

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 5:1-11
July 4th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Am a Sinful Man, O Lord!

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Cause Thy Church to arise and shine, O Lord, and let her ministers be clothed with righteousness and salvation, that Thy Word which is in their hands may not return unto Thee void, but have free course and be glorified in the world, prospering in the thing whereunto Thou hast sent it, and prevailing mightily to turn men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ, to Whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Evangelist St. Luke tells us that our Lord + Jesus is preaching by the Lake of Gennesaret. So many people had come to hear Him preach that the crowds were pushing Him into the sea. Therefore, He got into one of two boats by the shore. This boat belonged to Simon, who would later be called St. Peter. The other boat belonged to St. John and St. James, the two sons of Zebedee. These men were cleaning their nets from a long night of fishing, and as we heard in the Gospel reading, it was an unsuccessful night of fishing. Our Lord + Jesus after He got into Simon Peter's boat then continued to preach. When He had finished, He told—He did not ask—Simon to launch out into the deep and cast the nets which they had just finished cleaning.

After an unsuccessful night of fishing, Simon is a little reluctant, but he does what the Lord + Jesus tells him to do. What is not expressly mentioned in the Gospel reading by St. Luke is that St. Peter and the others, had been listening to our Lord's preaching while they were cleaning their nets. How could they not have been? The Lord + Jesus was in their boat preaching to the crowds. They had to have heard at least some of what He said, even though they were busy cleaning their nets. It is just in our nature to listen when someone is speaking. St. Peter's willingness to launch out into the deep after an unsuccessful night of fishing, and after cleaning their nets, is a result of the Lord's preaching. He heard what the Lord had said and it cut him to the heart.

He believed what the Lord + Jesus was preaching. Now that Word would be accompanied by a miraculous sign—a huge draught of fish. They caught so many fish that the nets were breaking. The men in the other boats—Sts. James and John—had to be called over to help with the catch of fish. There were so many fish that both boats began to sink. What adds to this miracle is that this huge catch of fish happened at the time of day when most fishermen would tell you it is not a good time for fishing. They best fishing is when the waters are cool, and when it is dark. Which is why the Evangelist tells us that the fishermen were “fishing all night.” But, here it is in the middle of the day, when the water is warm and the fish are usually listless, and these professional fishermen catch a draught of fish of which they had never seen.

St. Peter witnessing these things came to the realization in Whose presence he was. As He confessed on his feast day this past week, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles, this was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. What then is St. Peter's response when he realizes he is in the presence of the Lord Almighty? It is one of humility. He confesses that he is a sinful man. He is not worthy to be in the presence of the Lord God. He is not worthy to be in the presence of this Man. St. Peter is an example for all of us.

We are all sinful. We commit sins everyday in our thoughts, our actions and in what we say. Not only to we commit sinful acts, and words, and thoughts, but we also neglect to do all that is required of us in the Law of God, both toward the Lord God and toward our neighbor. We are sinful. We commit sin and omit to do the good things for our neighbor that the Lord God requires. We omit to give our full and undivided love, devotion and faith to the Triune Lord God. When the preaching of the Lord God reaches our ears; when we hear about what poor, miserable sinners we are, our hearts are also cut with the Law. We realize, like St. Peter, that we are unworthy to be in the Lord God's presence. We are unworthy for Him to call us His children; for the Lord + Jesus to call us His brothers. When the Law speaks to us, we, like St. Peter, humbly acknowledge our sin, and fall on our knees and confess, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

In His mercy, our Lord + Jesus does not treat us the way that we deserve to be treated. He does not say to us, "You are right, you are sinful and unworthy of my grace." Rather, as He does with St. Peter, when we humbly confess our sins, and acknowledge our wretchedness, our Lord + Jesus speaks the words of comfort and grace. He absolves us of all of our sins. He says to us and St. Peter, "Do not be afraid." We need not be afraid of our sins any longer. It is not because of something that we have done. We do not need to fear our sins any longer, because our Lord + Jesus has already fulfilled the Law on our behalf, and He has already paid the price of our sins with His innocent suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross. He has covered over our sinful actions by what He has done for us. When we hear of what our Lord + Jesus has done for us, we cling in faith to His words and His actions. We cling to the promise that through Him alone we have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

