

Sermon 2007 Epiphany 5 (Orlando Youth Sunday)
Text: Luke 5:1-11
Theme: **"CHOSEN"**

It had been a long night. I know fishermen say that a bad day of fishing is better than a good day at work, but I personally HATE getting skunked...thinking all day about fresh fish for dinner and instead stopping by Taco Bell on the way home. They had been dragging those nets all over the Sea of Galilee all night long and hadn't caught a single, stinking fish! Just then that carpenter from Nazareth was talking to a big crowd of people and he needed a better position from which to speak so he stepped into Simon Peter's boat and asked him to put out a little from the land. Well it wasn't like he was doing any good fishing...so why not? Peter had been chosen!

Today we are celebrating that 20 of our youth have decided to go to Orlando this summer with Judy and me for the 2007 National Youth Gathering of the LC-MS. We expect somewhere around 30,000 youth and youth leaders there and the theme is CHOSEN. What does it mean to be chosen? With your prayers and financial support, I hope that our high school youth will be

able to explore that very question in depth, but today we will just scratch the surface.

What did you do the last time Jesus stepped into your boat? Just like Peter, you were minding your own business, washing your nets and in steps Jesus and starts asking stuff of you. He does it all the time. We think we have life all figured out...our ducks all in a nice row and then comes Jesus to play a little fruit basket upset!

I wonder how patient Peter was that day. He was more patient than me – that’s for sure. He had to be dog tired from fishing all night and now he was just sitting in his boat, floating in the lake while Jesus addressed the people on the shore. Can you imagine his stomach growling? Just think of the things that were going through his mind as he waited to be able to go home to a nice breakfast and a comfortable bed. And then Jesus finished.

But instead of turning to Peter and saying,

“Okay guys you can take me back to shore now.” He said,
“Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

“Oh come on Jesus! We’re fisherman. You are a carpenter! If we have not caught anything all night, why do you think you know where the fish are? And all our nets are washed and folded and put away for tonight. If we let them down again then it’s back to washing and folding!” When was the last time Jesus not only plopped himself down in your boat, but asked you to do something hard? When was the last time you knew good and well what the right thing to do was, but you surely didn’t want to do it?

At his word, Peter let down the nets. Because of his word, Peter let down the nets. The Word of God gave Peter and gives you and me the power to do that which we surely do not want to do because as Peter saw, Jesus really does know where the fish are. Jesus really does know just what is going on in our lives every moment of every day. We have been chosen and that changes everything.

Why did Jesus decide to get into my boat, or your boat, or Peter’s boat? I guess we’ll never know. I know it was nothing special inside us. It was just that he insisted on choosing us. He

chose us to be his children for all eternity. But why he chose us is not nearly as important as the ramifications of being chosen.

Jesus said to Peter and his friends,

“I will make you fishers of men and from that moment on they left everything and followed him.” What have you left behind to follow him now that you have been chosen? What do you want to leave behind? I guarantee you that he gives you the power to leave behind anything that is not useful to you in your new life, whatever that is.

You have been chosen. You are brand new every day, washed clean in the waters of Baptism, filled with the body and blood of Christ, instructed by His Word, you are free right now to leave behind anything and everything that is not useful. What do you want to walk away from?

Sometimes we're a little slow. We weren't paying attention and didn't notice Jesus sitting in our boat. Sometimes we're a little scared that Jesus might take away all our fun, or all our control. But from the moment he came and sat down in your boat, he has been preparing you for this moment. You have the

strength. Let go. Leave everything behind. Follow him for you have been CHOSEN!

Take a deep breath and fall into Jesus' arms. You have no worries, no fears, no need for anger or hurt. You can let go of all your pettiness and all your bitterness. **Everything that has happened to you has happened to get you to this moment.**

So there is no need to win every argument or avenge every wrong because those arguments and those wrongs were used by Jesus as he sat in your boat to get you where he wanted you.

There is no record that St. Peter ever bemoaned the day he left everything behind. He never missed it once he walked away from it. St. Paul said that he considered everything he left behind as a pile of dung compared to the richness of knowing Jesus. Like them, you have been chosen. Rejoice! Let go. Follow him.

Amen.