

Luke 5:4-11

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[0 : 00] Peter must be one of the most well-known personalities in the whole of the Bible. And you look at his life later on in Acts, and you look at his confidence.

In Acts chapter 2, for example, in the day of Pentecost, he rises up and he speaks to a crowd of 3,000 people. It's not everyone that can speak to a crowd of 3,000 people. With such confidence and boldness, and with such power, the Lord spoke through him, it's with such power that 3,000 people became believers.

On that one day we think, well, what a powerful preacher of the word. That's incredible. And it's not just that. As you go on, as he's arrested, later on chapter 3 in Acts, he has to stand in front of the Sanhedrin against.

Not everyone that can stand in front of such an august group of men. They're all criticizing you, they're all judging you, they're all accusing you of one thing or another. And Peter is able to stand in the confidence of the Holy Spirit.

He's able to speak to them in confidence. Then chapter 12, we saw this. We looked at chapter 12, I think about a month, six weeks ago, when we saw how bold Peter was to be taken to prison, and he slept in prison as, even though his life was due to be taken away from him, the next day he was to be executed, the next day.

[1 : 22] And in chapter 15, again, Peter, this time the context of the church, of church leadership, when a question arose about how the new Christians from the Gentile world were to behave, it was Peter that stood up and started the discussion, a confident church leader.

He's also a confident theologian. If you read through his writings in 1 and 2 Peter, at the end of the Bible, you'll find a man there who seems to know so much, and seems to have so much passion about the Lord, he's able to look into the future and able to know for sure that God is going to take him to be with himself in heaven.

He's able to encourage the people who he's writing so much by reminding them that the story is not finished. Even death itself is not the end, because God has prepared an inheritance for us that cannot be corrupted, that no one can take away from us.

But Peter was also a transparent person. You know what a transparent person is? A person who wears his heart on his sleeve. You always know, what you see is what you get. They don't try and hide anything about themselves.

He's not a closed person. You see all the cracks in Peter, as well as all the good things. There was one time when Paul had to confront him, because he had gone wrong on one occasion.

[2 : 46] You remember how, when he was walking on the water, or trying to walk on the water with Jesus, how he took his eyes off Jesus, and began to sink into the lake of Galilee, and Jesus had to reach out and pull him up.

You remember that, of course, the most notable occasion, when Peter denied that he ever knew Jesus, and had to go through the shame, and the horror, and the guilt, of having let his Lord down so much.

And that's why we can identify with Peter so much. That's why we see in Peter, a Christian who fails constantly and regularly, a Christian who does let his Lord down, and yet, a Christian with whom the Lord persists.

God is not finished with Peter. Even although Peter falls and fails, and lets his Lord down, Jesus continues with him, and he will continue with us as well. That's what grace is all about.

That's what the grace of God is all about. It's not going to be overcome by our sin, but it's going to overcome our sin, and last with us, and stand with us, as in Jesus, the friend who sticks closer, than a brother.

[3 : 53] Nevertheless, Peter was a great man, even despite all the cracks, because God had made him great. That's the only answer. You might expect a great man like Peter, who did so much for the Lord, and who was such a leader, and such a theologian, to have been brought up in a home, where he'd been educated by the rabbis.

He would have expected him, maybe to go to university, and to have a formal education, and to have great achievements, perhaps like the Apostle Paul. But that wasn't Peter's story at all. Peter was a nobody.

Now, of course, God gives everyone different gifts. Some people he gives academic gifts. Some people he gives practical gifts. But this man, this is a testimony. Peter is a testimony, of what God can do, with someone who's totally uneducated, and who's unschooled.

He's an ordinary fisherman. And yet God transforms him, by working in his life, he transforms him, into someone who was, a tremendous leader.

See, there's no telling, what God is going to do, with someone. You can't ever say about someone, oh well that person, doesn't have much ability. He'll never go far. Well, that may be true, in professional life.

[5 : 04] But it's not true, with the gospel at all. God can do anything, with a person, who learns obedience, and who lives in faith. And that's, what I want us to see, in this passage.