We learn from the Evangelists St. Matthew and St. Mark that when the Lord + Jesus had been baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River that He began to preach the same sermon that St. John the Baptist preached: repentance toward the forgiveness of sins. This is most likely the summation of all that the Lord + Jesus preached from the boat of St. Peter to the crowds along the Lake of Gennesaret. In other words, St. Peter had heard what we should all hear from preaching, that there is forgiveness found in the Lord + Jesus for those who humbly confess their sins and believe that in Him and His works and merits is forgiveness, life and salvation. This is what repentance is: to be sorry for our sins, and desire to live holy lives, and further to believe that it is not our works that justify us, but the works of the Christ on our behalf. We obtain these works through faith. We are justified through faith.

Our Lord + Jesus having heard St. Peter's confession, absolves him of his sins by proclaiming to him to "not be afraid." Our Lord + Jesus proclaims the same thing to us through the voice of His minister, who preaches into our ears that we are forgiven "in the stead and by the command of our Lord + Jesus Christ." And this ultimately was our Lord's goal. For our Lord + Jesus tells St. Peter that not only is he forgiven, but that he would also from now on catch men. Our Lord + Jesus establishes for us today the Office of the Holy Ministry. The Office in which He sends men to us to preach repentance toward the forgiveness of sins to all those who are on their knees with the realization of Whose presence they are in and saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" The minister of the Lord is here to proclaim to all of us weighed down by sin, and who know that they are unworthy to be in the Lord God's presence that they are indeed worthy, not because of anything they did, but because our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven to make us worthy through His perfect life, and His suffering and death.

The great catch of fish is also an example of what this preaching of our Lord + Jesus will do. The Word of God will perform the task that it was sent out to do. It will catch men even at the times that are not what the world considers ideal times and moments. The Holy Ghost will work when and where He chooses to call all men to repentance through the preaching of the Word of God. The catch of men will be so great that another boat will have to be called over to help, and it will be so great that both boats will begin to sink. This miracle is a sign of what is to come. It is a sign of what the preaching of the Word of God will do in this world. It will cause poor sinners to fall on their knees and confess their sinfulness. It will cause many sinners to come and hear the proclamation that there is no need to fear our sins, for the Lord + Jesus has won our forgiveness by His death on the tree of the holy cross.

This forgiveness is given to us in the Absolution which we heard. It is given to us in the waters of Holy Baptism, in which we were blessed at the beginning of the Service. And this forgiveness is given to all of us who in humility come to this altar and kneel before the Lord + Jesus and receive from Him, through His minister, His true and substantial Body and Blood for the remission of all of our sins. This is what our Lord + Jesus promises. He promises us that there is forgiveness found in Him alone. And He promises that His Word preached in its truth and purity will accomplish the task that He sent it to do. It will catch men. His Word will catch men and bring them into the boat of the Church, where we will all sail to the heavenly shore of the Promised Land of Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us hear what our Lord + Jesus desires to preach into our ears and hear that our sins are forgiven in Him. He has called us by the preaching of the Gospel to cling to Him and His works in faith. We have no need to fear our sins any longer, for those sins have been paid for with our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf. He has caught us by His Word and brought us into the ark of the Church, where His minister continues to feed and sustain us by His Word, until He calls us out of this vale of tears to Himself in Heaven. May the Lord God Almighty continue to sustain us in the one, true faith, until our last day, so that we may join Him in Heaven with all the other saints who have been caught by the preaching of the Word of God. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, heavenly Father, without Whose aid and blessing all our labors are in vain, regard, we beseech Thee, Thy goodness and our need, and bless us, that in Thy Name and with firm trust in Thee we may patiently and cheerfully labor in our calling, honor Thy Word, and evermore praise Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!