

February 6, 2022

Texts: Isaiah 6: 1-8; Luke 5: 1-11

Title: "Put Out Your Nets"

Two fishing boats stand empty by the side of a lake. The fishermen have given up for the day. They are standing near the boats cleaning out their nets. Their faces are weary with discouragement. They are not fishing for sport. This is their living, and they are not making much progress.

Any of you who've ever been salespeople know the feeling. Prospect after prospect says no. Any who've started your own business know the feeling. There are many rewards, but also many times when you're not sure if you're going to make it.

Farmers know what it's like. You can get that sinking feeling that this year's crop isn't measuring up and not because you haven't worked. That's the frustrating part. You've worked harder than ever. But the rain came at the wrong time. One week sooner and you would have had a bumper crop.

Those of you in school, have you ever worked hard studying for a test in school and you found out you studied the wrong assignment. We've all been there, haven't we? So we can sympathize with these fisherman standing beside their boats with nothing to show for their labors. All they can do now is clean their nets and hope for a better day tomorrow.

THEN, INTO THE SCENE STEPS JESUS. What powerful words, into the scene steps Jesus. Evangelist John Wesley was stopped one night by a highwayman who robbed him of all his money. Wesley said to the man, "If the day should come

that you desire to leave this evil way and live for God, remember that `the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.'"

Some years later, Wesley was stopped by a man after a church service. "Do you remember me?" the man asked. "I robbed you one night, and you told me that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. I have trusted Christ, and He has changed my life." This fellow is just one of thousands / millions through the centuries who were headed down the wrong road until Jesus stepped into the scene.

And notice what Jesus told them to do. He told them to launch out into the deep. He told them to throw their nets on the other side of the boat. **WHAT HE WAS REALLY TELLING THEM TO DO WAS TO EXERCISE THEIR FAITH.**

Faith in him, faith in their own abilities as fishermen, faith in the abundance of the seas. It was Simon Peter who spoke up: "Lord, we've worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." Jesus restored their faith, and that was precisely what they needed at that moment in their lives.

Did you know that many of us need that same word from Christ? Do you know the biggest barrier to success for most people? It is the fear of launching out. It is the fear of change. It's our reluctance to take action.

We're not happy with our lives, we're discouraged, disillusioned. We feel that life is passing us by and what do we do about it? Nothing! Experts tell us that most people have a built-in resistance to change. We are afraid to take the first step towards a dream, a hope. And Christ steps into our lives and says, "Don't be afraid. I

am with you. Launch out into the deep. Put down your nets.” That's what the disciples did and, miracle of miracles, they brought in so many fish they nearly sank their boats. It wouldn't have happened if they had not exercised their faith.

There is a story from sailing-ship days about a ship stranded off the coast of South America, unable to advance because there was no wind. Day after day went by. The sailors were dying of thirst when another schooner drifted close enough to read their frantic signals for help. Back came the answer: "Let down your buckets!" When they did, they found water fit to drink beneath their keel. Far from the coast though they were, the freshwater current from the mighty Amazon River surrounded them. All they had to do was reach for it.

Our lesson for today says to us: cast your nets. Don't be afraid to exercise your faith. This is still a wonderful, abundant world that God has created for us. Trust Christ's word and launch out into the deep, whatever that means in your life. We are not alone. Let Christ step onto the stage of your life. If we will trust him, he will provide. Amen.