



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

It can be scary to try new things you have never done before. Remember trying to ride your first bike as a child? You had seen others do it, but you had never tried yet yourself. Or how about going to your first job? Remember back that far? Well, you were prepared from college or trade school and the interviewer thought you were ready but now it was your first day. You were scared of many things; would you fit in, would you be able to do the work, would the others like you? We do experience many scary things as we go through life.

One of the scariest things I ever did was move to Park Falls in hope of being your pastor someday. Rodney and I had lived in the Town of Erin, outside Hartford for 27 years. He was retired and I had a successful real estate career that was demanding, but for many years very profitable. What on earth was I thinking moving away from everyone and everything I had known for most of my life? God had called me into some pretty deep water.

I remember reading once in a book by Richard Bode, "If we want to write, we need a master who speaks to us in a voice that bears a kinship to our own. If we want to paint, we need a master whose vision of light, form, and color appeals to our inner eye. If we want to compose, we need a master whose music touches our soul." And today I would add if we want to be a person of faith, we need to listen to the master and follow his call. And I did that when we came to Christ the Servant.

In our reading today, Jesus tells Peter to take his boat into deeper waters. And you bet that Peter was scared, skeptical at the least. He had already been fishing all night to no avail. Peter was an experienced fisherman and knew the ins and outs of fishing. Yet, Peter trusted in Jesus enough to give it a try. Peter and his partners did as Jesus suggested, even

though it went against what they thought best and ended up catching a boat load or two of fish.

These men, Peter included were experienced fishermen. They were taught to fish by their fathers and their fathers, fathers. They knew that by going into deeper waters might there be danger. After all that is the way, they had always fished, closer to shore. But now someone was challenging them to do it differently. And so, I suppose that they were a bit fearful. Possibly fearful for their safety or possibly fearful of failure. But they took the risk and trusted Jesus that they would have success.

Trust is not always easy. It means that we must move forward yielding to a higher power. We must listen to a different call if you will. Trusting that things will be Ok and turn out well is not always easy when your life or livelihood is on the line.

Peter and the other fishermen did need a little push to face this challenge set forth by Jesus. This was a bit outside of their comfort zone. But they were fishermen and needed to get a good catch. And Jesus must have thought that they could face the challenge, that they were prepared to face the deep waters. You do know that this Gospel story is not about fishing at all right? It is a story about trust, trusting Jesus. And He will never send us to a place of harm when we are not ready. Yet, He will challenge us into deeper waters to follow Him and go places we have never been before. It is all about trust. It is all about trusting the one who loved us so much that he was willing to give his life for us, Jesus.

The ending of this story has always troubled me. Peter and the others “left everything and followed him.” Wow, what a conclusion to this great story. Did that really mean that they gave up their fishing careers, their homes and their families and followed Jesus. I doubt that is what happened. But I do think it was a moment where they took Jesus into their hearts and accepted His challenge to go into deeper waters, so to speak. I think that they shifted their thinking from the things of this world to the things of God. They now were looking at a new way of living out one’s life in line with what they now believed to be a more important call.

Now because they realized their own human inadequacies and were overwhelmed with the power of Jesus, they would follow a different course for the next several years and fish for men. They would be helping others see the power of Jesus to change lives. They were called to tell others the good news of the Gospel of Jesus, where others who were lost could be saved. These men were not called because they had special qualifications, other than they followed Jesus’ challenge to go out to the deep. They were called while they were doing what they usually did, fish. It was on their ground that they were called to follow, not in some holy temple. But their willingness to follow changed their lives.

And now a baseball story by Robert Morgan from [More Real Stories for the Soul](#). One uncharacteristically awful afternoon during the 1950’s, the Yankee superstar Mickey Mantle struck out three times in a row, and he was basically depressed. “When I got back to the clubhouse”, he remembered, “I just sat down on my stool and held my head in my hands, like I was going to start crying. I heard someone come up to me, and it was little Tommy Berra, Yogi’s son, standing there next to me. He tapped me on the knee, nice and soft and I figured he was going to say something nice to me like, ‘You keep hanging in here’

or something like that. But all he did was look at me and then he said in his little kid's voice, 'You stink'."

That is most likely how Peter felt about himself. That is why he told Jesus to "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Peter had questioned Jesus and not trusted him without question. But after Peter and his fellow fishermen did what Jesus suggested, they hit it big, so big of a catch their boats could not hold all the fish.

God needs people like Peter and these fishermen who were willing to trust in Jesus. This story of Jesus taking these men into deeper waters means he wants those of us of the faith to extend our faith beyond known limits, beyond limits we have set for ourselves. And just maybe with us too, the deeper we go the greater the results will be.

Here at CTS, we have stretched our limits to go beyond what we thought was possible to make 60 -70 quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We have taken on new projects of quilts for homeless veterans. We are going to repave the parking lot to make it better for our Farmer's Market and other visitors.

My deep-water challenge from the Lord was fulfilled in becoming your pastor. I can truthfully say that it was the best move in my life, scary and often a struggle, but when I put my faith in God it turned out bigger than I expected. I love the life we have shared here at this congregation with all its ministries in this community and beyond. And maybe the thought of us starting a homeless shelter is not in such deep water that it cannot be realized if we follow Peter's lead and trust the Lord. **AMEN**