

Miracles of Jesus 12-05-13b

We resume our study here looking at the miraculous draft or catch of fish as it is recorded in Luke chapter 5. We've seen the parallel over in Matthew chapter 4, which is, by the way, also found in Mark chapter 1, verses 16 through 20. And the reason that it is much earlier in Mark is that Mark, of course, is giving Peter's account of his time with the Lord Jesus. And this is the point where Peter, Andrew, James, and John begin to accompany the Lord Jesus full time.

It has been episodic. He would join Simon and perhaps Andrew, Simon, or John, or the various ones of them would be with Jesus on some occasions and not others. There were synagogue sermons that he preached that they did not hear.

They stayed home and fished or they spent time with their families or whatever. But at this point, Jesus begins the active phase of his ministry. And one of the things we see here is that in Cana and a few other places, Jesus says, My hour has not yet come, but this is now the time of public proclamation.

And Jesus has first gone and made the word known and done miracles that were of a more private nature inside a house at a distance. When he wound up having a whole bunch of people and big crowds starting to see miracles, he would leave. He didn't want to make an issue out of the miracles themselves or an issue out of his healing ability.

They were supposed to be the means to an end. And what is it that they do? What is the message that they convey? Well, as in miracles of the Old Testament, they authenticate a messenger from God. Truly, this man is operating in the power of God.

We've never seen anything like this. No magician can fake it. No physician can reproduce it.

These healings are profoundly divine power in action. So this man has a connection to God. He is from God.

God is enabling and empowering him. So I should listen to what he says. It is identification.

Those who know their Old Testament prophecy know that the Messiah will come. The servant will come and open the eyes of the blind, both literally, but more importantly, spiritually. That he will proclaim freedom to the captives.

These are those held captives in demon possession, held captive by disease, held captive by blindness or deafness or lameness or whatever else they might be afflicted with. And to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. This is the Jubilee year.

This is the removal of debts and forgiveness of sins and the Jubilee. It's a year of

renewal. It is a time of opportunity.

That's what Jesus is declaring. And that's what the miracles were supposed to communicate. When people were missing that message in droves and creating a false issue, this is why Jesus told people he healed, don't tell anyone.

And when they did, it confused the issue. People came from all over to see and benefit from the miracles and they had no interest in the kingdom. They had no interest in God or the things of God.

Didn't really care who Jesus was. He could have been Beelzebub from Syria for all they knew. If he could heal, that's all they cared about.

And that's not why he came. My purpose is to preach the gospel of the kingdom. And anything that started interfering in that, even some of the means, he had to reduce the significance, reduce the frequency, reduce the emphasis on it, so that he could get back to his mission.

This is the kind of analysis and the kind of correction, of course, that we have to engage in ourselves. And we do it through prayer. We do it through meditation.

We ask God to give us a clear vision. What should I be doing? Regardless of the consequences, regardless of who criticizes, we follow the plan and purpose of God. So, we've seen that as the preaching is concluded and Jesus says to Simon, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

Now, we noticed earlier, especially from the Matthew and Mark accounts, that Simon and Andrew have been casting their nets. Well, net casting, and Jesus is standing on the shore and sees them. So, guess where they are not? They are not in the deep and they're probably not fishing from the boat.

Jesus sees the boats parked. They're doing that shore net casting that you see. They say, well, we've been out all night on the sea and didn't catch anything.

Maybe the fish are up here at the shore. Let's try the small nets and see if we can gather something. Have you ever seen these guys do this net cast type of fishing? It's a beautiful, graceful thing.

These nets, whatever they make them out of, they look white. They've got weights all around the edge and they gather them in a particular way. This is like packing a parachute, I guess, but they gather them a particular way.

When they fling them, they open up into a perfect circle and they land right on the water. Then the weights take down to the bottom. Then there's a particular way to gather that net so that you keep any fish that were trapped underneath inside.

It's really a thing of beauty. You can watch it for just minutes and minutes and minutes. Watch these guys casting.

