

“Toiling Without Taking” **Luke 5:1-11**

Introduction: It would be by the lake of Gennesaret that Jesus would teach a multitude about the importance of evangelization. Using Simon Peter, and his boat as a pulpit, our Lord would demonstrate to everyone how to be a fisherman of men (Luke 5:10- *“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”*). Certainly, it is every believer’s obligation to win others to Christ! As we view the Scriptures, we see the importance of soul winning and discipleship. Notice:

1. Our Obligation to Go Mark 16:15- *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”*
2. Our Obligation to Get Luke 14:23- *“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled”*
3. Our Obligation to Grow
 - a. Ourselves II Peter 3:18- *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*
 - b. Others Matthew 28:20- *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Body: However, there was a problem with the efforts of Peter. He had toiled all night and did not catch even one fish (Luke 5:5). If fish represents sinners, then why was Peter not winning one soul to the Lord? Is not this the case with many a believer? They work effortlessly in the Lord’s field and do not see one conversion. Evidently, they are doing something wrong. However, in this passage our Lord reveals to us how to be a successful fisherman. Observe:

I. Peter’s Correct Method

- A. He had the Right Sea 5:1- *“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”*
 1. The sea represents a world full of sinners.
 2. Lake Gennesaret is also known as the Sea of Galilee and the sea of Tiberias. It was 3 ½ miles long and 2 ½ miles broad. (Powell)
 3. However, Peter was not catching any fish.
- B. He had the Right Ship 5:2- *“And saw two ships standing by the lake...”*
 1. The ship represents the church.
 2. However, Peter was not catching any fish.
- C. He had the Right Strategy 5:2- *“...but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets”*
 1. The net represents the casting of the gospel into the world.

2. "If nets are not washed and stretched out to dry, they rot and break." (Wiersbe)
 3. However, Peter was not catching any fish.
- D. He had the Right Site 5:3- *"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"*
1. The shallow water is the place where the fish were at night. This represents Peter going to where sinners were.
 2. However, Peter was not catching any fish.
- E. He had the Right Service 5:5- *"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"*
1. Working all night signifies that Peter was busy about the Lord's business in His harvest.
 2. However, Peter was not catching any fish.
- II. Peter's Compassionate Master (Notice what we need in order to catch fish.)
- A. The Right Person 5:3- *"And he entered into one of the ships..."*
1. There are other ships, but we need God to get into our ship!
 2. John 15:5- *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"*
- B. The Right Praying 5:3- *"...and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land..."*
- C. The Right Place 5:4- *"Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep..."*
1. 5:3- *"thrust out a little from the land"*
 2. 5:4- *"Launch out into the deep"*
 3. "If Peter had not obeyed the first seemingly insignificant command, he would never have participated in a miracle." (Wiersbe)
- D. The Right Persuasion 5:4- *"...and let down your nets for a draught"*
1. Our Doubting 5:5- *"And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing..."*
 - a. "It was a well-known fact that, in the Sea of Galilee, you caught fish at night in the shallow water, not in the daytime in the deep water." (Wiersbe)
 - b. Matthew 13:58- *"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief"*
 2. Our Doing 5:5- *"...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net"*
 - a. "What Jesus asked Peter to do was contrary to all of his training and experience, but Peter obeyed." (Wiersbe)
 - b. "The key was his faith in the Word of God" (Wiersbe)
 - c. "Peter was willing to submit to the authority of Jesus, even though he did not understand all that the Lord was

doing. And remember, a great crowd was watching from the shore.” (Wiersbe)

- d. Isaiah 55:11- *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”*
- E. The Right Performance 5:6- *“And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake”*
- F. The Right Partners 5:7- *“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”*
 1. “Fishermen must be willing to work together (they used nets, not hooks) and help one another.” (Wiersbe)
 2. I Corinthians 3:9- *“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building”*
 3. II Corinthians 6:1- *“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain”*
 4. III John 1:8- *“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth”*
 5. “The man who tries to do everything himself deserves to fall overboard! God gave Eve to Adam; Aaron to Moses; disciples to Jesus; Silas to Paul; John Mark to Simon Peter...” (Powell)

III. Peter's Convicted Manhood

- A. The Size of the Snatch
 1. 5:4- *“let down your nets”*
 2. 5:5- *“I will let down the net”*
- B. The Sinking of the Ship 5:7- *“...And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink”*
- C. The Sorrow of the Sinful 5:8- *“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord”*
 1. “There must always be hope for the fisherman who considers himself useless.” (Powell)
 2. “A man is seldom as tall as when he kneels before his maker.” (Powell)
 3. “Simon Peter did catch men. Remember how well he did on the Day of Pentecost—the Lord's answer to Peter is certainly significant. Three thousand souls came to Christ after his first sermon! Peter was fishing according to God's instructions.” (McGee)
- D. The Surprise of the Successful 5:9- *“For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken”*
- E. The Sending of the Servants 5:10- *“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”* (God had supplied the financial needs, the fish, for their full-time Christian service.)

F. The Surrender of the Sailors 5:11- *“And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him”*

Conclusion: We may learn many lessons from this miraculous draught of fishes. First, we need to realize that many times we are laboring without the Lord. Secondly, we need to get the Master into our ship (the church) and then we will be successful. Finally, there is a need to repent over our unbelief and failures.