

Luke 5:1-11 *One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

It's interesting, isn't it, that Jesus targeted fishermen to become His first disciples? Maybe He chose these men because they had to be **persistent** people to make a living chasing those elusive critters. Maybe He chose them because they had to be **innovative** or open to new ways or new techniques to increase their yield, as the old ways became outmoded and the old holes became fished out. In fact, Peter proved his receptiveness to new ideas when He went against a tried and true fishing fact that you can't fish at daylight, because the fish will see the nets. Peter flew in the face of that tradition and listened to his Lord. He gave it a try. He was open to a new idea and it paid off. The Lord blessed his efforts, even though it went against conventional wisdom.

Maybe it was a life lesson for Peter. Maybe Peter was being given permission to be creative in his new calling – fishing for men. Maybe the Lord was showing Peter that it was OK to do this new kind of fishing in a new kind of way. Remember it was Peter who received the vision that the Gospel wasn't just for the Jews, but for the Gentiles too! Talk about innovative! That was revolutionary! And it didn't throw him for a loop. He dealt with it and he went with it and it changed the church forever. Maybe it goes back to the permission the Lord gave him at the Sea of Galilee to do what he had always done...in a different way. Now he could do the same thing with the Gospel.

Times have changed. But some things haven't changed. The Gospel hasn't changed and people's need to hear the Gospel hasn't changed. We just need to make sure that we are fishing where the fish are. That might mean flying in the face of tradition, abandoning old fished out fishing holes and looking for fresh, unfished holes. It might mean abandoning old worn out methods of fishing and trying creative new approaches.

Our Lutheran schools are doing just that. For the most part in the PSD we are fishing in areas, where the fish are teeming. And they are hungry. Some are so eager they are practically jumping into the boat. We have a spectacular mission field – both home and foreign -- right in the halls of our schools! What an opportunity the Lord is providing for us and what a tool He has given us: our Lutheran schools!

Why are we here? What is the bottom line? Isn't the bottom line to do what we can to get our students across the finish line? Our reason for being and our reason for being in Lutheran schools is yes, to provide an excellent education, but more importantly to win souls for Christ and to keep souls in Christ. Isn't that what our Lutheran schools are all about? That's why it is so important to avoid Mission Drift in our schools and keep the main thing the main thing. Jesus needs to be the main thing in our academics, in our athletics, and in our arts.

This may be the only opportunity that some of these young people will ever have to hear the Good News and to feel the love of Jesus. And to see their Savior. And they will be seeing Jesus through us. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our students would be able to say about us what the folks in Acts 4:13 said about Peter and John: *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that **these men had been with Jesus.**"*? Friends, you have been with Jesus. Not all of our students have been there just yet. Make it your goal that your students can see that you have been with Jesus. If you wear Jesus every day and share Jesus in every way, not only will your students benefit as the Spirit works in their hearts, but you will benefit as well: your own faith will grow. The amazing thing about sharing our faith is that when we do, we don't divide it, we double it. We have the privilege to be part of a very exciting ministry, a ministry where we can see the Lord's blessings daily!

It's OK to fish new holes with new methods. The Lord has given us permission to be innovative and creative in the way we fish. Such is the ministry in our Lutheran schools. Innovative and creative! He wants us to be persistent and He wants us to fish where the fish are. Friends, the fish are here! We've got the best bait in the world – the Gospel! We've got the Lord's promise of great blessings on our efforts! More than we could ever dream or imagine. The cool thing is that when we catch these fish, they don't die; they get to live forever. My friends, the fishing is gonna be good, so let's go fishing. Amen.

Dear Jesus,

You have given us the Great Commission to go to the world with Your Word, to be fishers of men and women and children. You have saved us the trouble of travel and brought the world to us in our PSD Lutheran schools. Help us to see the halls and the classrooms of our schools as our mission field. May we come to the understanding that if our world, our student body, is going to learn about You, they are going to have to see You in us and through us. May we wear You and share You daily. May we reflect the love that You have shown to us onto our students. Use us, Lord, to be fishers of people. Bless our efforts in Jesus' name. Amen.

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