



1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11
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The gospel story about the extraordinary love of God in Jesus is designed to prompt us to ask basic questions about Jesus: **Who is he?** What is he about? Why do we want to know about him? What impact does he have on our life? How far are we willing to go with him?

From the experience of the resurrection working our way backwards to the time of his birth and earlier, we wonder about his identity and the implication that it has in our life.

We are invited to ask a follow-up question: because of Jesus, **who are we?**

When we know **who** we are, we can better identify **what** God is calling us to do in our plot of creation and how we are to steward our time and resources. After all, when we're clear about who God is calling us to be, we can then be specifically clear about how God is calling us to be in this world.

God's call to ethical action stems from God's call to just and truthful living. God shows up as a Lover in pursuit of our corresponding love. God engages us in **a conversation** based on respect, inquiry and discovery; a conversation interrupted only from our side.

As willing and active participants in divine conversation, we realize that **the more we remain engaged the deeper we understand** ourselves and the significance of our existence. The more we know Love, the more we pursue Love's company.

The identity question has an ethical effect. Are we about oneness with God? If so, **there is no way we can be one with God and not be one with the universe God has created and loves.** The implication is clear: in God there are no strangers, no enemies; "In Christ there is no East or West, no South or North."¹ No one is forgotten, abandoned or neglected. All creatures matter.

The divine conversation is open to all, and all are invited to partake in it. If people are **not part of the conversation**, it is only because they have not responded to the call, have refused to engage in the first place, or have interrupted the conversation bent as they are in the pursuit of evil intents.

Funny how in our conversation with the Lord, we seek to have the last word, and he seems to lose the argument. Thank God for Jesus' persistence who grabs us from deep waters.²

Those who hurt, seek peace and love. The truth is, **we all hurt.**

Some turn to God in their pain and are reconciled with God. Others find their own way of suiting their pain and give free range to selfishness, narcissism, hate, greed, power over...all along motivated by fear. In the process, they hurt others.

The **ministry** we are called into is one of reconciliation and healing, a mandate in the power of the Spirit of God.³

¹ [In Christ There Is No East or West | Hymnary.org](#) based on Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:29

² Matthew 14

³ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Our encounter with the Divine can be destabilizing. When we encounter the Lord, there is no telling what happens next. And we don't care, for we have found (ourselves?) what most counts for true Life: The Holy one of God!⁴ What follows next is an exciting life adventure...not without cost, though!⁵

Take for instance what happened to Simon in today's gospel. Jesus is so pressed by the people who came to hear from him a word of truth that he climbed into one of the moored boats and requested to be taken a few feet away from the shore. We easily remember this remarkable passage as the story of the massive catch of fish. The catch was so abundant that the nets were beginning to break.⁶

Luke remembered Jesus' grandiose miracle and the effect it had on the people who witnessed it. The miracle had such an impact on the new disciples that they left it all behind and started a new life in him. They never had a better day, and their business could now be booming if only they could convince the carpenter to stick around and to fish with them. But they didn't even try.

Jesus' next words were way too compelling. He addressed their fears and offered them a new vision: "Fear not; from now on you will be catching people." They abandoned all that to trek off to... well, they had no idea where, or what would happen, or how it would turn out.

Jesus ended up making the better catch...not of perfect and sinless people – just committed ones.

Those who follow him, are involved in the same healing ministry. We do that by assisting the orphans, the refugees, the

⁴ Such is the experience of the Holy for Paul and Peter in today's lessons.

⁵ Luke 9:24

⁶ To John, the fruitless night of fishing is a post-resurrection event meant to restore and reinforce the call (John 21)

sick and the most vulnerable through Lutheran organizations such as Lutheran Disaster Response, Global Refuge, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Services of America.

Curious that Luke remembered this story in all its details and yet, he gave **no clue of what Jesus taught** before performing the miracle. Luke offered just a brief mention: “he (Jesus) sat down and *taught* the crowds from the boat.” The memorable miracle of the catch was the pivotal experience that moved the disciples to follow Jesus. But his teaching must have prepared the soil for what was going to be a life-transforming event. What was spoken was then affirmed with something mind-blowing. He spoke and something new came about.

Once the trust was built, Jesus’ words were listened to more closely and reported more faithfully.

Jesus’ pedagogy was also important: first he asked them to take some distance from the shore, to “put out a little,” and then to “put out into the deep.” Baby steps. Don’t be stuck and consumed by the obvious, or the familiar, or the comfortable, or the most expedient. Risk a little bit but do not take on too much from the start. Then, go a little farther out and try something deeper. Shift the spotlight away from the shoreline to the sea – from old failures to new possibilities.

To those who have seen miracles all around, are you ready to explore Jesus’ teaching a little further and a bit deeper?

To those who need a miracle, are you willing to let go and get away from the familiar, the comfortable, and the convenient to gain new perspectives and see new possibilities?

May we grow in trust and follow Jesus when he calls. Amen.