

At Your Word!
Luke 5:1-11

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Such a crowd had followed Jesus, and they were pressing in so close to Him, that only a few could hear. So, Jesus went and climbed into Simon Peter's boat which was beached nearby, and had him put out a little from the land. Then, Jesus sat in the boat and taught the people from there. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." Simon, a little put out by the request, answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

You all know what happened. The nets were lowered and filled two boats to the point that they were near sinking. Simon fell before Jesus' knees and begged Him to depart for he was a sinner, unworthy to have Jesus in his presence. At this Jesus informed him that for that point on he would be catching men.

Usually, this would be turned into a mission sermon and how we are all to be out evangelizing our neighbor, bringing the good news to them. Maybe I should preach such a sermon. But do I even need to tell you that is what you are to be about? Our world could use the message of Christ! And you dear friends need to bring that message to others. In fact, if I were to ask each of you individually, "To how many you have personally brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ?" I dare say that many of you would be rather embarrassed to have the question asked of you. Why? Because you have not done that as well as you know that you should.

While this could be a mission sermon, it is not. But even that question gets to the heart of what this text is about, it can be summed up in three words – at your word!

At your word – and they let down the nets. At your word – and they left everything and followed Him. At your word – and the children immediately did the dishes. At your word – and you immediately went about the task you boss set you to. At your word – and you immediately tackled the honey-do list. At your word – and you immediately jumped to make your spouse happy.

And Simon Peter answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

Simon was tired. He was physically exhausted from his night's work. Along comes Jesus, an itinerant preacher with some mighty fine words. Maybe he was a prophet, for he had healed Simon's mother-in-law. But what could he know about fishing? "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!" You can hear the heaviness of his voice, and his sigh of resignation. Jesus has just taught with authority, He had done some healings, but Simon doubts that anything different will happen. "But at your word I will let down the nets."

Doubting that any fish will be caught, never mind that he never imagined such an incredible miraculous catch, Peter had let down the nets for a catch. At this point, Jesus is an unknown quantity. What was Jesus to Peter at this time? A rabbi? Most likely. A good teacher? Definitely. A prophet, who had God with him? Probably. But Peter had no idea that Jesus was the "Christ, the Son of the living God" as he would later confess.

Nevertheless, what does he say when Jesus tells him to let down the nets for a catch? Does he say, "I saw the miracles, I heard you teach, and I know there is something different about you, but you are asking me to believe that you can put fish where there were none – all night! You expect me to believe that you can change the laws of nature?"

No, Peter does not respond that way. Instead, he says, "At your word!" While I do not *believe* that anything different will happen than what happened all last night, I will still let down the nets because you say to do so. "At your word!"

How do people respond to the Word of God today? We all know the things that those who are Christians should not be doing, yet how often do we continue in sin, and then try to justify our sinfulness with excuses? And of course, there are those things that we as Christians are told they should be doing, and those are the very things that we fail to do?

When confronted with God's clear word, do we say, "At your word," and then immediately go do so? Maybe even with some skepticism, but still in obedience?

Or, when shown the clear teaching of God's word, do we promptly ignore it, because it doesn't fit our world view. Instead of doing according to God's Word, we are more like Peter was when Jesus explained that He must suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, scribes, and elders. At that time Peter did not say, "At your word." Instead, at that time he said, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

That is when Jesus rebuked Peter, even calling him Satan, for he did not have in mind the things of God, but of men. Too often **we** are bound by the thinking of men rather than God. Our own desires trump God's Word.

The great prophet Elijah faltered in faith in our Old Testament lesson. He had run away, he was afraid for his life. God basically told him, go and do what I tell you, you have a job, now go do it. And in the end, Elijah did.

How willing are you to say, "At your word!", and then do as Christ commands? Go, bring the Gospel to your neighbor! "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Forgive your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Forgive and be reconciled with your neighbor, for if you do not forgive, then neither will your heavenly Father forgive you. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Such a list could extend forever, and the longer it continued, the more we would each have to hang our head in shame, for we **do not** respond, "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Do you remember how Peter responded to Jesus' news that He was going to suffer and die at the hands of evil men? Thankfully Jesus did not respond in the same manner we do, to the will of His Father.

Son, my beloved Son, my only begotten Son - you must take on human flesh in the womb of a virgin named Mary. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must then be obedient to all my laws, and the laws of our creatures, even when they are unjust. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must also submit to baptism, taking into your flesh the sins of all mankind. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must walk among the people, teaching them, doing miraculous signs among them, even though they will not believe that you are God. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must submit to the authority of Jewish leadership when they arrest you and falsely accuse you. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must submit to the authority of Pilate when brought before him. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must allow yourself to be mistreated in the most vile manner, to be spat upon, beaten, whipped, humiliated, and lied about. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Then, you must submit to the most cruel form of punishment, punishment usually reserved for the most foul criminals. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

And there, upon the cross you must give your life unto death to pay for the sins of all those who did these things to you - yea, to pay for the sins of all mankind. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Love them as you do all this for them. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

Three days later, I will raise you from the dead. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You must give the authority I give to you to your disciples, the authority to forgive sins. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

You yourself must be present in the forgiveness they dispense. "Yes Lord, at Your word."
You must be the water of life in a miracle called baptism. "Yes Lord, at Your word."
You will be the Word of Peace that they speak to one another. "Yes Lord, at Your word."
You will be the food and drink to satisfy their hunger for righteousness. "Yes Lord, at Your word."

All this Jesus did, in obedience for your sake... All these things He DOES... for you.

Jesus now comes and speaks to you. Hear the absolution my minister speaks to you and know your sins are forgiven. Yes Lord, at your word.

Bring your children to the font, that they may be united to me, made my dear children. Yes Lord, at your word.
Hear my word proclaimed to you, for it is the means by which I will come to you and build you up in the most holy faith unto life everlasting. Yes Lord, at your word.

Eat and drink at the table I set before you of My precious body and blood. Eat and drink of forgiveness. Partake of the salvation I won for you out of My boundless love for you. Be strengthened in faith by this holy meal unto life everlasting. Yes Lord, at your word.

You are mine now, and will be forever. Amen.

That is, Yes Lord, at your word.