

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: March 15, 2009

## What Are You Trying to Catch?

by Dan Trygg

"And Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.'<sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets *began* to break;<sup>7</sup> and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!'<sup>9</sup> For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;<sup>10</sup> and so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not fear, from now on you will be catching people.'<sup>11</sup> And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."

Luke 5:5-11

Luke inserts a brief account immediately after the story of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and Jesus' determination to go elsewhere to preach. This story is not included in any of the other gospels, and immediately precedes the healing of the leper, reported next by Mark and Luke (Mk. 1:40-45; Lk.5:12-15). It is helpful to ponder this episode, because it reveals something about the way in which the relationship between Jesus and His disciples grew and developed. **The on-again, off-again, nature of their commitment and involvement is no different than what many of us go through on our journey. It helps us be a little more tolerant of our own weaknesses** when we realize that even the closest of Jesus' disciples were full of inconsistencies and lapses of commitment. **Thankfully, we see Jesus' persistent efforts to seek them out and repeatedly call them to Himself.** The Bible says that He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:6), so **we can depend upon Him to deal with us as He did with them.**

**These disciples, Peter, Andrew, James and John, had been with Jesus since the early days** (Jn. 1:35-42). Though their fishing businesses were on the Sea of Galilee, **they had spent much of the previous year following Jesus in His ministry in Judea.** They must have had other people running their businesses, while **they were off with Jesus, attending His meetings, spending time with Him, and eventually being called by Him to help in the ministry work itself** (Jn. 2:1-4:2). They seemed to be rising in Jesus' estimation of them, and in their commitment to Him. By *this* time, Jesus had left Nazareth, and moved to Capernaum, probably even into the house of Simon Peter (Matt. 4:13; cf. Mk. 2:1). When John the Baptist was imprisoned, and Jesus returned to minister in Galilee, **it came as no surprise that Jesus would come by and call them to follow Him to become fishers of men** (Matt. 4:18-22). *They knew this meant that they had to leave their fishing nets in order to devote more time to being trained by Him.*

**They traveled with Him throughout Galilee, as He taught in their synagogues, and was healing all kinds of sick people** (Matt. 4:23). He preached the sermon on the mount, declaring to His followers the meaning of the Kingdom of God, and what it would mean to live for the King (Matt. 5-7). **The crowds were very large, and were amazed at His teaching** (Matt. 7:28-8:1). Then He dealt with the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, and healed Peter's mother-in-law, followed by the late night of ministry to the sick who came to Peter's door (Mk. 1:21-34). He rose early the next morning, and crept out of the house unnoticed, to secure some alone time with God. **People began to gather at the door of Peter's house, seeking for Jesus.** They found that He wasn't there, and began looking for Him, because they wanted Him to minister to their sick and demonized friends and family members. Peter and his companions (possibly including Andrew, James, John, Philip and Nathanael – Jn. 1:40-49) went searching for Him *outside* of town, and found Him. **When Peter informed Him that the people were looking for Him, Jesus declined to return to them, saying that it was necessary for Him to go elsewhere to preach** (Mk. 1:35-38). Mark records, "And He went out into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons" (Mk. 1:39).

**From the sequence of events, we would have assumed that His loyal disciples would have stuck with Him on this next stint of His journey, but apparently they did not.** It is clear from Mark 1:38, that He *invited* them, and *expected* that they would accompany Him, "Let *us* go somewhere else to the towns nearby, in order that I may preach there also; for that is what I came out for." The next verse, however, and Luke 4:44, only mention that *He* was going throughout the synagogues of Galilee, preaching and casting out demons. It doesn't specifically mention the involvement of these close disciples of Jesus. We just *assume* that they went along with Him. Maybe they did, at first. The record does not spell it all out for us. **The next time we see them, however, Jesus is preaching to a crowd of people, and they were not among those who had come out to hear Him, or to participate in the ministry.** Had there been some kind of rift that had occurred? Had they been frustrated with Jesus' choice to leave the popular interest of the people of Capernaum, and decided to stay home when He pushed on? Were they embarrassed because everyone was looking to *them* to set up a time to meet with Jesus, but He was unwilling to stay around?

