

**Victoria Ave/Emmanuel Baptist
Sunday, August 16, 2020
Luke 7:1-11 – The Call of Jesus**

INTRO

I love good food! There is something incredibly comforting about sitting down to a wonderful meal with good friends and enjoying an evening of fellowship. I think that this is one of the events I miss the most during the pandemic. As Baptists, we have a wonderful tradition of gathering together over everything from cups of coffee to incredible pot-luck suppers and everything in-between.

I do like my desserts! There is something incredibly satisfying in partaking of a ooey, gooey, warm, chocolatey brownie. Give me a big glass of cold milk and the tray with a fork and let me go at it!

One though! How many of us would sit down with a spoon and eat ½ a cup of all purpose flour? What about drink a 1/3 cup of vegetable oil. Eat a spoonful of baking soda or cornstarch? Down a couple raw eggs followed by 5 tablespoons of butter? The worst part is that wonderful smelling unsweetened cocoa powder. Not pleasant on its own!

Take all of those ingredients and mix them together then add a bit of heat, about 325 degrees for about 30 minutes and then see what has happened.

And that is what we call – **TRANSFORMATION!** The taking of something seemingly useless on its own and making something spectacular!

Last week we started a “Basics 101” series all about being a Christian, also known as being a disciple or discipleship. We started with the question “What is a Christian?” and came up with a basic definition:

A Christian is one who answers a call by God to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. A relationship is established with Christ as Mentor or Master Teacher and the person as student, learner, apprentice, and practitioner of the life and wisdom Christ sets out.

Today we are going to look at one aspect of the definition – “one who answers a call by God...” What does that mean?

Let's begin by reading our text today found in Luke 5:1-11:

The First Disciples

5 One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. ² He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. ³ Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

⁵ "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." ⁶ And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! ⁷ A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

⁸ When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." ⁹ For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. ¹⁰ His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" ¹¹ And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

In the story of Jesus calling Peter as a disciple, we see a fundamental truth about becoming a Christian. The fact is Christianity is not a matter of your deciding at some point in your life that you should be more spiritual and so you choose Christianity as the most likely avenue for you to attain your goals. As Jesus offered Peter a place with him as a follower, the fact is you

cannot become a legitimate follower of Jesus Christ **UNLESS** and until God first reaches out to you through the Holy Spirit.

This is the biblical way! Examples? Absolutely...

⁸ It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Heb. 11:8)

Noah was called to build the ark. Moses was called through the burning bush to lead his people out of Egypt. Saul was called (against God's wishes) to be Israel's king but sadly disobeyed his calling. Isaiah was called to take God's message to the people. Judges, prophets, priests, and kings...over and over the call of God to service.

Perhaps you think God's calling is purely for the special...but scripture tells us that God called an entire nation to be His chosen people and he entered a relationship with them that we call a covenant.

Joshua powerfully reminded the people of their calling in Joshua 24:14-15:

¹⁴ "So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD."

Jesus called the twelve and Paul met Jesus and was called on the road to Damascus.

GOD'S CALLING TODAY

Today God is still calling people to be, as the children's song says, "fishers of men." I think one of the problems is that we don't know how to interpret the call to follow. For most, the call is not the audible voice of God, but rather, God using the voices of others. It could be through a sermon or study; it could be through a

tv show or a piece of music. It could be a sudden realization of the need for a relationship with the creator after gazing on the magnificence of His creation. It could be a feeling of emptiness, a compelling need to fill a void and nothing we try works. Or it could be a combination of many of these things over time. There have been atheists and cynics who heard God's call when they attempted to prove God didn't exist. A great example of this is Lee Strobel, author of "Case for Faith" among other books. He was an atheist and an investigative journalist who basically set out to prove his wife's newfound belief false.

Have you felt the Spirit calling you to follow Jesus? Are you wondering how you should respond? Let's use the apostle Peter as an example of how we should respond.

Peter had three necessary qualities that Jesus was looking for. He is willing to go where Jesus leads, he is humble, and he is fully committed.

I. Will you obey even when you don't understand?

Have you ever really sat down and asked yourself, "What do I believe about God/Jesus?" Peter had some decisions to make.

Jesus used Peter's boat as a preaching platform. The crowds were closing in on Jesus and he saw these boats, got into one and asked the owner to move away from the shore. Then Jesus preached. Peter heard the words of Jesus that day. Something about his words caused Peter to willingly respond to Jesus' instructions later about where to cast his nets. As you ponder responding to Jesus' call in 2020, know that the willingness to follow where Jesus leads may occasionally go against your culture, customs, or common wisdom. Sometimes God takes us in surprising places in surprising ways to stretch us.

II. Are you humble?

Peter realized very quickly that he wasn't worthy to be in Jesus' presence. That is WHAT made Peter such a great disciple! God could use Peter because Peter knew that he needed God not the other way around. Peter understood that as a sinner he brought nothing to the table except what God was willing to use. What an amazing realization to come to! God loves you regardless of who you are. You are loved, wanted, and important in the eyes of God. You are significant because God decided you are!

III. Are you willing to make Jesus your priority?

Jesus issued the invitation to Peter to become a fisherman of people. Peter's response was to leave his boat and follow Jesus. I have known many educators in my time. Many of my college and seminary professors could have taught at institutions that would have paid them generously...but they chose to sacrifice in order to serve and teach. Pastors, missionaries, Christian charitable organizations, many people sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. It doesn't seem logical to the world.

Peter understood that casting his nets for people, helping people meet Jesus and know God, was the greatest calling he could personally have.

CONCLUSION

God doesn't call everyone to leave their jobs and go into full-time ministry, but he does call you into ministry. If you have already answered God's call, are you making the most of it? Do you actively serve Jesus? If so, well done! May you see the rewards of your obedience! If you have lost your excitement for your call...what do you have to do to get it back. David faced that dilemma after his horrible bout of sin with Bathsheba. This is what he prayed and maybe it is the prayer you need to offer up to your Lord: Ps. 51:10-12

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a loyal spirit within me.

**¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit^[d] from me.**

**¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.**

Let's pray...