

# “Launch Out”

## Luke 4:42-5:11

Two of the other Gospel writers (Matthew and Mark) record the call to discipleship of Peter (and Andrew) – Matt. 4:18-23 and Mark 1:16-20. Whether these three accounts are synonymous or whether the record in our text in Luke happened shortly after the actual call is debatable and not entirely clear. For the purposes of what is taught (and what we will look to in this text) it is not entirely relative as to whether they are recording the same event or not.

### Matthew 4:18–23

**18** And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

**19** And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

**20** And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

**21** And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

**22** And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

**23** And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

### Mark 1:16–20

**16** Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

**17** And Jesus said unto them, **Come ye after me, and I will**

make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

The vast majority of Christians have never won a soul to Christ. They have never given a gospel tract to anyone. They have never seen the need to even tell someone they're a believer. Why? What makes it so difficult for God's people, saved from a devil's hell, to give the gospel to someone, to try and convince them they are on their way to hell, and without Christ they will perish? Why is it that Christians say they have never been "called" to be a soul-winner?

These are questions that are answered in these verses. The only thing God requires of us as Christians is that we be found faithful. In order to be a faithful steward we need to follow the commands of the "Owner." One of those commands is here - LAUNCH OUT.

Paul Harvey said, "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium."

Most Christians have become so concerned about the cares of this world that they don't even see that the world is dying and going to hell.

Jesus said that He came to "seek and to save that which was lost" - what about us?

In following Christ, He promised He'd make us

fishers of men - soul-winners. It wasn't an "if," or a "maybe" but a promise, but as with all promises there was a condition – that we "follow Him." That's where many of us fail.

So, how do we "Launch out" – and follow Him?

## **I. WE MUST GO WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE - "INTO THE DEEP" (VS. 4) - MATT. 9:35-38**

NOTE: Some preliminary comments on the lake of Gennesaret (vs. 1), or the Sea of Galilee, need to be made in order to understand the picture of what was taking place. The Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth and the second-lowest lake in the world (after the Dead Sea, a saltwater lake). It is approximately 33 miles in circumference – 13 miles long and 8.1 miles wide (roughly the same size as Seneca Lake in New York State). Its maximum depth is approximately 141 feet. Josephus commented that there was a thriving fishing industry in the first century with 230 boats regularly working in the lake.

"Before Jesus' time, few Israelites were fishermen. There was only one Hebrew word for fish, and it covered everything from minnows to whales. In Jesus' time, a small, flourishing fishing industry developed around the Sea of Galilee. The town of Magdala (in Greek, Tarichaeae, "the place where fish are salted") was a sardine-pickling center. Many of the images Jesus used indicated that he was familiar with fishing and the sea.

"The job of a fisherman in Jesus' day was difficult. Fishermen worked year-round in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, often at night. Certainly, Jesus' choice of Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, as his home brought him into

contact with many fishermen. Several of his disciples - Andrew, Peter, James, and John - knew the trade well. It's possible that Jesus selected fishermen as his disciples not only because the imagery of their occupation fit well with the mission that he had called them to, but also because they were a hardy group of people, accustomed to difficult work and long hours. Jesus even asked them to return to the lake and fish again after a night of fishing without a catch (Luke 5:1-7)." (Ray Vander Laan from the website [www.thatttheworldmayknow.com](http://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com))

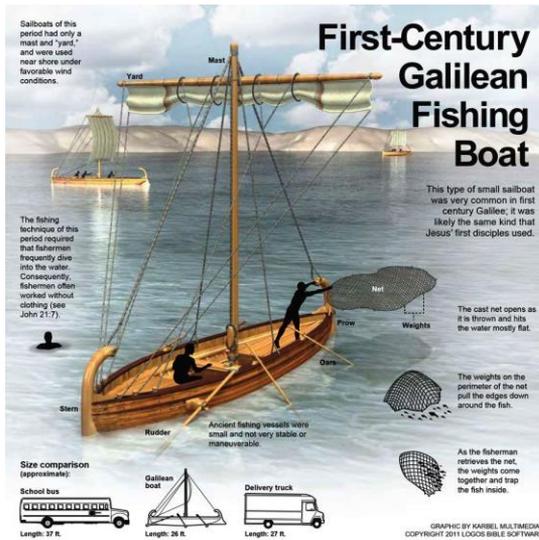
As to the fish they caught:

"Various species of freshwater fish in the Sea of Galilee were caught with the different types of nets. Renowned Galilee scholar Mendel Nun has described the three types of fish. Musht, called St. Peter's fish, was, according to tradition, the type of fish caught by Peter. This fish is found on the northern end of the sea, near the area of Jesus' ministry and Peter's fishing. It grows up to 15 inches long and three pounds in weight. It has relatively few bones and is very tasty. (Take my word for it!) It is likely that this is the kind of fish Jesus used to feed 5,000 people (Matt. 14:13-21). Biny, a member of the carp family, was used in Bible lands for feasts and banquets. Sardines are small fish that were caught in enormous numbers. Drying and pickling sardines was the main industry of Magdala, home of Mary Magdalene. These are probably the "small fish" referred to in the Bible (Matt. 15:34; Mark 8:7).

