

Research: Fishers of men  
Luke 5:1, 3-6

1AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

“As the people pressed upon him, with great eagerness, to hear the word of God — Insomuch that no house could contain them: they perceived Christ’s word to be the word of God, by the divine power and evidence that accompanied it, and therefore they were eager to hear it. It seems the sermons which Jesus had preached in his last tour through the country had made a great impression on the minds of the people who heard him; for they either followed him to Capernaum, or came thither soon after his return in great numbers, in expectation of receiving still further instruction from him. He stood by the lake of Gennesaret — Elsewhere called the sea of Galilee, [Mark 1:16](#); and the sea of Tiberias, [John 6:1](#); being distinguished by these names, because it was situated on the borders of Galilee, and the city of Tiberias lay on the western shore of it. The name Gennesaret seems to be a corruption of the word Cinnereth, the name by which this lake was called in the Old Testament.” (Benson Commentary)

shore stood round him in the form of an amphitheater. It is not improbable that the lake was still; that scarcely a breeze passed over it; that all was silence on the shore, and that there was nothing to disturb his voice” (Barnes’ Notes).

3And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

“Now when he had left speaking,.... Teaching the people, and preaching the word of God unto them out of the ship, as they stood on the shore before him.

“He said unto Simon, launch out into the deep; he spoke to Simon Peter, being the master of the vessel, to thrust it out, or put it off further into deep water, more convenient for fishing;

“and let down your nets for a draught; of fishes: his meaning is, that he would give orders to his servants, to put out the vessel to sea, to take their nets and cast them into the sea, in order to take and draw up a quantity of fish, which was their business” (Gill’s Exposition)/

**5And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.**

“Master - This is the first time that the word here translated "Master" occurs in the New Testament, and it is used only by Luke. The other evangelists call him Rabbi, or Lord. The word here used means a "prefect," or one placed "over" others, and hence, it comes to mean "teacher" or "guide."

“At thy word - At thy command. Though it seemed so improbable that they would take anything after having in vain toiled all night, yet he was willing to trust the word of Jesus and make the trial. This was a remarkable instance of "faith." Peter, as it appears, knew little then of Jesus. He was not then a chosen apostle. Jesus came to these fishermen almost a stranger and unknown, and yet at his command Peter resolved to make another trial, and go once more out into the deep. (Barnes’ Notes).

“all night—the usual time of fishing then (Joh 21:3), and even now Peter, as a fisherman, knew how hopeless it was to "let down his net" again, save as a mere act of faith, "at His word" of command, which carried in it, as it ever does, assurance of success” (Jamieson-Faucett-Brown).

“we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; which carries in it an objection to what Christ advised and directed to: they had been fishing that "night", which was the best time for catching fish; and they had been at it all the night, and had "laboured" hard; and were even "fatigued", and quite wearied out; and what was most discouraging of all, their labour was in vain; they had caught "nothing":

“nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net; which showed faith in Christ, and obedience to him:” (Gill’s Exposition).

**6And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.**

“Their net brake - Or their net "began" to break, or was "about" to break. This is all that is implied in the Greek word. If their nets had actually "broken," as our English word seems to suppose, the fish would have escaped; but no more is meant than that there was such a multitude of fishes that their net was "on the point" of being torn asunder.” (Barnes’ Notes).

8When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

“When Simon Peter saw it - Saw the great amount of fishes; the remarkable success of letting down the net.

“He fell down at Jesus' knees - This was a common posture of "supplication." He had no doubt now of the power and knowledge of Jesus. In amazement, wonder, and gratitude, and not doubting that he was in the presence of some divine being, he prostrated himself to the earth, trembling and afraid.

“Depart from me - This is an expression of Peter's humility, and of his consciousness of his unworthiness. It was not from want of love to Jesus; it did not show that he would not be pleased with his favor and presence; but it was the result of being convinced that Jesus was a messenger from God - a high and holy being; and he felt that he was unworthy to be in his presence” (Barnes' Notes).