It's how Peter's faith, came to life. There's only one way, in which a person's faith, comes to life. And that is, when God brings it to life. And he does that. Which of us is here, as a Christian this morning, whose faith, hasn't been brought to life, by the working, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the, most interesting questions, that we ask, when we're looking at the disciples, is, at what point, did they become, real true believers? When did they become converted? When were they converted? Some people say, well it must have been, towards the beginning, of Jesus' ministry. Some people suggest, that it was in the middle, of Jesus' ministry. And some people suggest, it was the end, of Jesus' ministry. We actually, just don't know, when the disciples, became believers. I believe that Peter, certainly after he, after this passage here, in Luke chapter 5, he was a follower, of Jesus.

For them, it was a life, of continual discovery. I want us to see, today, that great things, very often, begin, with small beginnings. Great people, begin with, small beginnings.

[6 : 21] And this is, a small beginning. You might look at Peter, and say, I could never, ever be a person, like that. I could never, be a church leader, like that. I could never, stand up for the Lord. Well if somebody, had told Peter, that day, as he stood, on the shore, of the lake of Galilee, as an ordinary fisherman, that one day, he would be standing, in Jerusalem, preaching, to 3,000 people, he'd probably have run a mile.

You see, this is what God can do. He can totally, transform a person. And we're here today, because we believe, in the transforming, changing power, of the Lord, in the gospel.

That's what I want us to see, this morning. I want us also to see, that it is, a discovery. This is a constant, there's an interaction, going on, in which Peter, on the one hand, discovers, the Lord Jesus, for who he is.

And at the same time, as he acts, Jesus, faith, is growing, because Jesus, is bringing it, to life. And so there's this, interaction, between Peter's discovery, of who Jesus is, and his faith, and his commitment, and his obedience.

You see, people talk, in the 21st century, about someone, who has faith. But that's not good enough, to talk about, just having faith. You've got to have faith, in someone.

[7 : 38] And the Bible, the Bible insists, Jesus insists, that there is no such thing, as real, true, genuine faith, unless it is rooted, and unless it discovers, who Jesus is.

And that's what we're seeing, happening in Peter's life. He's discovering, who Jesus is, as he discovers, his faith is resting, and growing, and developing, and transforming, all the time, as Jesus is leading him, bit by bit.

Let's look first of all, at what Peter discovered, about Jesus. Because that is the, all important key element, in what faith is all about. Faith has to rest, in Jesus.

If your faith, doesn't rest in Jesus, and in him, alone this morning, then your faith, isn't real. I don't want to insult you. But Jesus insists, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And I have to be truthful, and say to you, you're on the wrong road. If your faith, does not rest, in Jesus, and in him, alone. And that's what Peter, came to discover.

[8 : 46] Now it's only by looking at Jesus, and by learning about him, that our faith, can rest, in him. It had a very, innocuous beginning. Jesus of Nazareth, came to the shore, where Peter was.

He was mending his nets. He had spent all night, fishing, and had no success, whatsoever. I suppose that's the way, that very often, things were. If you were a fisherman, sometimes you had a successful evening, you would fish all night.

In the morning, you would put, sometimes you'd pull the boat, into shore, and the boat would be full of fish. Other times, like on this occasion, there would be hardly anything. And on this occasion, there was nothing, at all.

And it was in the middle, of all this frustration, that Jesus, spoke first of all, to Simon Peter, and asked him, if he could use his boat, to go out a little bit, from the shore, he said to him.

He sat down, and taught the people, from the boat. Use that as a kind of, proof it, if you like, in order to make, a little safe distance, between himself, and the people. There was a whole crowd, of people who were sitting, riveted, listening to every word, hanging on every word, because that's the kind of, preacher that Jesus was.

[9 : 53] You simply couldn't, be bored, bored, with his preaching. He was riveting. And it was afterwards, after he had stopped, and after the crowd, had gone home, that he's, carried on with Peter.