"When Jesus asked the disciples to put the net on the other side of the boat near Capernaum and Bethsaida and they caught a large number of fish, they probably caught musht. Their skill

in catching, processing, and selling fish provided a ready teaching tool for Jesus. He used imagery from their occupation to explain that they must use the same care and devotion in bringing his message to the world.” (ibid)





## Matthew 9:35–38

**35** And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

**36** But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

**37** Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;**

**38** **Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**

**A. Jesus said He must go and preach – it wasn't a question – 4:43**

Luke 4:43

**43** And he said unto them, **I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.**

## **B. We are to go and bring them in – we must go**

Luke 14:16–24

**16** Then said he unto him, **A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:**

**17** **And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.**

**18** **And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.**

**19** **And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.**

**20** **And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.**

**21** **So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.**

**22** **And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.**

**23** **And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.**

**24** **For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.**

“The Church of God has been fishing along the shore. We set our net in a good, calm place, and in sight of a fine chapel, and we go down every Sunday to see if the fish have been wise enough to come into our net. We might learn something from that boy with his hook and

line. He throws his line from the bridge: no fish. He sits down on a log: no fish. He stands in the sunlight and casts the line: but no fish. He goes up by the mill-dam, and stands behind the bank, where the fish cannot see him, and he has hardly dropped the hook before the cork goes under. The fish come to him as fast as he can throw them ashore. In other words, in our Christian work, why do we not go where the fish are? It is not so easy to catch souls in church, for they know that we are trying to take them. With the Bible in one pocket, and the hymn-book in another pocket, and a loaf of bread under your arm, launch out into the great deep of this world's wretchedness." (Exell, Joseph S. "Commentary on "Luke 5:4". The Biblical Illustrator. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tbi/luke-5.html>. 1905-1909. New York.)

"We have toiled in the narrows too long, and have taken little by our toil. Look round you in this nineteenth century of Christendom, and survey what ought to be a kingdom of heaven. We must launch out into the deep, the great human deep, which is in Christ's dominion, and not in the devil's, and let down our nets for a draught. We have learnt wisdom perhaps from our faults, our follies, our failures. The Church has toiled in the shallows surrounding her coasts among the souls she could get within her pale. But rarely has man, in his simple human relations and activities, been suffered to feel that as man he was dear to Christ, and a subject of His kingdom. The great evangelical movement began with a noble attempt to fulfil this command. The evangelists saved our State. Voltaire wrote to d'Alembert, when the revolutionary yeast was beginning to

work: "We have never pretended to enlighten the cobblers and the maid-servants; we leave that to the apostles." In a few years those cobblers and maid-servants were flooding the gutters of Paris with the best blood of France; while in England the apostles had tamed them. But the evangelical movement, as the years passed on, shut itself up more and more to its Churches, and treated the great human world, the world of secular thought, activity, and interest, as quite outside its pale. Christ points us to the broad ocean, the great human deep — the relations, the energies, the industries, and the interests, the thoughts, and the sympathies of men, in their physical, intellectual, social, and political life; these we claim for His kingdom, these be it ours to win to His love. Instead of saving souls out of the world, let us save the world with the souls in it." (J. Baldwin Brown, B. A.)

## **II. WE MUST GO WITH THE GOSPEL AND NOTHING ELSE – "LET DOWN YOUR NETS"**

***A. By the "gospel" that is to be preached is meant simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (as found in 1 Cor. 15:1-4).***

***B. That Gospel must be in the power of the Spirit***

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

<sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

<sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

<sup>3</sup> And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

<sup>4</sup> And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

<sup>5</sup> That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

***C. There is a danger involved is we add anything to the simple gospel as necessary for salvation (i.e., good works, baptism, church membership, partaking of the Eucharist, etc.).***

Galatians 1:6-9

<sup>6</sup> I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

<sup>7</sup> Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

<sup>9</sup> As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

### **III. WE MUST GO BY FAITH, EXPECTING A "DRAUGHT" OF FISH (MEN)**

***A. Vs. 5-7 - they just believed God and did according to His Word. They had labored all night on their own, but when they believed God by faith, they had a great harvest.***

1. The word for "draught" is the Greek word *ἀγρα* (agra) – only time it is used in the New Testament is in this verse.
2. Many versions translate it simply "catch fish" but that's not the correct implication in the word. It may mean "catch" but it has to do with a "haul" of fish – more than normal.

***B. Without faith and trust in God, we will not succeed.***

Hebrews 11:1

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6

<sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

***C. V.10c says in the same manner they caught those fish they would catch men – by obedience and faith (work and faith, if you would).***

**IV. WE MUST GO WITH A HUMBLE HEART - "FOR I AM A SINFUL MAN, O LORD" - VS. 8**

***A. Jesus was the most humble man, meek man, loving man the earth has ever known. We are to follow His example***

***B. We are only sinners saved by grace. We are no better than those we are trying to win to Christ. The only difference is we are Children of God now.***

## 1 Corinthians 6:9–11

<sup>9</sup> Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

<sup>10</sup> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>11</sup> And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

### ***C. With a humble heart, forsake all and follow Him.***

**Conclusion:** All those who love the Lord Jesus should desire to walk as He walked and should be eager to reach the lost with the Gospel.

Jerry McAuley is an example of such an individual. Early in life he was a thief and counterfeiter. As a result, he spent 7 years in Sing Sing Prison. Although he was converted there, it was a long time before he experienced the complete victory that's available in Christ. When he did, however, he began witnessing to other men who had sunk deep in sin. Later he started America's first rescue mission in New York City where he befriended the worst criminals and skid-row characters. Just before his death in 1884, he said to his wife, "I know that soon tuberculosis will take my life, but I want to die on my knees, still praying for the lost. I'd rather have some poor soul that I led to the Lord put one small rose on my grave than to have the wealth of a millionaire." His wish was granted, for at his funeral an

aged, shabbily dressed man appeared. Handing one of the ushers a few flowers, he asked him in a voice trembling with emotion to place them on the coffin. Then he said apologetically, "I hope Jerry who was my friend will know that they came from old Joe Chappy." Mrs. McAuley preserved that little bouquet for a long time in remembrance of the fact that her husband had been a true friend of sinners.

**Are we like this man? Do we really want to follow Christ? Do we really want to be a soul-winner?**

**Or are we one who has never been saved? One that needs this Gospel that compels us to be soul-winners?**