Well, this is what Simon and James and John have given up. They're cleaning their nets. They're saying, look, we're going to go to the tavern and get a beer.

This is a worthless night. I'm going to get a beer and take a nap. Probably not a beer.

Probably cool water from the well or something. But they've given up. You know how dogged and determined Simon is.

He's not going to let that effort go without some kind of reward. If he only catches a few minnows, he can at least say it wasn't totally in vain. He's got his brother out there helping him.

Jesus says, go out to the deep. This is where they were all night. In the daytime, this isn't apparently the place to fish.

But at your word, master, notice Peter recognizes the Lord Jesus' authority. He calls him master. We've fished in this place you're sending us to all night and caught nothing.

Nevertheless, at your word, I will let down the net. And we've seen the result. They nearly sink two boats with this catch.

And this is the big net. This is the boat net, not the one they were casting at the shore. This is the big heavy duty net.

And even that takes at least four men to haul it in. When Peter sees this, now this is the great thing. This is one of the reasons that Peter is in that top three of disciples.

What's the purpose of a miracle? To communicate divine truth. It's not just an end in itself. Jesus doesn't just feel sorry for him and say, oh, no fish.

Well, that might hurt the business. Here's a way for you to get some fish. And now your business is to help your family.

Why is Jesus doing this? There is a point. And the great thing about Simon Peter, whatever else you want to say about him, is he gets it. He gets the point.

When he sees all of these fish, he doesn't say, Bonanza! We've met our quota for the month. Oh, let me do the calculations. I can pay off the boat.

I can buy a new net. I can add some men. I can go to this fishing spot.

I'm going to get this Jesus to come with me every time I fish. And we're just going to make a real business out of this. What is the conclusion that Peter draws when he sees this catch? He falls at Jesus' knees and says, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O

Lord.

Now, can you enter into this reaction? It's kind of difficult to figure out, how did he get to this point in his mind? Jesus has just done this wonderful, amazing, supernaturally provident thing, and Peter says, Lord, get away from me. I am a sinful man. He's looking at a net full of fish, two boats sinking, overladen with fish, and he says, I'm a sinful man.

How did he get there? What does this miracle communicate? What channel is Peter tuned into that he gets this message? Well, what was he thinking earlier? While Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and he was casting his nets, and finally he and Andrew look at each other, and they haul them ashore, and they start cleaning them along with James and John. Jesus says, hey, row me out in the boat. Peter says, no, perfect.

I can't even clean my nets. I've got to sit out here so Jesus can preach. I'm sympathetic to Jesus.

I'll do it. But, you know, his mind is probably working, and he's frustrated. He's tired.

He's been probably 24 hours without sleep. And when Jesus says, go further out, and Peter says, all right, this is, you know how long my day has been, oh Lord? You know how frustrated I am at this point? You want me to do more fishing in the deep with the big net? Nevertheless, it's your word. I'll let it out.

He obeys, but it's under, you get the idea, the connotation here is that there is some reluctance and not a totally positive attitude. He's not like, oh, great. He's not expecting anything.

And when it comes in and he recognizes that professional fishermen notwithstanding, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory, and he, and Peter is thinking back, he controls creation. He has authority over demons. He has authority over sickness.

For crying out loud, he's even got authority over the fish. And when the Lord Jesus decides it's time for fish to be in the net, look how obedient these fish are. Jesus apparently has issued a command of some sort, and these fish have entered the net and are sinking two fishing boats.

And he says, here's my grudging, tentative, iffy obedience, and look at what creation does. Look at what the demons do. Look at what illness and disease and sickness do.

He has been obedient, but what was the quality of his obedience? Why does he say, I am a sinful man, even though he's been obedient? He knows what the quality of his obedience was. It was under duress. It was just barely won out over.

Forget this. Why would Peter say in this context, at this time, depart from me. I'm a

sinful man.

