

Miracle 6: First Miraculous Catch of Fish on Sea of Galilee

Luke 5:1-11

The Context (vs. 1-3): Six contextual observations:

- 1) After healing Peter's mother-in-law and many others in Capernaum, Jesus continued to preach in the synagogues in Galilee (Luke 4:38-44).
- 2) Crowds of people are closely following Jesus to hear the Word (logos) of God and Jesus is teaching them near the Lake of Gennesaret (named for the plain near the lake; same as the Sea of Galilee named for the region; and Sea of Tiberias named for a city on its bank).
- 3) The Sea of Galilee is about 16 miles long (100 furlongs) and 6-7 miles wide (40 furlongs). It was the place where fishermen Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John were called earlier as disciples.
- 4) Jesus was standing by the lake preaching to the multitudes while the disciples were washing their nets of the two "ships" (little fishing boats) in which they had been fishing.
- 5) Jesus enters (embarks) onto Simon's boat and asks him to "thrust out" (nautical term for push off from the land) a little distance.
- 6) Jesus then sets down (common posture of Jewish teachers) to teach the people from the boat (boat was his pulpit).

The Miracle (vs. 4-6): Seven observations related to the miracle:

- 1) When Jesus had ceased speaking (sermon over; crowd departing), he commands Simon to "launch out into the deep" (nautical term to put out to sea directed to Simon individually) and then commands others in the boat to "let down" (loosen; slacken) the nets for a "draught" (haul, catch).
- 2) Simon answering (replying to) Jesus says, "Master" (teacher, guide- not usual rabbi or lord), we have toiled (labored, grown weary) all night and have taken no fish, nevertheless, at Jesus' word (spoken word rhema- not logos), Simon obeys the command to let down the net.
- 3) Simon, a discouraged fisherman, had numerous reasons (excuses) not to obey the command. Five potential excuses for disobeying Jesus' command are: 1) it was not the best time to fish- night was the best fishing time; 2) tired from fishing all night- fatigued; 3) already cleaning up the nets; 4) had caught nothing all night; 5) essentially saying "it's a waste of time" to try.
- 4) But Simon obeyed the Master; do we? What has Jesus commanded us to do that we find excuses to ignore (disobey) because of discouraging or untimely circumstances?
- 5) If Simon and his crew had not obeyed, no miracle would have happened.
- 6) "This doing" (obeying the commands), they "enclosed" (to shut together) a great multitude (Greek plethos large amount or number) of fish and their nets were about to break (Greek imperfect passive; in the process of breaking).
- 7) If the nets "broke" they would have lost many of the fish unless Jesus did another miracle and kept the fish there- which is possible).

(over)

The Results (vs. 7-10a): Eight observations:

- 1) They “beckoned” (making a sign; nodding the head) the other boat (perhaps the sign given by fishermen who were to be quiet on the lake or because they were speechless because of the miracle). Their partners (associates- James and John as noted in verse 10) came and they filled both boats so much so that both were almost immersed (about to sink; swamp).
- 2) Simon Peter fell down at Jesus’ knees (a posture of supplication; spontaneous act of worship).
- 3) This is the first time Luke addresses Simon as “Peter,” a name he will more commonly be called in the future.
- 4) Simon Peter says to Jesus, “Depart (leave) from me for I am a sinful (depraved) man (an-er-male individual- not anthropos- mankind), Lord” (term mostly used by disciples of Jesus).
- 5) Did Peter wish Jesus to leave him? No, he was so overwhelmed by Christ’s miracle and majesty, he became conscious of his unworthiness to even be in Christ’s presence. Much as Isiah (Isa. 6:5), Job (Job 42:5-6), and the centurion (Matt. 8:8).
- 6) All (including all in both boats) who saw the miracle were “astonished” (seized with astonishment) at both the act of catching and the amount of fish caught.
- 7) James and John become “partners” (koinonia sharers; fellow-shippers) with Peter and Andrew in Christ’s miracle.
- 8) Jesus commands Simon to “Fear not” assuring him of no sinking boats.

The Future Implications and Applications (vs. 10b-11):

- 1) Jesus goes on to say “henceforth (hereafter) you will “catch” (catch alive- only here and 2 Tim. 2:26) men (Anthropos- general mankind).
- 2) Thought: Fish are caught for food (death); mankind is caught for life (eternal).
- 3) They brought the boats to the land, and they (the disciples) forsook (to send away or leave) “**all**” (the fish just caught, the boats, the nets, their occupation).
- 4) Probably whatever crew or family members present took the fish and boats; they forsook all and followed (accompanied) Jesus.
- 5) It is important to see the progress (or lack thereof) of the disciples. First, Jesus called these four disciples earlier to be fishers of men (Matt. 4:18-22) and they followed Him (but not forsaking all). Second, here they are still fishing (even cleaning nets while He was teaching); and this time they forsake all and follow Him (both Aorist tense forsook and followed with continuing forsaking and following). Third, they continue to follow until the Crucifixion (when only one, John, shows up there). Fourth, after his death and resurrection, they are back to fishing (John 21:3), when Jesus reminds them of their commitment with another miraculous catch of fish (John 21:4-8). Finally, they are fully committed; and at Pentecost they demonstrate that commitment (Acts 2:37-43) with Peter preaching and he “caught alive” about 3, 000 souls.
- 6) Now, they truly are “FISHERS OF MEN;” fully committed even unto death (all martyrs except John).