Everyone had come to *Peter's* house the night before, and again in the morning, looking for Jesus. Peter had been *excited* at the crowd beating at his door that morning. He and the others got up quickly, dressed and went out to look for Jesus. They searched high and low until they found Him. They thought this was an important development that Jesus needed to know about and attend to. Along with Jesus' fame, overnight, people came to know who *Peter* was, as well. He was suddenly important because of his connection to Jesus. It *appeared* that he was the man to go to if you wanted to get to Jesus. Jesus was staying at *his* house, after all. He seemed to be among Jesus' closest friends. Jesus even healed his mother-in-law! Peter's fame and possible prestige came crashing to the ground, however, when Jesus decided to leave town. He couldn't be convinced to even minister to the people who came out that morning in search of Him. He brushed them all aside. He brushed *Peter* aside, and his expectations. The Lord did not consult with Peter, or ask his opinion. In fact, He abruptly changed course on them. ***Against all that made sense to them, Jesus said it was time to move on. He was not going to stay at Peter's house for another night. It was time to leave.*** He had heard from God, and that was it. It was time to move on.

Again, all of this is supposition, ...questionings. We don't know. Maybe all this emotional turmoil did not happen at all. ***Possibly they did just pack up and go with Jesus. Maybe when they got close to home again, they just took a day off to go earn a few extra shekels.*** I can tell you from experience, living by faith can be difficult. There are lean times, times when it *seems* as though there is not going to be enough. When you are supported by the offerings of others (cf. Lk. 8:1-3), one of the hardest things is that *you* do not control what people choose to give. Unless you become manipulative, you have to *trust* that God will guide them to give what is needful. ***It is easy to try to take matters into your own hands, to go back to other employment to try to get ahead. If that is not the Lord's will, then it is disobedience.*** It may be that when he returned to Capernaum, Peter could see that there was need to restock the cupboards, and get a little bit ahead. He and his other friends decided to take some time to work at fishing, hoping to get some stores laid up before going on the road again. We don't know. ***It is clear, however, that here, the choice to go back fishing was not what they should have been doing.*** When we do see the disciples next, they are *not* part of the ministry workers, nor had they even come out to hear Jesus. Instead, they were trying to make some money.

***It appears that Jesus intentionally brought the crowds along the beach to where they were working.*** They had been out fishing the night before. Their boats were pulled up to shore, and they were occupied with washing their nets, getting out any seaweed, sticks or other things that had gotten tangled in the netting. They did this so that the net would be easier to handle, and less visible to the fish. As they washed the nets, they also looked for tears, and mended them, as well. They were probably very tired, and were looking forward to going home to sleep for awhile. Suddenly, Jesus and a great crowd come down the beach to where they are. ***Jesus got right into Peter's boat and asked him to put out into the water a little way from the shore!*** Was he going to say, "No!" in front of all those people? So, as a favor, and out of respect for Jesus, Peter pushed the boat out and took Him a little way from the shore, where the Master was able to teach the crowds without being pressed upon by them.

***After He finished speaking, Jesus turned to Peter and told him to put out into the deep water and put his nets down for a catch.*** Peter protested that *they had worked all night, but caught nothing.* ***Out of respect for Him, however, he was willing to do as He asked. When he and Andrew put down the nets, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, so many that their nets began to break!*** They signaled to James and John, who were still on shore with their boat, to come and help them. They came and filled *both* boats with so many fish that they began to sink! When Peter saw that, he fell on His knees at Jesus' feet, exclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" He and the others were amazed at the great catch of fish. ***Obviously, he was immediately convicted of his unbelief and disobedience. Jesus' response to him was, however, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching people."***

What was all that about? How does it relate to me? Whatever issues were going on inside of Peter, Jesus took steps to help him refocus on what was truly important. ***Misunderstandings, embarrassment, confusion, hardships do not matter. What matters is that we stay on task, that we remain obedient and focused on the Lord's calling in our lives.*** God will remind us, once again, that He is calling us to be involved in the work of drawing people to Christ. ***Winning people to Christ, and training them to be His obedient followers, is the greatest task and the Kingdom calling we are all commissioned to fulfill*** (Matt. 28:18-20). We need to be mindful that it was *Jesus'* directive that those who preach the gospel should get their living from it (I Cor. 9:14). It was *His* idea, His call, His *insistence*. ***We should do what we can to keep workers freed up for that purpose.*** An army at war is only as good as its supply line. ***Finally, what is our focus? Are we living for this world, or for the Kingdom? What are you trying to "catch"?*** Is it the respect and admiration of others? Is it the next "high", or pleasurable experience? Is it a romantic relationship, or a life partner? Is it material success, or financial security? Or, ***are you really out to catch people for Christ?***