I would suggest that Peter is thinking, Lord, you need disciples that are a whole lot more faithful and committed than I am. I almost didn't come out here. I had complete reservations and questions in my mind.

I didn't think this was a good idea. I didn't really believe any good was going to come of it, and look what you have done anyway. It reminds you of Israel coming out of the land of Egypt, where God blessed and provided and cared for them, and their faith was of such a sputtering, sporadic, on-again, off-again nature.

And Peter sees it in himself, and he says, Lord, depart from me. You need somebody that is not as sinful as I am. And we've seen similar reactions when people recognize that they are in the presence of deity.

You remember Ezekiel, for example. You remember Isaiah in chapter 6. Woe is me, I'm a man of unclean lips. And he's obedient.

He's a prophet of God. He's got the biggest prophetic book in the whole Bible. And Isaiah said, essentially, depart from me.

I am a man of unclean lips. And that's when the angel grabs the coal and says, I've got a cure for your lips. Now get busy and be obedient.

And it's a reminder to us that our failures, our hesitations, our uncertainties should not be an excuse. It is apparently good enough for the Lord. With our frailties, with our inadequacies, with our fallenness, God can use us.

It is in our weakness that his strength is made manifest. It's not an advertisement to be weak, but our weakness shouldn't discourage us. It shouldn't limit us.

It shouldn't put us off. We shouldn't say, oh, Lord, you just carry on with your plan. Get some other people and go on and do great things.

I'm too sinful. No, you're not. Why does he say this? Look at verse nine.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken. They were all astonished. But who is it that says, depart from me for I'm a sinful man? It's not John.

It's not James. And it's not Andrew. It's Peter.

Because he recognizes the distance that God has spanned. Remember that great hymn at Calvary? Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span. And that channel of communication in this miracle hits Peter full force.

This is the Son of God. This is the Lord of glory. I am not qualified even to be near him.

Peter doesn't say, I'm leaving. He says, Lord, you need to leave me. Jesus said to Simon, what? What is the real motivation here? Jesus pinpoints it.

What's the completely basic motivation behind Peter's words? Lord, depart from me, I'm a sinful man. What's the motivation? Do not fear. Do not be afraid.

Peter didn't say, Lord, I'm scared of you. He said, depart from me, I'm sinful. But Jesus knows why he said it.

Why did he say it? I cannot measure up. I am too sinful. I am fallen.

I am flawed. I am inconsistent. I am plagued and fraught with trouble.

And you need to get away from me. It's fear. And Jesus says, don't fear.

Don't be afraid. And we might have trouble diagnosing ourselves in this regard. But Jesus has no trouble at all.

Me phobu. And this is, by the way, is the gentle negative. Me is the milder of the two Greek negatives.

Me phobu. Jesus is gentle with Peter. He doesn't give him a stark command.

What's the matter with you, you mean afraid? He says, look, don't worry. Me phobu. Don't worry.

People that have phobias, they're worried about crowds or heights or diseases or whatever it may be. He says, look, don't be worried. Do not fear.

From now on, starting now. And this is a great principle of Scripture. Jesus knows what happened the previous night.

He knows what's happened that morning. He knows what was going on in Peter's mind when he rode him out to preach. He knows what was in Peter's mind when he rode him out to the deep and was very reluctant to throw out the net.

Lord, this isn't going to work. But if you say so, we can do it. Jesus gives him a look, and he goes ahead and does it.

But all of that's in the past. Jesus says from now. Apa nun.

From now. Pick up now. Think about what can start and what the potential is now.

Paul says it a different way, forgetting those things which are behind. I press for the mark of the high calling of God. This is a point of application.

When we become aware of the enormity of who God is, who the Lord Jesus Christ is, when we see the plan and purpose of God unfolding, we think there are so many people that are better at this, so many people that are more spiritually gigantic than I am. They're more gifted in speech. They're more gifted in action.

They're more gifted in perception. I look around and I see all these people that God can really use, that God seems to be using. I am just kind of a stick in the mud.