He continued, with Peter. And he said to Peter, put out into the deep water, and let down the nets, for a catch. Now what I want you, to notice here, is not simply, the fact that Jesus, was in control. The main point, of this passage, of course, is that Jesus, is in control, of where the fish are. He is a sovereign Lord, he is sovereign, over his creation. That's the main thing, that Peter discovered, we'll see that in a few moments time.

But I want you to notice, that that's not the only thing, that Jesus, that Peter discovers. He discovers, the personality, as well as the power, of Jesus.

And the personality, is one which reaches out, into Peter's existence, and into, into his world. It is a person, Jesus is a person, who's not content, with finishing, as soon as, the service is finished.

[11 : 04] You see, there was this great service, on the seashore. There was a whole crowd of people, Jesus preached to them, and then the people, were quite happy, to just go back, to their own homes.

I don't know what effect, Jesus preaching had on them, ultimately. I suppose it had an effect, an ultimate effect, on some of them. But I'm sure, like, great many people, they were content, to go to their own homes.

But Jesus wasn't content, to finish things, at that point. He wasn't content, to go home. He entered, into Peter's life, including, his boat, including his net, including his work, including the frustration, of what it was, to be a fisherman, at that time.

So that when Jesus said, let down the mess, for a catch, Simon answered, in exasperation, Master, we've worked hard, all night, and haven't caught anything. But Jesus, is not content, to just simply, ignore Peter's world.

In fact, if Peter is going to come to faith, with Jesus, he's going to have to discover, that Jesus, is the constant companion. The person, Jesus is the Jesus, who goes out with us, on a Sunday morning, after church, into Monday morning, into Tuesday, and all the frustrations, that life brings, and life involves.

[12 : 26] One of the wonderful things, about this passage, is that Jesus, is saying to Peter, Peter, I know, all about your frustration. I know, all about the kind of world, that you live in.

I know, how disappointed you are, having worked all night, and that is part of your life. Your life is very often, filled with frustration, and disappointment, and sadness. But Jesus, comes with us, into that sadness, and he says, not only do I know about it, but I'm able to make, the difference.

And that's what it means, to have a personal relationship, with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me ask you this question, does your knowledge, of Jesus finish, the moment you walk, out that door? Are you content? Are you quite happy? Just come to church, for an hour, listen, and then just like the crowd, just be content, to go away home again. Well that's not, what faith is all about. Faith is taking Jesus, into your world.

Perhaps we find it easy, to believe today, that God is, is controller, of the whole world. Yes, after all, it makes sense, it's logical to think, that if God created the universe, therefore he must be, in control of the universe.

[13 : 39] But here, Jesus is saying, that the whole world, is made up, of thousands, and thousands, of little worlds, and one of them, is yours, your little world, your friends, your family, your home, your work, your profession.

Your sickness, your disappointments, your frustrations. Are we ready, today, to take him, and to accept him, into, our, little worlds.

Because that's the world, we live in. Jesus is saying to Peter, I know Peter, I know. And he says, to us, I know.

Perhaps, some of us, are deeply frustrated, about something, this morning. Just like Peter was. And perhaps, we've made, the so common mistake, that so many Christians, make, we've just, lost sight of, bringing that to Jesus.

There's another, wonderful passage, in Mark, the beginning of Mark's gospel, where Peter's mother-in-law, is ill. She's in bed, with a fever. And they told, there's this little verse, it's just, this all important verse, they told, Jesus, about her.

[14 : 49] Because Jesus was concerned, about Peter's home, and his family, and his situation. Have you brought, your problems, to Jesus, this morning?

Have you brought, your world, to Jesus? Sometimes we lose sleep, over the problems, that we have. And we do that, rather, than take it to the Lord, in prayer. I'm not saying, that all these problems, are going to be solved overnight.

They're not. But it's one of the great, blessings of the gospel, to know, that Jesus, God, is intimately concerned, with our world.

But then, the second thing, of course, that Peter discovered, on this occasion, was the lordship of Jesus, over his creation. Now, I suppose, it could have been, a coincidence.

