



**Series:** The Way of Jesus

**Sermon:** Part 1 | Fishing with Jesus

**Date:** March 10, 2019

SERVE WEEK – What to say. Hey Serve Week begins TOMORROW and goes through next Sunday. A church-wide mission trip to our city. If you don't have a place to serve yet, you can get that place today.

**Independence Campus Only:** Thanks to Principal Webb & the staff here.

- Night of Prayer at Eastway – Monday 6:30 – 7:30
- Wednesday – Staff Lunch
- Saturday – Big Serve Day

Today we start a brand new series of sermons that I am pretty excited about. We are entering a series that will take us all the way up to Easter and we are calling it “The Way of Jesus.” We are going to look at the Life of Jesus and the life he called his followers into.

One way the bible describes the first church is “The Way.” See that in Acts. We call it the first church but there in real time

they were called people of “The Way.” That’s because the people who believed what Jesus said *and also went where he went*.

That’s what followers do. They believe, & they act. Maybe update that for today - “they *like* it, AND they *live* it.” And its real easy for us to get around church and kind of agree with what’s being said, but if I came to you today and introduced you to someone who was brand new to Christianity, could you show them what life in THE WAY of Jesus looks like? If they followed you around, would they catch it? That’s not a guilt question. It’s an opportunity that we are stepping into together in this series. Learning the way.

**And if you are new with us, how awesome of a time for you to get in here. By Easter, you will know how to walk with Jesus and how to help other people walk with Jesus.**

I believe and I have seen that when you step into the **way** of Jesus, its like stepping into the highway of God’s power. God’s power is unleashed through a step of faith into the way of Jesus. His power to transform YOU is unleashed, AND his power to transform the lives of others THROUGH you is unleashed.

In fact, to practice the way of Jesus together, we are going to begin a 6 week prayer & fasting & inviting initiative that we are calling “Whose Your One?” Who is one person you know who is far from God? **BOOK MARK**

with Easter as like a target on the wall, We are going to spend these weeks praying & inviting people to hear the gospel.

We are going to hold a few times for us to fast & then come together and pray. We'll announce those next weekend but you don't need to wait on us. Get going!

Ok, with that said lets start today in The Way of Jesus. We are going to be in a section of Luke for this series. Luke 5 – 10. Today is Luke 5.1-11. Walking in the Way of Jesus all begins with Encountering Jesus. And that's what happens to our main character today, a guy named Simon. We'll walk through this encounter. Only 11 verses but such an important encounter. And then after walking through it I'm going to show you three signs you are walking in the way of Jesus.

**Main Idea Today:** Jesus Meets us where we are but does not leave us there.

**1 As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word, he was standing by Lake Gennesaret.**

Ok Luke is writing this (That's why its called the gospel according to Luke). Luke was a doctor who rode around with the apostle Paul. We know this because Luke also wrote the book of Acts and talked a lot in the first person about his journeys. But as a doctor it shouldn't surprise us Luke did a lot of research and was meticulous in making sure the accounts he recorded were well attested to. He even goes so far as to call this Lake Gennesaret. Everybody else in the Old & New Testament calls this the sea of Galilee. Except for John who calls it the sea of Tiberias. But Gennesaret was a little town on the sea of galilee & there was a little area called the plain of Genesaret. So this is Luke's little way of pin pointing where

this event happened. Somewhere around Genesaret and Capernaum. And I say that as an aside to those in here who are skeptical of the bible I just want you to know it wasn't put together haphazardly. Some real investigation & fact finding went into it.

**2 He saw two boats at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat.**

Ok: Simon. If you read the end of chapter 4 you learn that this is the second encounter Simon has with Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Just before this, Simon's mother in law had been sick with a fever. Jesus walks into his house & Luke says he REBUKES the fever. And it comes out of her and she starts serving them. Jesus is powerful.

This encounter introduces Simon to Jesus. We don't see him worship him yet though. And I think this is what happens to a lot of people in the process of encountering Jesus. We see Jesus do something in someone else and we observe it closely. And we are brought in a little. We are curious enough to hear them out about what they've experienced.

Man that is what happened to me. A few people in my old Baptist church were just convinced I needed to go to student camp for a week because it had been so impactful for them and their relationship with God. I didn't care all that much about camp but I was like man, they were really impacted by this. Maybe I should do it. And so I went and that's where I

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<sup>1</sup> Cross ref: Mt. 8.14-17; Mk 1.29-34

met the God I saw in them. God rescued me from my sins and I received the forgiveness offered to me in Christ.