Lord, you go on without me. You accomplish your plan without me. And Jesus says, look, don't let that fear.

What is it a fear of? Fear of failure? Fear of falling short? Fear of being shown to be the sinful people that we are? Jesus says, don't let that fear get a foothold. We are not given a spirit of fear. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of what? A spirit of power, of love, and of self-control, sound mind, sobriety, balance.

Do not fear. From now on, you will catch men. Now, this is a profound statement.

You know, I will make you fishers of men in Matthew, Mark, and so on. Jesus says here in Luke, from now on, starting now, you will catch men. Now, what kind of fisherman is Peter? Amateur or professional? He's professional.

What has he just done in the preceding 24 hours? He's used all of his professional skill, all of his talents, all of his knowledge, all of his experience, and caught zilch. Doesn't have a minnow in his lunchbox to show for it. At the time that Jesus declares, in the way that Jesus declares, in the place that Jesus declares, when Peter obeys, his catch is bigger than anything he's ever seen in his life.

And Jesus says, don't be afraid from now on, you will catch men. How is he going to catch these men? Is he going to be using his talents and his experience and his skills? He will catch men the very same way he caught these two boats full of fish. In God's time, in God's way, in God's place, at and by means of God's Word.

That's how. Not by human wisdom, not human advertising, not human gimmicks, not human promotional techniques, human sales strategies, which by the way are rife in the church today. Well, we'll do a marketing study, we'll take a poll, we'll analyze the neighborhood, we'll figure out the demographics, let's have a focus group, let's try a film, let's bait and switch, let's woo them with non-confrontational friendship, and once we've kind of hooked them with a friendship, then we'll spring the old gospel on them.

In God's time, in God's place, in God's way, at and by means of God's Word. Think about it, remember it, everything in our life is this way. It's God's time, it's God's way, it's God's place, it is at and by means of God's Word.

That fruit is produced, that fish are caught, that people are blessed. So when they had

brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed him. There's a great study you can do on forsaking in the Word of God.

I think even your New King James may have many of the references here. Do you have a note J right there next to they forsook? My New King James does. But the passages are the same ones I have in my notes.

In Matthew 19, 27, Peter answered and said to him, See, we have left all and followed you, therefore, what shall we have? What is going to be the result? We have forsaken all. And this is where Jesus said, if you've forsaken these various things, you're going to have them a hundredfold. For my sake and the sake of the kingdom.

Mark, chapter eight, verse thirty four, when he had called the people to himself with his disciples, also he said to them, whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Very interesting statement for Jesus to make, because nobody knows anything about the crucifixion at this point. Right.

It's Mark, chapter eight. We're not down to chapter 14 and 15. Mark, chapter eight, whoever desires.

And when we went through Mark, I translated this Greek very intensively. Whoever desires to end up where I am ending up. Let him deny himself and take up his cross and go where I go.

If you want to arrive at my destination, you've got to drop your priorities and your personal goals and follow me on the path. If you want to get to the destination, you've got to follow the path and to follow the path. You've got to drop your personal baggage.

That's what this verse says, 834 of Mark. In Luke, chapter nine, you have the rich. You have the man, different ones come to Jesus wanting to follow him.

Here's a young man that comes up and Jesus says to him, follow me. But he says, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Jesus says, let the dead bury their own dead.

You go and preach the kingdom of God. Another said, Lord, I will follow you. But let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.

Jesus said to him, no one having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. Doesn't say fit for salvation is fit for the kingdom. This is the place of function, of blessing, of reward, of opportunity, of inheritance, of possession, of fulfillment of Old Testament promises, because this is the Old Testament age.

And once you embark, once you commit, once you endeavor, you don't start plowing the furrow and then say, well, I think the ox can take it from here. I'm heading to the house and get a drink of cool water from the well. No one having put his hand to the plow and

looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

If you're going to plow a straight furrow, if you're going to finish the field, you've got to be looking ahead. You've got a mark up ahead of you. It's a fence post.