It could have been, a coincidence. You're probably, really shocked, to hear me saying that. But what I'm saying is, that, it's not a miracle. This is not, a miracle as such. A miracle was, for example, when Jesus walked, on top of the water.

[15 : 53] A miracle is where, if you like, the norms, or the patterns of nature, are changed, in order to accommodate, God's purposes. Like, for example, the surface tension, of the water, was made solid, in order to, accommodate Jesus' weight.

That's a miracle. This is not a miracle. And yet, yet, even so, it is quite obvious, that Jesus, is in control.

Because it's at the precise moment, that Jesus commands Peter, to let down his nets, it could not have been, a coincidence. And at that precise moment, I suppose it's like saying, the time, when he sent Peter, to fish, in the lake of Galilee.

And for the fish, that he was to catch, would have a two drachma coin, in its mouth, a four drachma coin, in its mouth. I suppose, it was possible, by the laws of averages, there was always, a one in ten million chance, that there could have been, a fish with a, but it was, that's the point is, that it's quite obvious, that Jesus, by knowing, precisely, where the shore, is at precisely, the right time, that he proves, beyond any doubt, whatsoever, as far as Peter is concerned, that Jesus, is the Lord.

And it's at that moment, that Peter recognizes, when Peter recognizes, the Lordship of Jesus, that it, it effects, it puts into effect, a life changing experience, because when he saw, the number of fish, that he all of a sudden, caught, after a whole evening, catching nothing, that he ran, and he fell down, at Jesus, at Jesus feet, and said, go away from me Lord, I am a sinful man.

[17 : 43] What he discovered there, was something similar, to what Isaiah discovered, the time that, in Isaiah 6, when he saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and his, the train of his robe, filled the temple.

It's one thing to know, that there is a God, it's another, it's one thing to believe, that there is a God, it's another thing altogether, to be confronted, by the Lord, ourselves, in the flesh.

This is not the first time, that Peter, had seen Jesus, and yet, but this is the first time, that it actually sunk in, the penny, had dropped. You know, there are great moments, of discovery, in human existence, and human history, as the great scientific discoveries, of the last hundred, two hundred years, the discovery of penicillin, for example, the discovery of chloroform, by James Young Simpson, and all these people, have been involved, in great moments, of discovery, and you can imagine, you have to, try and enter into their world, and try and imagine, what it must be like, to all of a sudden, when the penny drops, when the light dawns, and when these people, have just discovered, something absolutely, life changing, that the world, is never ever, going to be the same

again, what a difference, it must have made, to the way they felt, it must have made a difference, to the way, the whole attitude in life, how much more so, when someone discovers, who Jesus is, and there are a great number, of people today, and as there have been, in every age, who have said, yes I believe in Jesus, but you've never yet, discovered, what that really means, what it means, that Jesus is God, because the moment, you discover that, you discover like Jesus, like Peter, that you are a sinful person,

Isaiah discovered that, when he looked at, when he saw the Lord, high and lifted up, he discovered, that his sinfulness, came to the surface, and he said, woe is me, I am undone, I have a man, of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people, of unclean lips, and my eyes, have seen, the Lord, that was a moment, that we could possibly call, the moment also, of worship, when Peter fell, and he fell, on his knees, and, he, what he said there, was I suppose, a statement of worship, worship, worship is something, that we do, when we discover, the greatness, and the wonder, of God, in Jesus, worship is something, that we are doing, today I hope, but we will never, ever, ever, worship truly, unless God, means everything to us, and God will never mean, everything to us, until we come to this point, of discovery, that Jesus, is the son of God, himself, have you come to that, have you come to that discovery, for yourself, but then,

