

OUR DAILY AND SPIRITUAL BREAD
Sermon for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany, 2019
Luke 5:1-11

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Gospel read before, Luke 5:1-11: ¹ **While the people were crowding around Jesus as they were listening to the Word of God, He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret.** ² **He saw two boats standing on the shore of the lake. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.** ³ **Then Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. He sat down and began to teach the crowd from the boat.** ⁴ **When He had stopped speaking, He told Simon, “Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch.”**

⁵ **Simon answered, “Master, we have been working hard all night and have caught nothing. Nevertheless, at Your Word, I shall let down the nets.”**

⁶ **When the men had done this, they caught a very large number of fish, and their nets began to tear.** ⁷ **They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came, and they filled both the boats so that they began to sink.** ⁸ **When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!”**

⁹ **He and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken,** ¹⁰ **and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon’s partners. Then Jesus told Simon, “Stop being afraid. From now on you will be catching people.”**

¹¹ **When they had brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and became His followers.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

From our Gospel readings over the past couple weeks, Luke has pictured for us Jesus *going it alone* in proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom. He seemed to have had no companions as He made His way through the synagogues. However, Jesus and the first disciples were well acquainted with each other even before their call to follow. Earlier Jesus had gone to the home of Simon Peter to heal his mother-in-law.¹ Today **standing by the Lake of Gennesaret..., Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon.** Jesus hopped in Simon’s boat, and it does not seem at all strange. Shortly, this solitary ministry of Jesus would come to an end as the first permanent disciples are called.

The **people were crowding around Jesus as they were listening to the Word of God.** The Lake of Gennesaret is more commonly known as the Sea of Galilee. While we aren’t told exactly what Jesus was saying, surely His constant message would have included warnings against sin and false teaching that makes one unholy before God, and it would have included the message that grace and salvation are to be found in Him alone.

Whatever Jesus was saying, the crowd had grown. Jesus **saw two boats standing on the shore of the lake. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Then Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. He sat down and began to teach the crowd from the boat.** Jesus needed to use Simon’s boat because of the people crowding around Him. The multitude of listeners points to the popularity of Jesus as a teacher and the authority with which He spoke. The need for helpers in this ministry was becoming more evident all the time.

When He had stopped speaking, He told Simon, “Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch.” ⁵ **Simon answered, “Master, we have been working hard all night and have caught nothing. Nevertheless, at Your Word, I shall let down the nets.”**

Simon followed Jesus’ instructions. Why? Simon had been struck by Jesus’ teaching from the boat about the kingdom and therefore lowers his nets at Jesus’ Word.

We know what happens next: they **caught a very large number of fish, and their nets began to tear. They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came, and they filled both the boats so**

¹ Luke 4:38-39

that they began to sink. This was a miracle showing how much Jesus desired to help Simon. To make a living, fisherman need fish. The Lord helps Simon Peter out with his daily bread.

After a slow night of fishing, in which nothing was caught, you would expect Simon to show much joy, but look at his reaction. Between the teaching and the miracle, he has come to the realisation of something important. He is standing in the presence of more than just a teacher, more than just a man. He is standing in the presence of the Messiah - The eternal Son of God. Standing in the presence of his holy Lord, the holiness of Jesus suddenly makes Simon see how holy he is not. Simon knows he is unworthy to be in Jesus' presence. He exclaims: **“Go away from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!”**

Simon had told the truth. He is a sinner who justly deserves the Lord's temporal and eternal punishment. There is nothing in him that deserves the Lord's gracious gift of all those fish or anything else. No, for his sin, Simon Peter only deserves to have the Lord go away from him.

When Simon asked the Lord to leave him, *he had the whole situation wrong.* Jesus had not accidentally hopped in the boat with Simon without realising He was helping out a sinner. Jesus knew that Simon was a sinner, and that was *precisely* why He got on the boat. Rather than leave Peter with his sin, Jesus says: **“Stop being afraid.”** Simon Peter need not be afraid because by these words of Christ, he has been forgiven.