It's a tree. It's something that guides you so that you can keep your furrow straight. And if you put your hand on the plow and you're looking behind you to see how, well, how did that furrow turn out? Any crops coming up yet? You're looking behind you to see what kind of furrow is behind you.

No, you look ahead and make sure that what you are currently plowing is straight and where it needs to be. Is there a stump? Is there a rock? Are you going straight? You plow. You look ahead.

This is obedience. This is sensitivity to the word of God. What did we say? The crop is going to grow.

The fruit is going to be born. The fish is going to be caught. The men are going to be blessed and caught.

When? God's time. God's place. God's way.

By and according to God's word. That's the pattern. Same thing in John 12, 26.

If anyone serves me, Jesus said, let him follow me. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. A lot of people want to serve.

There's a great hymn. Living for Jesus. A life that is true.

Trying to please him in all that I do. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also.

If anyone serves me, him the Father will honor. The Father will honor. That's an exciting prospect.

We think about the judgment seat of Christ. But the honor comes from God the Father. So when they had brought their boats to land, notice there's still responsibility.

They will delegate this. You know what's really interesting to me is when you look at the parallel in Matthew chapter 4. I wonder if you notice the detail going on from there after speaking to Simon and Andrew because that's the boat that he's in. Remember the other boat that is also about to sink has got Jacob and John.

I was talking to Brian on the break. If you look at this in Greek, you know that James is kind of a sneaky thing they've done in the New Testament because in both Greek and Hebrew, it's not James, it's Jacob. Jacobas and Ioannes are the names.

But I don't know if it's because it was King James and they thought they'd lay it on a little thicker for him. But anywhere Jacob occurs in the New Testament, they translate it James. There's no M in it anywhere.

There's a K and a B. It's Jacobas. This is Jacob and John. They are sons of Zebedee in the boat.

And notice we see Zebedee. This is one of the few places we actually see Zebedee. We also know that his wife's name is Salome.

Zebedee and Salome are the parents of Jacob and John. And Zebedee is in the boat. When Jesus calls them, they immediately left the boat and they left their father, Zebedee.

Zebedee in Hebrew is Zebediah. Zebediah. And it comes from the same root as Zebulun.

When Leah has Zebulun and she says, I've now had seven sons and this is my endowment. This is my gift from the Lord. I've had a perfect number of sons.

Well, Zebed means gift or endowment. And Zebulun is a play on that word. And she gives that explanation back there in Genesis.

Well, Zebediah is gift or endowment from the Lord. And Zebedee evidently is too old. It's not his calling.

It's not his place to go follow the Lord Jesus. So what does he do? He stays home and runs the fishing business. His gift, his endowment to the Lord is his sons.

His sons will follow Jesus full time. Zebedee will nail down the home front. But you know that he's honored by God and he's not a ne'er-do-well because his name is so frequently associated with James and John.

How many other disciples have their fathers named? Simon does. Simon Bar-Jonah. You have Nathanael Bar-Ptolemao.

Nathanael Bar-Ptolemao. But many of the disciples, you don't know who their antecedents were because they're not honored in Scripture. But Zebedee is, time and time and time again.

Zebedee's mentioned all through the New Testament. Why? Because he's a good guy. But it's not his place to drop everything and follow the Lord Jesus, leave the fishing business, leave the nets, leave everybody hanging, all of the people that depend on the business.

But they leave their father and his very name tells you what he has done. He is a man of prayer, evidently. He is a man of faith, evidently.

And he recognizes that his place is not to go to the front lines. It is to be in the rear with logistics. His gift, his endowment to the Lord is his two strapping sons, Jacob and John, James and John.

So, it is different for different people. You know, there used to be a saying, it was prevalent back in World War II, they also serve who only stand and wait. Not everybody can be in the front lines.

Not everybody can be out there with a point of a bayonet. Not everybody can be out there with a net. Not everybody can be out there preaching.

