



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 9, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

5th Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson: [Isaiah 6:1-8](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 67a

Second Lesson: [Romans 10:12-17](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 5:1-11](#)

EPIPHANY MOMENTS

The Least Qualified Are the First Sent

LESSONS FROM FISHING WITH JESUS

1. Fishing can be _____
2. Don't fish without _____
3. Honest _____, cast off _____
4. You are _____ to fish, but not _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

I know there might be some of you out there that would probably consider yourself expert fishermen. Maybe right now in this season of ice fishing, or even when there is not ice fishing and you go out on a boat and enjoy fishing. My experience with fishing is actually in Wisconsin, even though I haven't really fished since I've been here in these six years. Actually, when I was a kid, I would come up with my parents/family. My parents grew up in Wisconsin. My dad grew up on a farm and they had a fishing pond down the way. One of my biggest memories from that was actually going to fish with cousins, but especially with my grandfather. He died when I was a freshman in high school. He lived to be 90. I didn't spend a ton of time with him except during those times fishing. I do remember that. He loved doing that and it was a good time when we got to do that.

Maybe for you, as people that like to go fishing, that's part of what it is—to go with other people, to spend time with them. You might be one of those who would rather just go by yourself, but I think for a lot of people, fishing and getting out there in the water is about who you are spending that time with.

Today as we look at our lesson and how Jesus helps these fishermen, we are going to learn some **lessons from fishing with Jesus**—spending some time with Jesus and how He encourages us to go fish, but then also that encounter with Jesus and how we react to Him as well.

I think fishing is an interesting example. Is fishing easy? That might be why some of you don't really like to go fishing because you can go out there and you can spend all day and how many fish do you get? None or maybe a couple, unless you are really good, then you get a ton. You could go out there, but it's unreliable. It could get windy. It could get rainy. The weather and all these different things play a part, but **fishing can be frustrating**. It's hard at times! I think that's a challenge for us and we see that, especially here with Peter and the disciples. They were professional fishermen but as Jesus is preaching and teaching, Jesus is going to call him out to go put his nets down, but in Verse 5 he says, **"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything."** It's not always easy. Even these professional fishermen caught nothing.

As we talk about fishing in the sense of catching fish, we also want to think about fishing for men, or fishing for people, and sharing the Gospel. Is fishing and sharing the Gospel, trying to get people to hear the Gospel and to know about Jesus, also frustrating? Why can it be frustrating? Are you always confident in what you know? Are there all sorts of things out there that are speaking against Christianity? The last few weeks we've talked about popularity and failure and how just because something is popular or something is not popular doesn't make it true. You might not be confident. You might be up against a lot of hard teachings. Someone might say "Well, how can you speak these words? There are all these other religions. Are you being judgmental?" Sometimes you forget a passage. Sometimes you're trying to share Law, which is hard. Sometimes you are trying to share Gospel and people don't like that either. So we see how fishing for people can also be difficult. It can be very frustrating.

What we can learn from what Peter does here is as Jesus is preaching and teaching, it says that people are listening to the Word. Then He got into Simon's boat. He sat down and taught the people from the boat. He was sharing God's Word. Then we see after He is done, He sends Peter out again to put down into deep water and let down the nets for a catch. Simon says that they haven't caught anything, but he says **"Because you say so, I will let down the nets."** He trusts Jesus, possibly because of all the things He has been doing. We also know that many miracles had been done. We know that He healed Peter's mother-in-law either right before this or right after this. All these miracles were going on, so Peter trusts Him and goes out in God's Word—by the Word of Jesus. And what happens is he catches such a large catch of fish.

What we can think about that for us is we need to go out and fish with Jesus. **Don't fish without Jesus**. What happens when I go out and evangelize, when I leave the Gospel

out of it, what do I make it all about? Maybe I make it all about myself or I'm leaning only on my ability. Maybe I'm focused so much on just trying to win an argument instead of getting them to Jesus and really understanding this is a long process sometimes and you have to break down barriers, but understanding Jesus is so essential to all of this. If I don't have Jesus, if I'm not using the Gospel, then what am I using? We can go out and we can get so frustrated because we're not catching fish, we're not doing anything, but notice what happens is right over here, Jesus has prepared people for the Gospel. The worst thing we could do is just stop. We need to go back and say "How can I bring Jesus into this more? How can we ask God to help us and to guide us in our fishing, in our sharing the Gospel?"