Last Sunday we baptized a woman who had gone through some really tough stuff as a result of some unfair life circumstances & some bad decisions. She hit rock bottom a while back and here's what she said (she gave me permission): "I'd finally realized that it was God protecting me, not luck. I wept and kept asking Him, "why?" Why would He protect such an awful, selfish, disgusting person who didn't care if she lived or died? Not really knowing what to do, I reached out to my brother (**brother knew Jesus. God had changed his life & SHE SAW IT IN HIM.**) and asked him how I can get closer to God. And that's when I was first introduced to the gospel. After talking for hours, he told me to go to church that next Sunday, walk up to the tent at Mercy, tell them I have no idea how to read the Bible, but that I want to know God. And that's what I did. I met two awesome women, Kelli and Shannon. Kelli has taught me how to read the Bible and has helped me grow in my faith. She's helped me realize that although I am a sinner, God still loves me!! She also helps me grow closer to God and stronger in my faith!"

Listen maybe that's why you are here today. Somebody said you gotta hear about this Jesus that's changed me. That's a good thing! God has wired this whole thing up to use people to introduce other people to Jesus. So if you are here because someone invited you, what they are doing is saying "this Jesus changed my life and I just want you to know about him." And so what you need to do is make the friend who invited you TAKE YOU TO LUNCH...Your Christian friend WILL BUY YOUR

LUNCH, the pastor is ordering them to pay for your food, and you guys talk this stuff out.

Anyways – That's what happens here. Simon sees someone close to him experience the power of Jesus. And here Jesus is again now showing up where Simon works. And goes and gets in his boat. And Simon has seen enough to go along with it. But then...

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Now Jesus is engaging Simon directly. Not his mother-in-law...him. It's Simon's turn to figure out what he's gonna do with Jesus. And Simon's response is massively important to us today. Verse 5 records a response that I think will resonate with you. And depending on where you are, it might be REALLY freeing.

5 "Master," Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets."

Two things about this response I want you to see.

**DOUBT** – Jesus calls Simon to do something that doesn't make sense to him.

We've worked hard all night – We've done our job. And he says so. After all, Simon is the expert in this area. Who is Jesus to come in here and try to tell him how to do his job? Simon doesn't know at this moment Jesus is the one who commands the winds, waves, & also the fish.

We've caught nothing – Not only have we put in work, the work hasn't worked. This aint the right time to try to do what you are saying. Hear that? Jesus: I DON'T THINK IT WILL WORK & NOW ISN'T THE TIME. It's doubt. It's an uncertainty about trusting Jesus.

But **then he says**: But if you say so, I'll let down the nets. And that's the part I love.

**WILLINGNESS**: Ok Jesus. If you say so. After all I saw what you did to my mother-in-law. She's healed now. So I'm interested. See what Jesus has done? He has entered into Simon's arena and met Simon right where he is. And then called Simon to a step that from Simon's perspective doesn't SEEM to make sense. So if he's going to go with this, it will mean he has to trust Jesus over his instincts and over his experience. And **THOSE ARE THE HURDLES THAT KEEP UP FROM TRUSTING Jesus!** Our skeptical instincts say "that won't work" and our prior experience says "nothing will change." Simon is able to put that skepticism up on the shelf enough to say "ok I'm gonna take a genuine step here."

And what I think is so cool about how Jesus does this: Simon will appreciate the work Jesus does more than any average observer. Because it's fishing. That's his area. And that's how Jesus works. He usually touches on something you are deeply invested into and passionate about. It's how he gets your attention. And then when his power goes to work there, it radically changes you because you are the one closest to it.

Simon is uncertain but willing. And Jesus BLESSES an uncertain but willing step of faith. Can we just pause here and draw some encouragement from that? Christ uses an **uncertain but**

**willing step of faith** to show Simon his power. Some of you need to hear some freedom in that to step into the way of Jesus. **UNCERTAIN BUT WILLING.**

- I wonder what step God may be calling you to take. But you are just not certain if its gonna work. So you are hesitant. Your uncertainty is keeping you from stepping out. Listen, God does not need your confidence to accomplish his plan. You aren't inviting him into your plan, he's inviting you into his. He's God. But he's a gracious God who will bless uncertain but willing faith.
- This would be an **AWESOME** community group or maybe even a smaller group discussion to have. Like you and your sparring partner. The friend who is your ride or die for Jesus: What is your uncertain but willing step God is calling you to take? I'm telling you some breakthroughs are gonna happen with this!

**6 When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets began to tear.**

They caught more than they thought was possible to catch. That's why their nets were tearing. Nets weren't even made for this kind of a haul. This is a moment of awe & scramble. Scrambling to figure out how to pull in a haul unlike anything they'd ever gotten on their own efforts... So....

**7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.**

Not only the nets couldn't handle it, the **BOATS** couldn't handle it. I feel like I want to call this scene the Happy Chaos

of trusting Jesus. Honor Jesus, do what he tells you to do, and he starts releasing his power in your life.