We all go to the Lord God and we look for His time and His place and His method and His Word and His will. And we seek to obey. We seek to be faithful.

We seek to be obedient. We want to abide in the vine so that we can bear fruit. When the Father prunes us, we don't get discouraged.

We don't say, oh, I'm a sinful man. Lord, You go on without me. Just leave me here.

I'm not qualified. The Father's going to prune us so that we can bear more fruit. We take that pruning.

If we're getting chastened, what does the Bible tell us? That's a sign that God loves you. Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. And this is practical love.

This is living love. If we're getting our toes stepped on, if we're getting our spanking, as it were, that's because God is giving us practical love. He's working with us.

He is using us. We are in the fight. We are in the fray.

We are useful. We are in need of correction so that we can be more useful. We are in need of pruning so that we can bear more fruit.

So, when we have adversity, when we have discouraging circumstances, when we see just the magnitude of who God is and what He's doing compared to us made of dust, sometimes it's just a discouragement. We say, you know, Lord, You've got better people than me to accomplish this plan and purpose. Just depart from me.

I'm a sinful man. Jesus says no. Don't be afraid.

The root of that, oddly enough, is not humility. It's fear. Jesus didn't say be proud.

You're too humble. He said don't be afraid. This is fear coming out.

Don't be afraid of your own shortcomings. Don't be afraid of your own weaknesses. These are opportunities.

What fun would it be if there was nowhere to grow? If there was nothing to learn? If there was nothing new to stretch into? What fun would that be? It is in our weaknesses and our places of failure where we're going to see the power of God strengthen. Broken bone is strongest at the break after it heals. Welded metal is strongest at the weld.

When God fixes us, we're stronger than we were beforehand. So, it's no fun to be broken. It's no fun to be sinful.

It's no fun to fail. No fun to receive the chastening of the Lord. No chastening is pleasurable while it's happening, but what does Scripture say? It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

And that's our goal. Jesus understood His purpose. It is the fruit of righteousness.

It is fulfilling the plan and purpose of God. That's the goal. What is our goal? Bear that peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Lay hold of righteousness by faith. It's the same thing. And when we do these things, the abundance... Now, how many people got blessed by that miraculous catch of fish? Everybody down the supply chain.

There's abundance of fish. The price is going to go down. Supply and demand.

There's going to be more fish for more people. This blessing expands out well beyond, Peter. They managed to haul this stuff to shore.

What do you think happened to it then? It goes to the market. There is, by the way, a nice windfall for the business, which is going to help fund the early phase of the ministry because Peter and Andrew and James and John have got a pocket full of shekels, and so they're going to be able to afford to travel with the Lord Jesus. This is not just a sign.

It is also a provision. Why would Jesus say, come follow me? You don't need to work for the next couple of months because look at the money you've got from selling all of these fish that I have given you. You are free.

The Lord Jesus freed them from business responsibility. All Zebedee's got to do is count the money now. Make sure the fish get hauled to market and he can preside over this windfall that's going to last them for months.

They've never had to catch a fish like this. Why? Not just as a sign. Not just as a communication.

But it is provision. Now they are free to come and follow him full time for the foreseeable future. Everything works together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.

So these are things for us to meditate on and try to see the implications of and applications of in our own lives. Well, we are going to see another miraculous catch of fish, another miraculous draft of fish toward the close of our miracles study. And we will be revisiting this and looking at the now this is a favorite thing for English majors comparison contrast.

What's the same and what's different in the second miraculous draft of fish. And when we get to that one that is really fascinating and it will be built on the foundation of this one. So keep your notes and we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how vividly and effectively you have communicated to us your plan and purpose, the means by which we can accomplish those things in our own lives. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will encourage us, motivate us, enlighten us through these truths so that we can be good and faithful servants.

We can be fruitful branches. We can lay hold of righteousness by faith and fulfill your plan and purpose and calling in our lives, starting at this moment, now and for all of the time allotted to us in the days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.