

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES: STEPS TO CALLING MEN LUKE 05:01–11

Introduction

Jesus Christ set out to catch men, that is, to catch them for God. He desires to catch all men, but He is unable to catch everyone by Himself. He needs help, the help of all who will follow Him. The present passage is a descriptive picture of how Jesus goes about calling men to help Him in the enormous task of reaching the world.

- I. Lake Gennesaret (v. 1).
- II. Step 1: taking a view of people who need to hear the Word of God (v. 1).
- III. Step 2: seizing resources (vv. 2-3).
- IV. Step 3: removing reluctant obedience (vv. 4-5).
- V. Step 4: demonstrating godly power (vv. 6-7).
- VI. Step 5: stirring a deep confession (vv. 8-9).
- VII. Step 6: challenging men to discipleship, that is, to catch other men (v. 10).
- VIII. Step 7: watching for the decision to forsake all (v. 11).

I. *Luke 05:01 Lake Gennesaret*

The scene of this experience took place on Lake Gennesaret which was the same as the Sea of Galilee (See *Sea of Galilee*, Mark 1:16; Luke 8:22).

MARK 01:16

SEA OF GALILEE; LAKE GENNESARET; SEA OF TIBERIAS

A fresh water lake in northern Palestine. At its widest points, it was only about 13 miles north to south and 8 miles east to west. It would not be called a sea today because of its small size. There are several important facts to note about the Lake.

1. The Lake was known by several names: the Sea of Galilee (Mat 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 7:31); the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; 21:1); the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1); and simply the “lake” (John 6:16-25) or “the water’s edge” (Luke 5:2). In the Old Testament it was called the Sea of Kinnereth (meaning harp shaped) (Luke 8:22; John 6:16-25; Num 34:11; Deu 3:17; Jos 13:27).
2. The Lake was surrounded by some of the richest and most heavily populated areas of Palestine. Large towns flourished along its shores, towns which play a prominent role in Scripture: Capernaum (See Mat 4:12-13), Bethsaida (Mark 6:45), Khorazin (Luke 10:13), Magadan (Mat 15:39), the region of Gerasenes (Mark 5:1).

3. The Lake was subject to violent storms. It sat 680 feet below sea level which gave the Lake a warm climate, but it was in a pocket-like basin surrounded by steep, fast-rising hills (2000 feet high) and funnel-like mountains. The funnels or deep ravines running down through the mountains have resulted from eons of erosion. When cold-fronts move in with their fierce winds, the cold whips through the funnel-like gorges and mixes with the warm temperatures of the Lake. Unpredictable and terrifying storms result (Mat 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). □

II. *Luke 05: 01 Hunger for Word of God v Righteousness — Vision*

The first step to calling men is taking a view of people — people who need the Word of God. The people were actually crowding around, (*epikeisthai*) Jesus. They gathered and *crowded around* Him. Note why: to hear the Word of God. They crowded in to hear the Word of God.

They had a craving, a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Note two things.

1. Jesus met the hunger and thirst of people.

Mat 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Luke 6:21 “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”

John 4:14 “But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”

1 Pet 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Rev 7:16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Psa 36:8 They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.

Psa 107:9 For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Isa 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

Isa 58:11 The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

2. Jesus saw that He could never meet the needs of all the people, not by Himself. He needed others to help.

Luke 10:2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

III. Luke 05:02–03 Seizing Resources and Opportunity

The second step to calling men is seizing resources. Jesus had to find some way to handle the throng of people both then and later. The crowds were so large and their needs so many that He just could not handle their disorder. He could not meet the needs of everyone. Standing there and being confronted with the present problem, He scanned the horizon for some way to handle the matter.

As He looked around, He saw an opportunity and laid His plans. He saw a boat and a fisherman in the boat, and He needed both. The boat could be used as a pulpit, and the man could become a disciple. He asked the man to let Him use the boat as a pulpit and to steer the boat out from land a short distance. The point is this: Jesus seized and used the resources available. He had the vision of people's need of the Word of God, but He needed a pulpit and others to help; so He scanned the horizon and found both.

John 4:35-36 "Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together."

IV. Luke 05:04–05 Reluctance and Obedience

The third step to calling men is the *removal of reluctant obedience*. As soon as Jesus finished His preaching, He decided to win Peter's loyalty and discipleship. But first, He had to humble Peter. He had to show Peter that He, the Messiah, could look after and take care of him. He told Peter to put out to sea and fish. Peter objected because he had fished all night and had caught nothing. However, he stopped right in the middle of his objection and obeyed Jesus. Note what had happened.

1. Peter was reluctant to obey Jesus. He objected to what Jesus asked. He was thoroughly *exhausted*, for he had "worked hard all night." He was *disappointed*, because he had caught nothing, and he had worked enough hours already. Despite needing to be home in bed, he had stayed to help the Lord in His preaching by loaning his boat to Him.
2. Peter caught himself in the middle of his objection and obeyed. What caused the switch, the change from reluctance to willing obedience? Probably two things.

- a. Peter was pretty well convinced that Jesus was who He claimed to be, the Messiah.
- b. Peter was drawn somewhat to follow Jesus. Therefore, when he began to object to Jesus' will, there was a prick of conscience, and he obeyed his conscience. He followed his heart...
 - not his *mind*, thinking there were no fish.
 - not his *experience*, having already tried and failed to catch fish.
 - not his *body*, being too tired and exhausted, just incapable of going on.

Thought 1. Reluctance should always give in to obedience. We need the spirit that will *try* for God, no matter what the obstacles or how hopeless a situation may seem.

Thought 2. When a man is drawn to Christ, he desperately needs to obey his heart and to obey it immediately.

Rom 12:11 *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Heb 6:12 *We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

V. **Luke 05:06–07** *Obedience and Demonstration of Power*

The fourth step to calling men is demonstrating godly power. Peter's obedience produced results: his obedience caught fish, and the catch was no ordinary catch. It was much more, so much more that there could be no question about Jesus. Jesus was behind the miracle; Jesus was demonstrating the power of God. (Remember this was the very purpose of Jesus — to win Peter's loyalty and willingness to become a disciple on a full-time basis.) What happened is a little humorous when we remember what Jesus was doing with Peter, and Peter's reluctance and objection, weariness and exhaustion. There was a sense in which the Lord was really laying it on Peter, really letting him have it. Peter thought he was tired, but he did not know what exhaustion was yet. The Lord must have stood to the side smiling to Himself. How our Lord loved this man Peter, even now! He was after Peter's loyalty, and He was going to get it even if He had to make Peter drop in his tracks (which was exactly what was to happen, v. 8). At any rate, there was some humour in what began to happen to this man who was so reluctant, moaning and groaning about his tiredness. Just imagine Peter already bone weary, grumbling in his mind at this carpenter's telling him, the skilled fisherman, how to fish. Imagine Peter's exhaustion and weariness, reluctance and objection, moaning and groaning; and then all of a sudden a catch is made, a catch so great that he was going to have to work wearily along for hour upon hour.

=> Peter's net broke.

=> Peter had to call for another whole crew and boat to help.

=> Both boats were filled to full capacity.

=> Then to top it off, both boats began to sink.

Jesus had His man! What else was Peter to do other than what followed? In all the humour of the situation, our Lord's heart was bound to be full of rejoicing because this big hunk of a fisherman, man though he was, was like a little child before the Lord. He was broken in humility before the Lord, and the experience was but the first of many experiences of brokenness yet to come.

Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted."

Isa 43:13 "Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

VI. **Luke 05:08–09** *Stirring a Deep Confession*

The fifth step to calling men is *stirring a deep confession*. Peter knew exactly what had happened. He had been reluctant and objected to the Lord's request, and he had not been too happy that the great catch had caused so much trouble. But he was a skilled fisherman, and he knew that the great catch was no ordinary catch; it was a miracle of the Lord, a miracle which the Lord was using to teach him that he was to obey without reluctance and objection.

Note exactly what happened. When Peter saw the boat beginning to sink, he raced over to Jesus, fell upon his knees, and in a sense (continuing the humour) said, "Lord, I've had enough. Let me alone. I'll do anything." His confession was threefold.

