

Bible Study: Luke 5:1-11

“Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch”



Read Luke 5:1-11

The story opens with Jesus beside Lake Gennesaret, which is another name for the Sea of Galilee. He borrows a boat on the lakeshore that belongs to a fisherman named Simon. From there he teaches crowds of people. They will not leave him alone, for they want to hear "the word of God." Clearly the main figure on the scene, apart from Jesus himself, is Simon Peter. It is his boat that Jesus uses.

As the story unfolds, Jesus asks Simon to go out to the deep water and to put down the nets for a catch. Simon questions Jesus' command but eventually takes his nets back out. There is a great catch of fish; it is so great that others have to help bring the nets ashore; and the story ends with Jesus' recruiting Simon and the others as disciples. "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people" Jesus said. When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him."



This is a story of transformation. How is Simon's life transformed?

What does the phrase 'Launch out into the deep' mean for you?

In Luke Jesus refers to him as Simon, but we know that later on Simon is referred to as Simon Peter, or Peter. The name Peter means 'rock' and in Matthew 16:18 Jesus says to Peter "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." Jesus renames Simon or adds to his name as a way of commissioning him for the task that was ahead.

How does this story help us understand the role of the church in God's mission?

How do we understand what it means to be a missionary?



The term *missio dei* meaning the 'mission of God' can be traced back to Augustine but in the modern era, but began to be fleshed out by Karl Barth in 1932 and Hartenstein used it to differentiate from the *missio ecclesia* the 'mission of the church'. At the International Mission Council of 1952 in Germany, the church found itself in a difficult place with missionaries recently being expelled from China. The world had changed post world war 2 and a new way of talking about mission and mission work developed. There were two significant changes. Firstly, that mission is first and foremost God's mission. Secondly, that God's mission is defined by God's nature. God is a sending God (John 3:16).



Discuss the statement: "It's not that the Church has a mission but that the mission has a Church"

How does this statement impact how we understand the role of the church in the activity of God?



We're told in Luke 5 that when Simon let down his nets, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so they began to sink. What a wonderful image. So many people caught up in the nets of God's love and grace that the church is in danger of sinking! And we're given the impression that there are more fish in the sea, just waiting to be caught.

In this image we get a taste of the generosity of God and just how wide God's nets are to include everyone – all shapes and sizes and backgrounds and pasts.

In this image we see creation being gathered into God's grace and being brought into the kingdom of God. God is bringing to completion all that God began in the act of creation.

In this image we see that God's mission is bigger than the church. We are *part* of God's mission to the world but not the entirety of God's work in the world.



Discuss these statements



This story of the great catch is more than just the account of a great catch. It is not just about how to fish, for it is not the fish that are "hooked" but the fishermen, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and their partners James and John. This is about Jesus making disciples. From this point on, Luke informs us, these men left their jobs as fishermen and followed Jesus wherever He went. We get a clear picture here that discipleship, following Jesus, is meant to be transforming, it disrupts our lives, it takes us in a new direction, it costs us something. Are we courageous enough to pray 'God what do you want me to do today?' Instead of 'God bless my day'.



What image of discipleship are we shown here?



In this vision of mission the focus is on who God is. God is a missionary God. God the Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit, and the Spirit sends the disciples, the church into the world. One of the activities of God, is to 'send'. God send people out into the world to do God's work.

Before the movie begins there is usually about half an hour of trailers or previews for upcoming movies. Trailers are tasters, short film versions of the soon-to-be-released feature, and they usually include the best special effects or the funniest scenes or the most romantic moments. So whenever the trailer is played, you hear people turning to each other saying, 'I want to see that movie'.

The church is to be like a trailer for the kingdom of God, a taster, with all the best bits on full display. If it does its job well, people will see what it does and say, 'I want to see the world they come from.' The church is to create a foretaste of the kingdom to come. This is what is called a **proleptic existence**. We plant a seed before we believe in a God who will grow that seed into a plant. As Christians we live in the future hope that we do not fully see.



How do we live in future hope?