So now Simon Peter had two gifts. The large catch of fish, and the forgiveness of sins.

Simon received another gift that day. Jesus says to him: **“From now on you will be catching people.”** Now that Simon's sins have been forgiven and he has been made holy, Jesus is going to make Simon's life holy too. He will now be a disciple, later an apostle, a fisher of men. On Pentecost, Simon, now known as Peter, would preach a sermon that would lead to the conversion and baptism of three thousand people.² Now that Jesus has come to him, Peter has the kingdom of heaven. He doesn't deserve it, he doesn't get these things because of who he is, but he receives these gifts solely because of who Jesus is.

Dear friends, here is the lesson for us: The Lord still gives these gifts today. Obviously, as He gave Peter that huge catch of fish, so He also continues to give us our daily bread. The Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer reads, **“Give us this day our daily bread,”** and the Catechism explains daily bread as including *everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbours, and the like.* It is amazing to think that God not only gives these blessings to those who love Him, but to all whether they believe in Him or not, whether they give thanks to Him or not. Even if people give credit to other gods for their blessings, He still gives daily bread.

Obviously here, though, we need to remember the sin of ingratitude. Look at all that God gives – even in dry times, and yet we often fail to give Him gratitude. How often have we failed to thank Him properly? But even more dangerous is the thought that our Old Adam is continually trying to get us to say with Peter, **“Go away from me”!** He wants us to dwell on *the first gift*, our daily bread, so much so that we don't care for the second gift, the forgiveness of sins.

No matter what, the Old Adam - our old sinful nature - will take God's *temporal gifts* and try to get us to fix our eyes on them, so much so that we soon forget that the Lord has other gifts to offer. This is a real and present danger to us all, and especially in the life of the Church. Take for example the preaching of Law and Gospel. Not too many churches today openly preach this doctrine. Many refuse to speak of hell and damnation, instead, focusing their preaching on the goodness of God. No one wants to hear how bad they are. Now, telling of the goodness of God doesn't seem too bad, but can you see the error? If a pastor preaches only of the good gifts God gives in this life, and refuses to speak of sin as well as grace, then he denies people of the Good News of God's greater goodness – the forgiveness of sins all for the sake of Christ, who has died and has risen again for them.

Jesus became flesh and went the way of the cross to redeem us from our sin. He suffered God's judgment in our place, and the Father credited us with Jesus' righteousness so that we are pardoned for our sin and have eternal life. Give me a fish and I eat for a day – redeem me from sin and I live forever. Out of these two, which is the greatest gift?

² Acts 2ff

No doubt, the gifts of this life are great, yet the gifts of the Lord for eternal life are far, far better. He does not call us to pick one or the other, but showers both upon us. Do not stop with the gifts for this life alone, for the Lord desires to give us so much more. Daily bread is a great blessing, but to focus solely on it and reject forgiveness is to say with Simon: **“Go away from me.”** Those who persist in this error will stand before Him on Judgment Day only to hear Him say: *“Go away from Me, all you evildoers!”* (Luke 13:27).

Dear friends, we have been blessed, and we are honoured. Jesus honours us with His presence, and the Almighty God comes to us with His free gifts. What joy it is to be people of God! He showers upon us gifts for this life and for eternity.

What a joy to have! The Lord not only gives us our daily bread for this life, but also the Living Bread for eternal life, and sanctifies us along the way. Where our sin once cried out: **“Go away from me,”** Jesus now says, **“Stop being afraid.”** *“I am with you always,”* and if the Lord does not depart, then heaven is ours for all eternity. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Father in heaven, we who are Your children by grace pray that Your kingdom may come. We thank and praise You that You have revealed Jesus as Lord and Christ, and as King for evermore. We pray that His rule may be established from sea to sea and from the rising to the setting of the sun, that every nation, people, and tribe may confess that He is Lord, to Your glory. We thank You that, though He is King of kings, He humbled Himself and became our servant, so that He might be our Saviour, able to save all who come to You through Him.

