

**In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and may our Lord and Savior sanctify you in the truth, for His word is truth. Amen**

**Fifth Sunday after Trinity (2022)**

**Jesus Calls the Humble**

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***“Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.” (Luke 5:10–11, ESV)***

The Gospel Reading for today is St. Luke’s account of the calling of our Lord’s first four apostle’s: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Often this account focuses on the miracle of the large catch of fish, but there is another miracle here that is truly the focus of the story, and that is the call of the four apostles, especially Peter. It is about the miracle of Christ coming to Peter, it is about the miracle of the call of Christ to a man humbled by His presence. Thus, this Gospel Reading is a true illustration of how Jesus comes to us, humbling us by His presence while He calls us to faith. This Gospel Reading is all about *Jesus calling the humble*.

St. Peter, as we know from the Scriptures, could be brash, impetuous, vacillating, and unsure. He could also be rash and uncertain, irritable, and angry, these are all traits we could attribute to ourselves, traits which certainly lack humility. But in the Gospel Reading for today we see a Peter who through the miraculous action of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is brought to his knees in humble repentance, confessing his sinful nature. Peter was greatly affected by the miracle of the catch, which brought him to the realization that he was in the presence of holiness, a position in which he was sure he didn’t belong. So he fell ***“down at Jesus’ knees”*** and said, ***“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8, ESV)***

He confesses that he is a sinful man as he recognizes that Jesus is “the Holy One of God,” and he fears his proximity to Christ, to the Messiah. Surely God will dole out His just punishment on me, a sinful creature. But little does Peter know that God has come in Christ Jesus not to condemn, but to save, to bring about a new creation. God has moved from heaven to earth, from the temple to the person of Jesus, from the shore to the boat, and now He stands with Peter in that boat. But, as we see, Peter wants Him to leave. He is a sinner, he is unworthy, he has no right to be in the presence of “the Holy One of God.” Peter is filled with emotion, awe, fear, astonishment, and wonder, all rush over him. His boat is filled with fish, so many in fact that James and John had to come to help haul in the catch. It was so large that the fish also filled the boat of James and John. Please Lord, have mercy on me, and leave me, Peter pleads. But to his great surprise, the first words out of the mouth of Jesus are, ***“Do not be afraid.” “Do not be afraid”*** Peter for I am here to save you, I am here to make you one of my trusted apostles, for ***“from now on you will be catching men.” (v. 10)***

These are words of absolution. Christ performed the miracle of the catch, bringing countless number of fish into the boat. But more importantly He performed the miracle of making an unworthy sinner, Peter, worthy of being in His presence, in the presence of “the Holy One of God.” Thus, here we witness the miracle of the forgiveness of sins, the purpose for which our Lord Jesus came into this world.

What could these words, *“from now on you will be catching men”* mean to Peter? He has a wife, a home, a business. Can he just leave all these to follow this miracle worker? To chase after other men! For what purpose and to what end?

These thoughts flashed through Peter’s mind as he contemplates the words of Jesus. However, there is no question, Peter has been called immediately by Christ to be an apostle, a student of His who will be trained to continue to build the Church whose foundation is Christ Jesus the Lord. This is a daunting task; a task that is filled with both sorrow and disappointment, joy, and thanksgiving. It is a task which will tax Peter’s strength, his patience, and his understanding. But it is a task to which the Son of God has called him, a call he is compelled to answer.

When we recall Peter’s astonishment and awe as he realizes in whose presence he’s in, we cannot help but think of all the millions of souls who have found themselves in much the same situation as Peter, who found themselves among those who have been called to faith, who have been elected by grace. One moment they’re despondent, remember Peter had fished all night and caught nothing, and the next they are elated as the Messiah is made known to them by the Holy Spirit through His mediate call which comes through the Gospel. Wow! A new disciple of Christ, who, like the apostle Peter are not just given the gift of faith to believe, but who are also called to be a member of the Royal Priesthood so they, like Peter, can take the Gospel by which they were called and share it with others. Like Peter, their lives take on a new focus, one which is also filled with sorrow and disappointment, joy, and thanksgiving as they, too, go about their calling to continue to build the church.

Called and elected, disciples of Christ, like the apostles, take on an entirely new life, a life that is constantly in conflict with the world and their flesh. As I said earlier, Peter was impetuous, often foolish, and because of these traits he put himself into embarrassing situations. We can all recall the night before our Lord’s crucifixion, Peter, out of fear for his safety, denied knowing Jesus three times. The Lord quickly reminded Peter of his sin of disloyalty. Reminded of his failure to confess Jesus, Peter wept bitterly in humble contrition and repentance.