I want to move on, and see that it leads to, a life of obedience, that this discovery, led to a life, of obedience, the, this wasn't the first time, when, that, when, Jesus, told Simon, don't be afraid, from now on, you will catch men, that wasn't the first order, or command, that Jesus, gave to Peter, you'll notice, that the passage, is full, of commands, that Jesus gives to Peter, first of all, told him, to put out a little, from the shore, that was just, just, a little command, that he gave him, Peter did it, second command, was to put out a lot, from the shore, put out into deep water, the third command, is, that, to follow me, for I will make you, fishers, of men, and each occasion, each command, stretches Peter, and requires, faith, from Peter, a greater, measure of faith, but God is, is bringing that faith, to life, in Peter, and creating, in Peter, a follower, of the Lord Jesus Christ, faith, has to be stretched, and the only way, that that can happen, is for it to be tested, and for our obedience, all the time, to be tested, master, we've worked hard, all night, and haven't caught anything, faith requires, us obeying Jesus, against all the odds, when things, haven't looked good, when things, don't appear, to look good, when things, in the ordinary, course of life, will not, give us, what we're expecting, when God tells us, put down your nets, into the deep, faith says,

[22 : 34] I will do it, because, you, say so, faith is taking God, at his word, alone, we have to learn, more and more, to just believe, and to take, God, at his word, I often wonder, why, why, this, this, passage took place, why this test, why Peter was tested, in this way, but when you look, at the life, that Peter had to, the calling, that God was, was bringing him into, life in which he was, to go, into various parts, of the world, and to preach the gospel, he would be met, with all kinds, of obstacles, and difficulties, and those, similar frustrations, would come his way again, the kind of frustration, which many, people, who are working, for the Lord, have, in places, where, there doesn't appear, to be, much success, where, despite all, the work, that's gone into you, think of places, in the world, where missionaries, have been, for ages, and ages, we talked about that, last week, where people, haven't seen, anybody, coming to faith, in Jesus, and they might say, master, we have worked hard, all night, and haven't caught, anything, and yet,

God is saying to them, the success, is mine, the fruit, will be mine, you carry on, you keep on, obeying me, you keep on doing, what I am asking you, and commanding you, to do, we need to pray, today, for those, who are involved, in the work of ministry, or missionary work, in all different parts, of the world, people who are finding it hard, people who are saying, master, we've worked, all night, and haven't caught, anything, when we're praying, perhaps, for somebody, who isn't a Christian, praying for them, to be converted, perhaps for years, and years, and years, and years, you feel like, saying this, master, lord, I've been praying, for this people, for this person, for so many years, and nothing seems, to be happening, in their life, you keep on, carry on, I've been witnessing, to this person, I've been trying, to live a consistent, Christian life, for so many years, master, I've worked hard, so hard, and haven't caught, anything, but because you say so, I will carry on, Jesus is teaching, Peter, that the Christian life, the life of faith, this life, where we have to, a life of persistence, life, where we mustn't give up, we have to carry on, working, for, the Lord, last thing, I want us to notice, about this passage, is that as, we see, Simon, beginning, a life, which will, take him into, all kinds of, unknown situations, we're reminded, of this, tremendous truth, that God can do, anything, with a man, or a woman, who bows, in obedience, to him, Peter, must

have been, the most unlikely, candidate, to be a church leader, and a disciple, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet, when he was taken, to the Sanhedrin, when he spoke, to the Sanhedrin, in Acts chapter 4, the one thing, that all these elders, noticed about this disciple, these disciples, was this, they had been, with Jesus,

I said before, that God gives us gifts, every one of us, he gives us, talents, and abilities, gives us qualities, some, some of us are, some of us are good, at one thing, other people are good, at another, yet, when it comes, to a life of service, to the Lord Jesus, what really matters, above everything else, is the person, who bows, in worshipful, humble obedience, to his Lord, God can do anything, with a man, or a woman, who bows, in obedience, and faith, they had been, with Jesus, they took note, that they had been, with Jesus, may our lives today, be lives, in which we are, with Jesus, in which we live, with him, every day, in which he is, our Lord, and we are, his servants, let's bow our heads, in prayer, to our child, and Wes poe, to one person, as mijn o■ sly■ electr Beckstun, who is ■■ artist, the water, this DOWNS, when the sun comes, to the iron doors, and we are, after his servant, in which we do, willing, or life, to one person, to kill him,