What happens is our failures help us to see also our lack and our limitation. This is what happened for Peter. As he lets down the nets, he has this great catch of fish, so much that their nets are breaking, the boats are sinking, so Peter approaches Jesus and he falls on his knees and says, ***"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"***

One of the interesting things I think also about why it's good to go fishing and when you think about that, you've got that time to reflect. You think about a lot of things and then even the picture of sitting on water and you can look and you can see yourself. The truth that happens here is Peter sees himself. He sees a reflection of who he is. It's an honest reflection that he is sinful, that he doesn't measure up. He can't do it. He has been trusting in himself and he's lost. But what does Jesus do in that honest reflection? As the Law hits, He tells him these beautiful words: ***"Don't be afraid..."***

As we are out there fishing, we have our ***honest reflections, but also cast off fear***. Get rid of that fear. That's what Jesus does. That's what God does. As people are convicted by the Law and as He wants to send them out, notice this picture is so similar to what we read in Isaiah. As Isaiah sees God, he says ***"...I am a man of unclean lips..."*** These people are all sinful. I can't go and do this!" So He uses that coal, touches his lips, and says "Here is the Gospel. You're forgiven. Your sins have been taken away." This is exactly what Jesus does with Peter. He says ***"Don't be afraid..."***

Notice He doesn't say "Peter, you're not a sinful man." Notice He doesn't correct him and say "Oh, yeah, you're pretty good. No, I'm here to show you how great you are." He lets it stand that Peter is a sinful man, but He says ***"Don't be afraid..."*** This is what the Gospel does. It removes that fear. It removes the fear and encourages us to understand that we are forgiven so that we can go share that Gospel message. If I see that Gospel message, if I'm going out in Jesus, then I can share Jesus. If I understand MY sinfulness, then I'm not going to go out hypocritically and I can say "God has come to die for the sins of the world, and that includes you." But who is called to do this?

Notice here that Jesus speaks to Simon. ***"Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed***

him. Who was called? He calls Peter, but it says **they** left everything and followed him. Peter was called. James and John were called. They were called to go and share this message. Who is called to share about the Gospel? The truth is not just pastors but you are called to do this. *You are called to fish, but not alone.*

It's kind of fascinating to think about this. Here Jesus is, the perfect God, the Son of Man, and He is going out to do His ministry, but **He** doesn't even go alone. Jesus didn't say "Well, I'm just going to go share this all by myself. I don't need anyone." Jesus needed people to go help and share that Gospel message. Do pastors need help? Does our church need help? We can understand that we are all called to share this Gospel message, to go out. But understand that you are not alone. You have all the people here. You have the whole Christian body that is going out, to support you and to help you. Do you need to have all the answers? Do you need to be able to answer every objection that someone has? No! But as we sang about, you can speak about Jesus. You don't have to preach like Paul. You can give this great message that Jesus loves you. What is kind of fascinating to look at is who can do this.

When we were in China, some of the greatest missionaries that were there, do you want to guess who they were? There were pastors that were called that went over, but also people we call "lay missionaries." There were teachers and other people that weren't just sent by the synod as pastors. One family was a family from South Dakota. There were two parents and they brought over three kids. Do you know who some of the greatest missionaries were? It was those kids, who at the bus stop would talk to just about anyone. They would share something from America and share about God's love and that Jesus loves them. They would share just the basics about Jesus. And even in our house, one of the greatest things that we saw that brought people in and helped them to think about Christianity was our household—how we interacted with our son; what a Christian household looked like. I think it's important for you to understand that it's not just your words that matter but your actions—how you live your life, how you treat people at school, how you interact with your coworkers. It's not just your words but it's your actions and your attitude. As it tells us when we look at the book Unoffendable on our Sunday morning studies—that I can handle hardship and have joy. I can go through cancer and still trust God. I can have loss and horrible things happen, but I can have a peace in Christ.

What's fascinating, too, is it says that these disciples **left everything and followed him.** They cast off all their stuff and then they were going to go and share the Gospel, to tell people you can cast off your sin and to cast off that fear of judgment and have forgiveness.

So the question to consider is that God is not calling you to leave everything, is He? You don't have to leave your job. You don't have to sell all these things. How can you prioritize sharing the Gospel more? Again, maybe it's not even specific words.

Hopefully you can get to the Gospel, but sometimes it's looking at your attitude and your actions and saying "How can I share Jesus more? How can I get people the Gospel? How can I invite people to church? How can I get them Jesus?" But to not make it all about you—don't go fishing without Jesus. It's all about the Gospel. It's all about Christ and His redemption and forgiveness.

But in all of this, I want to remind you, you're not alone. You have this whole community, this body of Christ, and this body of Christ all over the world. And most of all, you have Jesus going with you—the Holy Spirit, who God says will give you the words of what to say, and maybe the encouragement to pray boldly. Ask God to put you in those situations, to give you opportunities to share the Word, to be with people, but to go fishing with Jesus to catch more souls for the Gospel. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.