

## Miraculous Catch of Fish Luke 5:1-11

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And 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.  
(English Standard Version – ESV)

### **Background:**

- The shore of Gennesaret functioned acoustically like an amphitheater, so withdrawing a little from the crowd to address them from the boat would have made it much easier to hear Jesus.
- A fisherman would likely trust a rabbi's teaching on religious matters, but probably not in his own field of expertise, like fishing; so, Peter's obedience is exemplary. These men had labored with a dragnet at night, which should have caught them many more fish than Jesus' instructions.
- Cost of fishing equipment was high, so fishermen often worked in cooperatives, with families working together to increase their profits. Men fishing from more than one boat could let down larger nets than those working from only one. Fish that were caught would either be emptied on another boat or the nets would be hauled ashore (see John 21:8).
- "Fishers of men" (see Matthew 4:19) may allude to two Old Testament texts (Jeremiah 16:16; Habakkuk 1:15), changing an image of impending judgment into one of rescue from judgment. More likely, Jesus is transforming their vocation from fishermen to "fishers of men," even as God transformed Moses and David from shepherds of sheep to shepherds of his people.
- Fishermen typically made a better-than-average income, so for these men to leave their work is an act of radical commitment that would have changed their livelihood and lives dramatically.

### **Questions:**

- + By saying, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch," what does Jesus imply? Simon Peter is bothered when Jesus tells him to go fishing again, yet he goes anyway. Why? How will you respond if God tells you to do something that doesn't make sense at the time?

- + What do you find remarkable about Simon's response to the miraculous catch of fish?  
If you were there, how do you think you would have responded to the miracle, and why?  
Have you ever experienced a miracle? If so, how did your experience affect your life?
  
- + What is most striking and significant about the response of Jesus to the response of Simon?  
When Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid," what fear was the Lord addressing in his life?  
What fear does the Lord want to address in your life right now? How will you respond?
  
- + Do the words of Jesus, "you will be catching men," apply only to Simon? If not, who else?  
If these words of Jesus apply to you, too, how will you respond, and to whom will you go?  
What would it take for you to leave everything and follow Jesus wherever he might lead?