So, too, these new disciples are no different, like Peter they’re human, born with corrupted flesh, a flesh that is always at odds with the Holy Spirit. Day after day as they live out their lives as called child of God, the Spirit leads them in a life-long battle with their flesh and Satan. But this is a good thing. It is the Spirit’s Sanctifying work in them, strengthening their faith that they may be able to fulfill their calling.

Think of the miracle of the fish, and of the miracle of Peter’s conversion, now think of the miracle of your own conversion. Christ, as He did for Peter and the other three apostles in the Gospel Reading for today, chose you. He called you out of the sinful world, pouring out on you His life-giving blood shed for you on the Altar of the Cross. He saved you from sin, death, and the devil that you may live for Him in His Church while simultaneously helping to build His Church. He gave you the gift of the Holy Spirit to keep you in the faith, to aid you in your continuous battle against your flesh and Satan. Thus, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in your heart that He may sanctify you all your days until you close your eyes in death to await the resurrection of the dead. But until that day comes, He calls on you to fulfill your calling to live as a child of God, striving to do the will of God, and that includes helping to add new children to His Kingdom, new souls saved by the blood of Christ, new souls who are brothers and sisters with you in Christ.

When Peter, Andrew, James, and John left their boats to follow Jesus, they did so, facing uncertainty. Whatever the future held, they would face it together, one day at a time. As Jesus continued His ministry, He added other apostles and they, too, accepted uncertain futures as they

willingly followed Christ. This is true faith, faith born of the Gospel, faith given to humble hearts. As the Scriptures show us, throughout our Lord's ministry His apostles faced many trials, the greatest being the death of their Lord on the Altar of the Cross.

This was devastating! They said, the Lord is dead and buried, what are we to do? Fearing repercussions from the Jews, they all, except for one, huddled fearfully in the room where they had eaten their last meal with Christ. As they huddled together, they could not help but lament their cowardness, having abandoned Jesus after His arrest. But mostly they feared life without the Messiah, what are we going to do now? But we know that fear was laid aside as Jesus rose from the grave on the third day, appearing before His apostles and saying, ***"Peace to you."*** (Luke 4:36, ESV)

Wow, another miracle. Christ is alive! He has risen! He had not abandoned them. Moreover, He promises them another miracle at His Ascension. He said to them, ***"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*** (Acts 1:8, ESV) Furthermore, He told them as called and chosen apostles of His, they are to go forth and proclaim, ***"repentance for the forgiveness of sins . . . in [the name of Jesus] to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."*** (Luke 24:47, ESV) He promises them the Holy Spirit to guide them in all they do as they build the Church that our Lord created. They have been gathered, forgiven, strengthened, and commissioned to go forth to ***"Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*** (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV)

The humbled are called to go forth and preach to the proud that they may be humbled, brought to faith and simultaneously called by Christ Jesus. Go forth they did.

After Pentecost the apostles fulfilled their calling by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ Jesus to a world filled with sin. Proclaiming that Gospel which reveals God's precious gifts of justification, faith, and salvation earned for mankind by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the Altar of the Cross. No works, no merits of men, solely the work and merit of Christ Jesus. Proclaiming that through Christ's innocent obedience, suffering, and death on the Altar of the Cross, all men are offered redemption and the gift of reconciliation with God. Furthermore, they proclaimed our Lord's death which earned the righteousness which avails before God for all men, and His gift of eternal life for all who believe and answer the call. These blessed merits and benefits of Christ's are offered, given, and distributed today to the Church through God's Word and Sacraments.

As the apostles went forward carrying the Gospel with them, they faced trials and tribulations similar to Jesus, and like their Master, they too tasted death. Yet, because of the continual presence of the Spirit of Christ and the apostles unwavering commitment to Christ and His Gospel, countless numbers heard the Gospel and were humbled and brought to faith in Christ Jesus, and the Church grew.

Thus, today's Gospel Reading reminds us that we are like Peter, humbly kneeling before Christ, confessing who we are, poor miserable sinners, unworthy of His love, unworthy of His affection, and unworthy of His calling. Yet, He has mercy on us and forgives us our sins. Strengthened by this blessed truth, the Holy Spirit continues to lead us to carry out the mission and ministry to which He has called us: the proclamation of the Gospel and the distribution of His Sacraments; Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution by which others may be humbled and saved.

St. Peter, the humbled apostle, reminds us, “***God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.***” (*1 Peter 5:5, ESV*) Thank God His Son humbled, for *Jesus Only Calls the Humble*. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

May the Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen