

**Epiphany 5C 2010**  
**Luke 5:1-11**  
**Sermon for Advent LC**  
**February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

### **“The Call has Come”**

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and the one who calls us to go, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

VOCARE...that is the word I want to talk about today- some of you should know it as we have talked quite a bit about it through our Spiritual Gifts class. For some of you, it is probably foreign- which is okay as it is a Latin word ☺. Say it with me...VOCARE- make sure you get some gusto in there.... Okay...so there it is- what does it mean? The word means “to call” and for Martin Luther was a central word in his understanding of the life of us as Disciples of Christ. The notion of being called in our daily life as something that is inseparable from our life of faith was and is an essential piece of Luther’s theology. Notice the similarity between vocare and vocation- your vocation is your calling- that’s what you do with your life is your place then to serve the Lord your God- if you are a teacher, a stay at home parent, an office worker, a retired whatever... that is where you are at and the quest then is to bring your faith into that part of your life. We use the word “call” or “calling” quite a bit when we talk about ministry and faith- but I wonder if we really take seriously the calling that God has given us- or if we write it off as one of those church words that really does nothing. You have heard me say it many times- the gift of Christ’s love for you is the call to follow him in your life- so let’s not write that word off today...let’s think a little bit about what God is calling you to do...friends, Christ calls you to follow just as he called those disciples in our Gospel- God has called you- do you hear him? What is he saying, where is he leading? How do you respond? Yes it seems once again that the charge of our scripture for today like the last couple of weeks is really about you living out the faith that God gives you.

We will come back to those questions in a minute but to get an idea of the way lives are transformed when Christ encounters people we must look at the Gospel a little bit. Most of the people that were working the waters of the Lake of Gennesaret or the Sea of Galilee fished from the shore or hired out crews to work for them- never fishing from their own vessels. But according to Luke, Simon Peter and his brother owned their own boat. And the other boat belonged to James and John or to their father Zebedee. They also owned nets- very fancy equipment for that region. We can conclude from all of that that these fishermen had a good thing going- they were not poor people eager to jump at the next best thing, these were people who were making a living, a good living and who eventually give it all up for the calling to follow. I think this is telling about Jesus- before people give up all they have, and the fruits of their labor you would assume they know what they are getting into before they say yes.

Often times when we talk about this Gospel we tend to conclude that Jesus just showed up on the lake shore, built a pulpit out of some driftwood, did a miracle, shared his message and they were so impressed they left everything immediately and followed him. Most likely, what really was going on was that these men knew Jesus- they all were from Galilee and grew up there- they had heard his message and had time to evaluate the cost of following this wonderful teacher and miracle worker. At the very least they were aware of the cause and purpose of Jesus' ministry. So the call came- Jesus perhaps knew they were ready- they had time to ponder it and when the call came they could not refuse- they traded in the fruit of their labor, the work they had sweated over to say yes. But for what? They traded their economic security and 401(k)s in for personal gain. They chose a relationship with Jesus for their identity and embraced the mission and purpose of Christ as their own. Was it worth it? Did they get their money's worth? They said yes...to the call- to the opportunity to use their time and their skills in the cause of Christ. Christ called- they said yes, Christ called- them to use who they were to further his kingdom...they trusted Jesus, they knew Jesus, the call came...they could do no other but respond by saying here I am Lord. They weren't sure of what it meant...they took a risk, they were even maybe afraid- but Jesus said do not be afraid and they went. And they never went back to their boats and nets.

So let's come back now to you and where you are at. You know this Jesus a little at least. I hope you know that you are loved and blessed beyond measure because of the fact that his love is for you no matter where you are at and what you have done and how badly you may have turned against him. You know that he feeds you at the table of grace, asking no questions but rather opening his arms and his being for you completely. He promises to walk with you- and even if you are down and out- unsure of how he may be working- his promise is that he loves you. And now that Lord that God that Christ comes to you in your life, and asks you to consider the vocation that he gives you. What my friends is God calling you to do? I don't know specifics...but I do know that you all are called and I do know that you are the only one that can really know- through prayer, through conversation, through time the gifts that God has given you are precisely the gifts you must use to further his kingdom. God calls you friends, to be his hands and his feet, to do His work on this earth- you are the fisherman on the edge of the lake and Christ has come to you- put down your nets... whatever they may be and follow. Trust God- fear not- take the leap and go.

You know I come back a lot to the way God works in our lives. And I trust that you and me, and all who are part of this ministry have something to offer the work we are about. I pray dear friends that you are able and willing to take a risk in your faith- to listen to the nuances of where God is calling and to live out your faith somewhere, somehow, now. God has called- come with me- don't be afraid...be bold in your response to the gift of that calling. God loves you and so do I. Amen.