Gracious Father, You do not enjoy seeing sinners die, but would rather see them turn from their sinning and live. Therefore spread the Gospel, and extend Your kingdom among all nations on earth. Cause the mighty to bow before Jesus their Lord, and teach all people to know that there is healing and saving power only in Him.

Although we rejoice that Your kingdom is already with us, make it come with fresh power and new blessing into our lives. Make the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts, and move us to thankfulness and praise. Give us increased trust in Your Word and obedience to Your commandments. Give us grace to be humble, merciful, kind, and forgiving. Make Christ’s message in all its richness live in our hearts and direct all we do and say. Grant that we, redeemed in body and spirit, may be dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Lead us to rejoice in Your grace, and to give thanks for Your mercy day by day.

We pray for Your Church on earth. Keep it from weakness and error, from unfaithful shepherds and false teachers. Protect us from heresy and division. Defend us from the lies of Satan and from the schemes of godless men. Make Your Church secure against the powers of hell. Teach Your people to be patient in hope, firm in trust, and faithful in prayer, until that day comes when You send Your angels to gather Your own into Your everlasting kingdom.

Comfort those who are cast down. Give patience to the sick, peace to the anxious, strength to the weak, help to the needy, and forgiveness to the repentant. We especially remember those members who are in hospital. Remind them of Your never ending mercy, and comfort them in their need.

Look with mercy upon us O Lord, and bring a swift end to the current drought.

Pour out Your mercy on us all, and teach us to set our hearts on things above, where Christ our Lord lives and reigns. In His holy and precious name we pray. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Isaiah 6:1-13

¹ In the year when King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne. The train of His robe was filling the Temple. ² Seraphs were standing above Him. Each had six wings; each was using two wings to cover his face; each was using two wings to cover his legs; and each was using two wings to fly. ³ The one

was calling to the other and saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! His glory fills the whole earth!”

⁴ The voices of those who were calling out caused the foundations of the doorposts to shake, and the Temple was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then I said: “How terrible for me! For I have been brought to silence. For I am a man with unclean lips and live among people with unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me, with a glowing coal in his hand. He had used tongs to take it from the altar. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said: "Look! This has touched your lips. Your guilt has been taken away, and your sin has been atoned for."

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"

Then I said, "Here I am. Send me!"

⁹ He said: "Go and tell this people: 'Keep on listening but do not understand, and keep on seeing but do not perceive!'" ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people insensitive, make their ears dull and seal their eyes shut, that they may not see with their eyes or hear with their ears and that their hearts may not understand, so that they should not turn back and find healing for themselves!"

¹¹ Then I said, "How long, O Lord?"

He replied: "Until the cities lie desolate with no inhabitants, the houses are without people and the ground is devastated and deserted, ¹² until the LORD completely removes the people far away, and there is a large abandoned area in the middle of the land. ¹³ Even if a tenth remains in the land, it will again serve as firewood. As the terebinth and the oak tree leave a stump when they are cut down, so a holy seed will be the stump of the land."

1 Corinthians 14:12-20

¹² So, since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, you too should try to excel in them that the church may be edified. ¹³ Therefore, let the person who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret! ¹⁴ For, if I pray in a tongue, my spirit is praying, but my mind is not productive. ¹⁵ What is the conclusion then? I shall pray with my spirit and shall also pray with my mind. I shall sing with my spirit and shall also sing with my mind. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you praise God only with your spirit, how can the person who occupies the place of an uninformed person say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you indeed are giving thanks well, but the other person is not edified. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all, ¹⁹ but, in the church, I would rather say five words with my understanding, that I may also instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰ Fellow-Christians, stop being childish in your minds! Be infants in evil but be mature in your minds!

Luke 5:1-11

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gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Then Jesus got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. He sat down and began to teach the crowd from the boat. ⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He told Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch!"

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