

It all comes down to a split second decision.

On a day that begins like any other.

In this case, it was morning –

It might have been a clear day
or there could also have been fog on the shoreline
...a mistiness that is common at dawn
before the sun burns through the moisture.

Genesseret, also known as Kenneret, the Sea of Galilee
Is 8 miles wide and 31 miles from the Northshore
where Capernaum sits on a hill
to the south shore
where the river Jordan flows further south to the Dead Sea.

At 140' deep, the lake was full of fish.

The most popular species being the **red-bellied Tilapia**,
Now more commonly known as the *St. Peter Fish*.

The fishing crew had *spent overnight on the job...*

A common occurrence. Just two boats... working side by side.
But on this morning they had **nothing to show for their efforts.**

So, they were washing their nets in the lake –
removing plants and debris
caught up as they threw the nets again and again in the dark
And pulled the rope in order to
bring what had been caught up to the surface.

They were doing what they did every day –
Preparing for the next fishing trip.

Jesus was there too.

Amid a crowd of people standing on a stone-strewn shore
Men, women, children
–**all longing to hear Jesus speak.**

That they felt he would share God's Word,
says volumes
about the impact Jesus had already made in the region,
the crowd's feelings toward him, his popularity,
and **their desperate need for words of hope.**

As they pressed in on him, Jesus looks... and sees the boats –
And gets into one of them
to **separate himself from the crowd.**

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It seems a split second decision.

The boat belongs to man named Simon –
The fisherman does what he is asked...
is willing to push his craft out a bit.

They are not far from Capernaum,
Just a few miles.

Then, as today, as one travels south & west along the Galilean shore,
there are inlets where fishermen beach their boats .
pulling them up to rest on black water-worn stones.

Beyond the beaches, ravines cut into the landscape.

And, one can stand inland in any one of them
And hear a voice coming your direction from the water
As if **the speaker is standing right beside you.**

Jesus sits – and teaches from this newfound perch
Just as he sat and taught in the synagogue at Nazareth
In our lesson last week.

While it's left unsaid, Simon would have had to have
managed the boat as Jesus taught,
to keep it from being driven into the rocky shore by the waves.

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If we stopped Luke's missive right here,
Simon already has quite the story to tell his wife
when he returns to town that night.
*That he had been asked to help Jesus in his boat was **no small news**.*

But there was more.

Jesus asks Simon to move the boat out even further,
To make even more of a commitment.
He asks him to throw his net for a catch.
...a request at a whole new level.

Jesus didn't say – *let's try and see if we can catch something*.
He speaks as if the fish are already there,
waiting to be accepted into Simon's nets,
if he's just willing to do as he's told.

Simon, who we'll soon see
doesn't take direction from others easily.
has obviously been moved by Jesus' Words
IS willing, putting even greater trust in him.

He moves the boat further out
And the fish nearly leap into his boat in response.
So many, **others must be called upon to help**.

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It sounds similar to Jesus eventual call
for his disciples to go make disciples of all nations.
If they just trust in him, let him work through them,
They will be able to teach and heal the world!

But something must happen to Peter and the others
Before this is possible.

And Luke is the one gospel that points this out
in Simon's call story.

Something spiritual, something holy happens
Out there in that deep water,

You see, the deep water didn't begin for Peter
with Jesus' request to cast his net.

It began when Peter put the nets down he was washing.

When he set aside from his daily tasks

And turned his sights on this preacher and teacher

Who became his Master and Lord.

When he listened and his words became God's Word.

When, with a look in his eyes,

Simon (sees God).

**Like a multi-step miracle that makes a blind man see...
Simon's 'eye-opening' comes in three stages
or deepening levels of commitment -
And a revelation.**

First, he commits when he agrees to let Jesus stay in his boat
(that Jesus has already boarded)

so he can teach and be heard by the crowd.

He's willing to be Jesus' temporary assistant.

Second, he commits when,

against everything he knows about fish and fishing,

he's puts his reputation on the line

takes his boat out and casts his net.

And, third, Peter commits when Jesus asks him to leave everything
and follow him on a new venture.

**But before that third and final commitment
there's an important, essential revelation.**

It comes, when Simon, who is now called Simon Peter in verse 8,
Recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah in that boat.

**He immediately lowers his eyes,
and humbly admits that Jesus is everything,
and Peter ----- is nothing...**

– nothing more than an unholy and unworthy servant,
not worthy of standing in the same boat with Jesus.

And Jesus, the Messiah, calls Peter to follow him anyway,
Just as he is.

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As Cradle Christians,
many of us cannot recall a single defining moment
when Jesus came into our lives.

When we admitted that God is God, Jesus is Lord
And we are neither.

For most of us, like Peter, the process is drawn out,
In steps...

But doubtless because you are still here worshipping,
Still kneeling in prayer
Still confessing your failures
Still thanking God ---

You too, are in the midst of that process.

But, you have likely had your God-moments.

Can you remember the first time

Jesus asked you to put down what you were doing
And do something he asked?

Can you remember

Setting down what the moment before seemed important,
And leaning into a question about God someone asked,
Or, Reminding your daughter or son
that following God, their faith, is important.

*Can you remember a time when you took risk,
setting aside your concerns about what others thought –
And followed your godly heart?*

AND, can you remember
A moment, the moment
When you were in deep water – or hot water...
And realized how Great God is and how small, unworthy,
And even insignificant your life is?????

When you put God first, and yourself 2nd?

Just like Simon, and Saul, and Philip and Mary, and Lydia
Jesus has looked you in the eyes,
...is penetrating deep into your soul and saying.

Put out into deep water, my child. Trust Me.

It's time for you to dive deep and **be who you are meant to be.**
Trust!.

Follow the one who gave up his life for you
and he'll teach you to fish for people too.

Who knows what miracles we will accomplish
when Jesus reigns here among us.

Today. Tomorrow. Right here.

Amen.