

Followed

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Luke 5:4-11, 28-32

In the Apostle Peter's first encounter with Jesus, we learn of Peter's failed fishing expedition. Peter knew that lake like the back of his hand. He knew exactly where to catch the most fish. And yet after fishing all night long, he and his friends came up empty.

Like Peter, we are all going to experience failure in life. So how does following Jesus make a difference? In the rest of today's bible passage, we read how Jesus transformed Peter's failure into success. The real key to the success of that second fishing expedition was simply the fact that Jesus "got into the boat."

Nothing will make a bigger difference in your personal success in life than having Jesus in the boat with you. Peter's boat represented his business, his livelihood. And Peter allowed Jesus to use his business as a platform for ministry. What a great key for success for us today!

Perhaps you are feeling like a failure today. Join the club. Perhaps you are feeling like you've "been working all night and come up with an empty net." Welcome to the human race. What are the lessons of failure you need to heed today? Get Jesus in your boat, follow the instructions of Jesus, and obey Jesus in faith and without hesitation. [excerpts from Jim Lemmon]



Peter, James, and John (Luke 5:4-11)

- After Jesus was rejected in Nazareth, He traveled to Capernaum on the north side of the Sea of Galilee. Many people came to hear Him preach and teach about the Kingdom of God.
- So many people came, Jesus got into one of the boats on shore belonging to Simon and asked him to put off a little from shore so the people could hear Him speak.
- After Jesus finished speaking, He asked Simon to go out into deep water and let out his nets.
 - Simon explained they had worked all night and caught nothing. They were tired, (it's now the middle of the day), but if Jesus wanted to, they would set the nets under His authority.
- When the nets were lowered into the water, a great multitude of fish were caught! The nets were braking when they tried to lift them, so they called another boat to come and help.
 - Simon's partners in the other boat are identified as James and John.
 - The large catch of fish could not be explained in natural terms!
- For the first time, Luke refers to Simon Peter. Cephas (Aramaic for Peter) is the name Jesus called Simon when they first met (see John 1:42). Peter is the Greek name.
- Peter saw what Jesus had done; he fell down at Jesus' knees.
- Peter said he, a sinful man, did not deserve to be with Jesus.
- James and John (sons of Zebedee) were likewise astonished.
- **"Fear not; from now on you shall be fishers of men."**
 - Peter, James, and John – **"forsook all and followed Him."**

➤ **How do you respond to miracles?** Follow Him.





Levi (Luke 5:27-28)

- Levi (aka Matthew) wrote the Gospel of Matthew we think. God uses people in His ministry that society often looks down upon.
- Levi was a publican, a profession despised by the Jews since tax collectors worked for the Roman government.
 - Many tax collectors charged people more than the Romans required and pocketed the difference. (See Luke 3:12-13)
- Jesus ***“went forth”*** He did so with purpose. Jesus was calling the disciples who would follow Him, learn from Him and carry out the Gospel ministry after Jesus departed Earth.
- ***“and He said unto him, follow me”***
 - Clearly Levi knew who Jesus was and Jesus must have had prior knowledge or interactions with Levi. What did Jesus see in Levi that others didn’t? Faith?
- Levi understood he could not remain where he was, doing his job, and follow Christ too.
 - Levi ***“rose up and followed him”***. He gave up job security and prosperity for salvation.
- Jesus still calls people to follow Him.
 - Most Christ-followers are quite ordinary people. They have regular jobs and families.
 - They simply accept Jesus as Savior and Lord and give their lives to Him.
- **What does it cost to follow Jesus?**
- **Why do people value life on Earth more than eternal life?**

Division (Luke 3:15-18)

- People who meet Jesus want to introduce Him to their friends and family. Levi, being a man of some wealth, prepared a great feast for Jesus and his friends in his home.
- ***“great company of publicans and others”*** – Levi invited his business associates.
- The Pharisees and Scribes were not part to the dinner party, but they knew that Jesus and His disciples were there with ***“publicans and sinners”***
- A reasonable question – ***“Why do ye eat and drink with sinners.”***
 - Jesus took the initiative to answer. He compared himself to a physician who is not needed by those who are well (whole) but is needed by those who are sick.
- The Pharisees and scribes did not recognize their own need of Jesus and forgiveness of sin.
- ***“I came not to call the righteous”*** – Righteous means to be in a right relationship with God.
 - The Pharisees thought they were righteous, but in truth they were sinners.
- Jesus came to ***“call ... sinners to repentance”***. He did not excuse or discount their sin but neither did He allow their sin to keep Him away.
- Jesus loves everyone and wants them to acknowledge sin, repent, and trust Him.
- **What does it mean to follow Jesus?**
- **How can you share Jesus this week?**

Biblical Truth:

Jesus uses ordinary people with diverse backgrounds in His work.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” John 3:17