Listen I saw this happen when a guy I knew decided he would step out and lead a 6 week bible study in his neighborhood. Now, he didn't really know anyone in his neighborhood. AND, he had never led a bible study before. So he came to me and said, ok man I'm gonna take a chance on this help me out. So I gave him a really easy, ready made study guide. And he invited his literal neighbors on his street. And they came. And the end of 6 weeks happened and they wanted to keep going. And he was like...well, now I've got to change my whole schedule but man God is doing something in these people. It was a happy chaos. And people came to know Jesus!

Now what happens next is huge for understanding what happens when you encounter the true Jesus.

8 When Simon Peter (Ok quick pause this whole time you've been hearing Simon, the guy is actually the guy you may know as the future apostle Peter. His name is Simon Peter. So that's who we are dealing with. I'm just referring to him as the text does ok) saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" 9 For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners.

Now, if a guy comes along on a hard day on the job & turns it into the best day in the history of the company...Are you telling him to go away? No. You are inviting him to Thanksgiving dinner.

So what is happening with Simon? It's of course not that he's ungrateful. Notice why he says go away... "because I'm a sinful man, Lord." He recognizes he's not just dealing with a better fisherman who out-fishes him that night. NO, Simon becomes immediately aware he's in the presence of holiness. And he's afraid because he knows he is unholy. And he knows he's not worthy to be in the presence of this holy one of God.

This is what happens throughout scripture. When someone really encounters God, there is an element of fear because they realize how unworthy they are. How the holy one who is all powerful and sovereign could JUSTIFIABLY judge them right here and there for their sins. In fact, this is always the reaction of a heart that finally sees God rightly. Humility. I see now I'm a sinner. Which is what makes Jesus' reaction all the more surprising to him.

"Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching people."

Instead of tossing Simon overboard for questioning his command, or judging Simon for his sin, he says "Don't be afraid." That's grace. But even more than that. I'm not pushing you away, I'm not judging you, no I'm going to pull you in and recreate you. You have a new purpose in life now. And let me explain your purpose Simon in a way you will understand it: From now on you will be catching people. And like what you experienced on the boat, I will bring them to you and you will catch them in overwhelming amounts. You'll have to call in more help. Look at their response:

11 Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him. -- Luke 5:1-11

They left everything right there and followed him. Just left it on the beach. Because they met God. They treasured Christ so much...they knew who they were with, "they treasured him so much they dropped the nets of their previous careers and picked up the nets of their new disciple-making careers right there." <sup>2</sup> Right There. See what has happened. In a morning, the lives of Simon, James & John were changed forever. They stepped into the Way of Jesus and it took them into the happy chaos of advancing the gospel and making disciples for the rest of their lives.

When Jesus calls people throughout the gospels he tells them to follow him. To walk with him in his way. When Jesus commissions the disciples at the end of the book of Matthew he says go make disciples...Baptize them and teach them to obey all the things I have commanded you. To walk in the same WAY I have shown you to walk. Here in Luke we are seeing the process Simon Peter goes through of stepping into the way of Jesus. And this is the process every person has to go through. **How you know you are walking with Jesus. (Keep this up and put each point underneath it).**

How you know you are walking with Jesus:  
You become aware of Christ's holiness, which makes you humble

The whole purpose of this encounter was for Jesus to call Peter and James & John to become his followers. But before

they follow him, Jesus wants to show them his power. And Peter's response is awareness of his sinfulness and a major expression of humility. This is what I heard one preacher describe as a "Self-quake." It's a lot like an earthquake but its you, your internal self, that is in upheaval. Like when you think you are funny, but you get around someone funnier, it can threaten you cause you aren't the funny guy anymore. Your self image is breaking up. That's what is happening to Peter. See what is happening is Peter is getting, for the first time, a real image of who he is, because he's comparing himself to God. And its humbling.

Isaiah 6 gives a beautiful parallel picture to Luke 5. See in Isaiah 6 the prophet has a vision and says he sees The LORD sitting on the throne. Look what he says he sees:

**Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 3 And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth. -- Isaiah 6:2-3**

Why were they covering their faces & feet? Because of God's holiness! They know they are unworthy...yet they keep flying close because they want to be in his presence. And this, one philosopher says, is the process all people go through when they get close to a deity. He called it the "Numinous Awe" problem. On the one hand we are very attracted to it, and on the other hand we are frightened to death by it. Isaiah says:

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<sup>2</sup> This wording is from John Piper's sermon "Breaking Nets, Sinking Boats, & Saving Men." Preached September 29, 2002.

“Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies. -- Isaiah 6:5

A sign you are thinking rightly about God is...WOE IS ME. He is holy, I am not. And I cannot be in his presence. BUT I WANT TO BE. I’m drawn to him. This is, Tim Keller said, the problem of our human condition. The numinous awe. We are attracted to God, but we can’t live with God. But we also can’t live without God.”<sup>3</sup> I want to be close to God because he’s the greatest, but in drawing close I’m exposed because I’m not great.

Listen the more you walk with Jesus, the more you become aware of your sin. Which makes the people of the way a humble people. Ones who are not surprised by the brokenness of this world because they are acutely aware of the brokenness within themselves. We don’t judge people around us, we don’t look down on anyone and we don’t write anyone off, because we know we are capable of even the worst of sin.

In fact, I get that SIN isn’t enjoyable to talk about. But man its real isn’t it? I wonder who in here is in this spot where you are like yeah, I’ve messed up. I need God’s grace but I don’t deserve it. I want it, but I’m not worthy of it. Listen: You are in a room filled with people saying the same thing. We want God but we are not worthy of him. And that leads me to the next thing about walking with Jesus:

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<sup>3</sup> Numinous Awe comes from Rudolf Otto’s book “The Idea of the Holy.” I was made aware of it through Keller referencing it in a sermon on this passage titled “Put out into deep water.”

How you know you are walking with Jesus:  
You receive the grace of Christ, which makes you joyful

Jesus’ response is so wonderful. “Don’t be Afraid.” I’m not going to judge you for your sin. Instead I’m going to bring you in and make you a partner with me. This is grace. And it gives you a radical new identity. We’ll talk about Peter’s new career in a second but first we have to stop and marvel at the grace of Christ to bring Peter into a relationship with him instead of casting him away.

The gospel message is: WOE IS ME. It’s awareness I am a sinner. BUT THEN, the response of God to your sin is not Judgment, its mercy. Here’s what happens: God still has to punish sin. But instead of punishing you for it, he puts the judgment for your sin onto Jesus. Jesus goes up on the cross as a punishment for your sin and mine. He dies, not us. And so in the eyes of God we are no longer unworthy of God. Because we are now IN CHRIST. Then he comes out of the grave 3 days later showing he has the power not just to pay for all sin, but to defeat SIN and death! We talked about this last week in Daniel 7. Instead of punishment, we get forgiveness, we get adopted by God as his children, and we get eternal victory & celebration with him!

So we can say like Martin Luther “So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: ‘I admit that I deserve death and hell, what

of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!”<sup>4</sup>

This is why when you get around people who truly understand the gospel they are humble, JOYFUL people. Not perfect people of course but in general there is a narrative running through their life that they’ve been given grace they don’t deserve. So let me ask you: are you joyful? Not necessarily cheery. Cheery is an emotion. Joy is a heart posture. And a way to answer that question honestly is to ask those you trust who see your life. “Am I joyful?” really listen in. And if not, just go spend time with Jesus. Rest in the gospel. He will change your desires & your heart.

How you know you are walking with Jesus:

You respond to the calling of Christ, which gives you a new purpose

Jesus says I will make you fishers of men and man, they left everything and followed him. Now, this doesn’t mean every Christian will quit their jobs, go raise support & be full time missionaries. SOME will. Plenty of the famous heroes of the faith in scripture had what you might call “secular” jobs. Daniel, our guy from the last series – worked in government his whole life. God used him MIGHTILY. What this means is that our new identity in Christ gives us a new purpose: fishing for people. We aren’t consumed by our jobs because profit margin isn’t our identity, Christ is. We do our jobs well

because we want to honor God. Which means neither success, nor failure, will define us. Christ defines us. And our purpose is to worship him...to draw near to him because through Christ it’s actually possible for us to. And we introduce others to him. We serve people & sacrifice for people with JOY because we are in this routine of remembering the one who sacrificed for us. This week in serve week: this is just gospel rehearsal. Let me do a miniature version for you of what God did for me. Listen: there are 2.5 million people in the Charlotte area. Over a million in the city limits and SO MANY don’t know the gospel. According to a Harvard research study Mecklenburg County is the HARDEST county for someone born into poverty to be able to climb out of poverty. There are systems of darkness and injustice so many that we can’t even see. There are rich people, poor people suburban & urban people, and people in dozens of people groups who need the hope of Christ. AND WE HAVE IT! And Jesus has said the harvest is PLENTIFUL. All we gotta do is go let down the nets. But instead of fish we are talking about people made in God’s image! We are talking about your one! God has the power to save that person & give them new life. And maybe, maybe...it starts with you saying “look you gotta hear more about this Jesus that I know.” That’s what this week is about, that’s what this church is about.

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, Letters of Spiritual Counsel, trans. And ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College, 2003) 86-87.