

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Stretched by the Word, Luke 5:1-11

The Demand for the Word

Luke 5:1-3 (KJV) ¹ *And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,* ² *And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.* ³ *And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.*

- Jesus is preaching along the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, which also the called the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias
- The crowds had a *craving, a hunger and thirst* for the Word of God **Matthew 5:6 (KJV)** ***Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.***
- This crowd was so hungry for the word of God that they were willing to go wherever Jesus was to receive His teaching
- The crowds were so large that Jesus got into one of the boats and taught the multitudes from the boat
- God wants us to have a hunger for the Word of God
- There should no spiritually starving Christians

Fishermen and their Nets

² ***And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.***

- The fishermen are nearby washing their nets
- Every time the nets were used, they had to be *washed* with fresh water and *stretched* so the nets would remain useful
- There is a parallel between *washing and stretching of nets* and believers regularly being *washed by the water of the Word* and being *stretched* by the Holy Spirit so that we can remain *useful* to God

May I Use Your Boat?

³ ***And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.***

- Jesus sees an opportunity to more effectively reach minister the word of God to the crowd and minister directly to Simon (Peter)
- Jesus asks Simon (Peter) if He could he use his boat to preach from
- Peter agrees and they push a *little* from the shore so Jesus can sit down and preach from the boat
- Preaching from the boat would create a natural amphitheater where everyone could see and hear Jesus
- Jesus was intentionally working to remove any barriers from the people hearing and accepting the word of God
- Peter easily obeyed Jesus in the little things
- How well do we obey the word in the *little* things?

What Will You Do with the Word?

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⁴ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

- Jesus tells Peter to *launch into the deep* and let down his nets for a draw
- After the word of God has been preached, taught, or even read; a response is always necessary
- Is there:
 - A command to obey
 - A sin to confess/repent of
 - A sin to avoid
 - An attitude to change
 - A promise to claim
- The purpose of the word of God is to *apply it* to our lives
- We are to be “doers” of the word of God **James 1:22-25 (KJV)** ²² **But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.** ²³ **For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:** ²⁴ **For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.** ²⁵ **But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**
- Where we spend eternity depends on what we do with the word of God we receive **Matthew 7:21 (KJV)** ²¹ **Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**
- Jesus finishes preaching and says to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.”
- Jesus is making two commands of Peter:
 1. Take your boat out into deeper water and let down your nets for a draught
 2. Leave your personal comfort zone and let Me *stretch* your faith
- The word of God is always working to *stretch us* personally by taking us further and deeper into our relationship with God
- What are you doing with the Word of God you’ve received?

The Stretching Process

⁵ And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

- Simon responds to Jesus by saying, “Master”
- Peter has heard Jesus’ sermon and realizes that Jesus is not just another person, but He is one who speaks with authority
- Peter heard clearly what Jesus told him to do, but he is *reluctant* and somewhat *resistant*
- Peter *quickly obeyed* when Jesus said push out *little* from the shore, but now Jesus is saying *launch out into the deep* and Peter is having a problem with it
- Peter tells Jesus, me and my *fellow fisherman* have toiled all night and have caught nothing
- Peter is telling Jesus; I don’t want to be *stretched*
- Peter has given Jesus a list of excuses/reasons not to obey His word

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- We are sometimes a lot like Peter when the word of God wants to *stretch us* into a deeper relationship with Him
- We often resist the Word stretching us, too
- Many Christians find themselves arguing with what the Word of God when the Word is *stretching* them to new levels of growth and maturity

Nevertheless

“...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.”

- Peter spent time debating with Jesus, but it was a brief time
- Peter seemed to catch himself in the middle of his objection and say “nevertheless”
- Peter instantly changed from objecting to obeying
- What changed Peter’s mind?
 - Allowing Jesus to stretch him *a little*, Peter obeyed Jesus in little things
 - Peter viewed Jesus as “Master”, as One who has authority
 - Peter allowed the Word of God (Jesus) overrule his objections
- Peter made the decision to obey the word of God in spite of his:
 - fatigue
 - skill as fisherman
 - experience in the sea
 - personal pride
- We must be like Peter and quickly say, “Nevertheless, at your Word, I will”

The Results of Letting the Word of God Stretch Us

⁶ And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ⁷ And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

- When Peter obeyed the word of the Lord, his net captured a great multitude of fish
- When Peter *humbled* himself to the word of the Lord, things began to change for him
- When Peter placed his faith and obedience in the Word of the Lord, he began getting God’s results
- When Peter *demonstrated faith* in the Word of the Lord; Jesus *demonstrated His power*
- Fish that Peter could *not* catch using his skill, experience, and trying and failing all night, were no problem to catch when he placed his faith in the Word of God
- The word of God comes to stretch us so that we can be useful for the kingdom of God
- When Peter obeyed the word of God:
 - He caught so many fish his nets were beginning to *break* under the weight of the catch
 - Peter had to call for another whole crew and another boat to take it all in
- All this happened because Peter humbled himself under the word of God and obeyed
- God’s provision, power, and favor occurred in Peter’s life after he obeyed the word of God
- What can God do *for us* and *through us* when we allow the Word of God stretch us?
- Could we be missing out on or delaying God’s best for our lives because we are resistant to obey the Word of God?

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Confession Time

⁸ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. ⁹ For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

- Peter was amazed at what had just happened
- He knew this was no ordinary catch of fish
- This has to have something to do with Jesus and his obeying His word
- Peter raced over to Jesus and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O, Lord"
- Peter realized that He was in the presence of a Holy God
- The holiness of God reveals or exposes our lack of holiness
- Peter had to confess:
 - His sin of disobedience and unbelief
 - Jesus as *Lord* meaning Jesus is more than One who has authority, but is One who is holy, convicting and must be obeyed and followed
 - A reverential fear of Jesus as Lord
 - The word of God works!
- When we obey the word of God we do it because Jesus is Lord, He is holy, and we reverence Him, not because there is a blessing attached
- Peter obeyed the words of Jesus *in faith* not knowing what was going to happen next

God's Greater Purpose

¹⁰ And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. ¹¹ And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

- Jesus told Peter, James, and John from now on, you will "catch" men, you will be fishers of men
- Peter, James, and John gave up fishing and followed Jesus
- God often blesses our lives when we obey Him, but God often has a greater purpose and plan for us
- They were being *stretched* again into greater service for Jesus
- Notice, there was no *reluctance or resistance* this time
- When the Word of God *stretches* us, we have *greater capacity* to receive the *next* Word from God
- We should be constantly be becoming more *elastic* to receive *and* obey the Word of God
- God wants to use us in a greater way as we learn to take Him at his word, obey it, and follow Him