1. He confessed his sin of disobedience and unbelief: of being reluctant to obey the Lord, of questioning the Lord's will and knowledge and power.
2. He confessed Jesus to be the *Lord*. Note that Peter had previously called Jesus *Master* (epistate, v. 5), which is a word used to address anyone in authority. But Peter had learned better. He now called Jesus *Lord* (kurie). He is the Lord who is holy and convicting, who must be obeyed and followed.
3. He confessed a fear, a reverence, an awe for the Lord (see v. 9-10).

Isa 6:5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Job 42:5-6 "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Dan 10:16 Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless."

Gen 18:27 Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes."

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Jer 3:13 *“Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favours to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,” declares the Lord.*

Ezra 10:11 *“Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.”*

VII. **Luke 05:10** *Calling Men to Discipleship and Mission*

The sixth step to calling men is *challenging men to discipleship*, that is, to catch other men. Note two significant facts.

1. The words *don't be afraid* (me phobon) indicate that Peter was actually scared and frightened. Jesus was calming him, telling him to trust and stop fearing. He, the Lord, was in charge and looking after everything.
2. The call to Peter was to “catch men.” The word *catch* (zograo) means to *catch alive or to catch for life*. The idea is that Peter was no longer to catch (fish) for death, but he was to catch (men) for life.

Mat 4:19 *“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Jude 1:22-23 *Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear — hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.*

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”*

Isa 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Jer 1:4-5 *The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

Prov 11:30 *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.*

Dan 12:3 *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*

LUKE 05:10 JAMES

There were two disciples named James. (1) The James mentioned in this passage, the brother of John, was the son of Zebedee. He along with Peter and his brother John formed an inner circle around the Lord (Mat 17:1; Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). He is never mentioned apart from John. He was killed with the sword by Herod (Acts 12:2). (2) James the less was the son of Alphaeus (Mat 10:3). He was called *the less* because he was shorter of stature.

It should be noted that two other men named James are mentioned in the New Testament. (1) There is James the Lord's half-brother (Mat 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19). He and the Lord's other brothers and sisters did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah until after Jesus' resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14). James, however, became a great leader and pastor in the early church. He pastored the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12), and he wrote the Epistle of James. (2) There is also James who was the father of Judas (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13,). □

MATHEW 10:02 APOSTLE (APOSTOLOS)

To send out. An apostle is a representative, an ambassador, a person who is sent out into one country to represent another country. Three things are true of the apostle.

=> He belongs to the One who has sent him out.

=> He is commissioned to be sent out.

=> He possesses all the authority and power of the One who sends him out.

The word apostle has both a narrow and a broad usage in the New Testament.

1. The narrow sense. It refers to the twelve apostles and to Paul as an apostle (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1). In this narrow sense, there were at least two basic qualifications.
 - a. The apostle was a man chosen directly by the Lord Himself or by the Holy Spirit (see Mat 10:1-2; Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:13; Acts 9:6, 15; 13:2; 22:10, 14-15; Rom 1:1). He was a man who had either seen or been a companion of the Lord Jesus.
 - b. The apostle was a man who had been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1).
2. The broad sense. The word "apostle" refers to other men who preached the Gospel. It is used of two missionaries: Barnabas (Acts 14:4, 14, 17) and Silas (1 Th 2:6), and two messengers, Titus (2 Cor 8:23) and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). There is also a possibility that James, the Lord's brother (Gal 1:19), and Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7) are referred to as apostles.

In the narrow sense, the gift of an apostle was bound to die out because of the unique qualifications to receive the gift. But historically, in the broad sense,

there is perhaps a sense in which the qualifications and gift itself are still given and used by the Lord. The Lord's servants of all generations must *see* the Lord and know Him intimately. Similarly, we must personally *see and experience* the power of the resurrection. Certainly there are some in every generation who have so *seen* the Lord Jesus and who so know and *so experience* the power of the Lord's resurrection. Perhaps the Lord Jesus endues some with the very special gift of an apostle to be used in a very special way throughout His most precious domain — the church. □

VIII. *Luke 05:11 Decision to Forsake Everything*

The seventh step to calling men is *watching for the decision to forsake everything*. Note three things.

1. The men responded immediately.
2. The men left everything: their businesses, their professions, and the biggest catch they had ever seen.
3. The men followed Jesus. He was the Lord who had spoken, and they were to be His disciples who obeyed and followed.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Luke 14:26 *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple."*

Luke 14:33 *"In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

John 12:26 *"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me." ■*