

GOD PURSUES FRUSTRATED PEOPLE

SERMON FOR TODAY: 17th, SEPTEMBER 2023 15th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

TEXT: LUKE 5:1-11

¹ So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ² and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. ³ Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. ⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at your word I will let down the net." ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. (NKJV).

Introduction

Welcome to today's sermon which is developed from Luke's Gospel on how our faith and action on God's Word can transform our situations. According to Luke's story, when God pursues us in our frustration, four things happen. He shows us how great his power is, how great is our need for His pardon, how crucial it is to adopt His purpose and how vital it is to value him above everything else. We sometimes become hopelessly unproductive and unsuccessful at something. As a result, we get extremely exhausted, disappointed, frustrated and even guilty when we fail to achieve our expectations. Simon and his counterparts had been fishing throughout the night in vain. When Jesus comes they are frustrated, tired, and weary. A long and cold night of fishing has proven very unfruitful. They've caught absolutely nothing. In the morning when Jesus shows up, the fishermen in the story are washing their nets. He requests to use one of the boats that belongs to Simon after which He asks him to launch the boat into the deep and let down the nets. Peter initially objects, but finally obeys and follows the instructions. They catch a great number of fish that their net was breaking. Let us look at what happens when God pursues a frustrated person.

What happens when God pursues a frustrated person?

1. He convinces us of His power

Jesus is able to do in seconds what the professional fishermen were unable to accomplish all the night! The miraculous catch of fish produces in Peter a contrite spirit as he marvels at the power of Jesus. The catch is so amazing that the nets are breaking and the boats are sinking. In other words, the point is: this is an utterly unprecedented catch of fish in a situation that seemed hopelessly unproductive. I think just like many frustrated men today, the fishermen got themselves busy washing the nets because they didn't want to go home emptyhanded. They feared to accept and face the reality of starvation and poverty. There are many people in the community who are just washing nets. If you are one of them I have some good news for you today. Simon allowed Jesus to use his boat to teach the Word of God to the multitudes and the rest is history. Join Jesus in his business and your situation will never be the same again. It may be your business, your relationships, your family, your work and whatever it is. You have tried your best for long and it hasn't worked. Surrender it to Jesus today and allow him to come into your 'boat.' Just as Simon surrendered his boat to Jesus, surrender your situation and life to Jesus. To Jesus' instructions, Simon answered and said to Him, "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at your word I will let down the net.*" In spite of having

profound experience, skills and time (the whole night), they caught nothing until Jesus comes and speaks. Simon finally attests that at the word of the Master he would let down the net. At the word of Christ and in his presence *'let down your net today.'* We see the courage and faith of Simon to believe and act on the word of Christ releasing his power, drawing fish into a net. *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ."* (Rom. 10:17). Put aside your doubt, limitations and frustrations for you to see God's power at work in your life.

2. He convinces us of our sin and unworthiness

Peter is amused of the miraculous catch of fish, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man."* He sinks to his knees in awe before this supernatural figure, *"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."* In other words, he acknowledges his sinfulness in the presence of Christ who's able to forgive us all our sins. The miracle awakens him to his position before Christ and thus, this new awareness supersedes the miracle he had just witnessed. He's drawn to his need for Christ in his life more than the miracle. This awareness would prompt him to follow Christ after the miracle. Let us ask the Lord to give us a growing awareness of His presence as well as more sense of the depth of our need of him and his forgiveness. The same power that prompts Peter to fall at Jesus' knees in contrition and humble worship lifts him into God's service going forward. It is interesting in this story that Jesus gets into Peter's boat to call him out of the boat!

3. He commissions us to serve Him fully in His ministry

In verse 10b, Jesus says to Simon, *'Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.'* In other words, he would be fishing for men or gathering from among the nations a people for the kingdom of God. He would be gathering those who could trust in Christ alone for salvation. Fishing and shepherding are two enduring metaphors and images in the Christian ministry. Catching men and women for Christ is an endeavor that the church has struggled with in history. In the early church, God used persecution to disperse the Christians throughout the Middle East for gospel expansion. Sometimes God brings adversity into the lives of his people so that they might live to prove that Jesus is more precious to them than even their physical lives. Later, Jesus empowered the disciples to continue with his work on earth, *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8). He has commissioned us to continue with this vision until He comes the second time.

4. He causes us to value Him above everything else

We see Peter, James and John respond with hearts overflowing with the value of knowing Jesus. *"When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."* The text notes that Peter and his companions *"forsook all and followed Him"* (5:11). According to the story, the three left their boats, their nets and the miraculous fish to follow Jesus. This shows us what it means to follow Jesus. He is more valuable to us than everything including the miracles. Paul affirmed that he counted everything as loss compared to knowing Christ Jesus his Lord (Philippians 3:8). Let's leave behind everything and follow Christ.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we should know that the Lord doesn't always end our frustrations instantly. If you have something in your life that has caused you much frustration, I can guarantee you this: *The Lord is pursuing you in order to show you four things: How great his power is, how great is your need of His pardon, how vital it is to adopt His purpose, and how vital it is to value him above everything else.* Brothers and sisters, let's allow Jesus to come into our 'boats,' believe his word and follow him going forward. **Amen!**

PRAYER POINTS

1. That we gain the courage to invite Jesus in our lives
2. That we make a decision to follow Jesus, the miracle worker but not miracles

HAVE A BLESSED SUNDAY AND THE WEEK AHEAD

Rev. Capt. Dr. Danson K. Mwangi, General Secretary, Church Army Africa