

Text: Luke 5:1-11

Title: “Your ONE ... How?”

If my records are correct, I’ve asked you to do this at least 1,800 times over the past 28 years and I want to ask you to do it one more time. Open your Bibles. Open your Bibles to Luke 5:1. In this last series of messages I’ve tried to call us again to make Jesus’s main thing *our* main thing. If you ask Jesus, “What is Your main thing?” He would say, as He did in Matthew 28:19, “Go and make disciples...” And we cannot let lesser things distract us from that.

So to keep us riveted to the main thing of Jesus we’re challenging ourselves these days with the question: “Who’s Your One?” We’ve talked about the “who.” Who in your circle of relationships needs to come to Christ? We’ve talked about the “why.” Why bother? We do it because the soul of every person on earth is of great worth to God. And then today we focus on the “how.” How can we be mobilized as followers of Jesus to get in on the mission of Jesus?

More than 200 of you have brought “Who’s Your One?” prayer cards to the steps of this altar. There’s a bookmark in the seat back. Write just the first name of your one, tear it off and bring it to the altar at the end of the service. We’ll join you in praying.

What we have here Luke 5 is a pivotal moment in the mission of Jesus. He is casting the vision for the mission He came to this earth to accomplish ... to bring salvation to people who are far from God. **Read Luke 5:1-11.**

Jesus has a mission but He doesn’t intend to do it alone. If we are followers of Jesus then His mission will be our mission. And make no mistake. Jesus will accomplish His mission. He said the gates of hell cannot stop His church. Evangelism will happen. People will pass from death to life ... from darkness to light ... from the power of Satan to the power of God. The big question for you and me and for Travis Avenue: Are we going to be in on what He is up to? This is why we exist. So how do we insure that when the Lord returns He will find us in the middle of what He is up to? First, there must be...

1. A FAITHFUL COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL

In this scene Jesus shows us His purpose for being in the world. In v.1 He’s standing on the shore of the lake around which so much of His ministry revolved ... the Sea of Galilee. What is He doing? He’s speaking and people are hearing

“the Word of God.” That’s the Gospel. Now the crowd makes it difficult for Jesus to communicate and He wants to make it possible for the maximum number of people to hear the Gospel. So in v.3 he turns one of the fishing boats into a stage for the Gospel. The boat happens to belong to an expert fisherman named Simon (we’ll know him later as Peter) who will eventually be the leader of the disciples. Jesus climbs into the boat and Peter pushes it out a little ways from the shore and from there Jesus taught the people the Gospel. This is His main thing and we learn from Jesus that we need to make whatever adjustments are necessary to insure that the maximum number of people can hear the Gospel.

So Jesus climbed into Peter’s boat, but more importantly He climbed into Peter’s life. That’s what I pray will happen for us ... for Jesus to climb in and take over our lives and our church for the sake of getting the Gospel to as many people as possible. Every soul in our city deserves to have repeated opportunities to hear, see and respond to the Gospel.

Again, the Gospel is that simple, but powerful message that God came to this world in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, who lived the life we were supposed to live, died the death we deserved to die for our sins, was raised from the dead to give us victory over sin and death and to make it possible for us to have a relationship with God. And through the proclamation of that message Jesus has the power to capture and transform anyone who trusts in Him.

When the Gospel is above everything else, we make whatever adjustments are necessary to get that Gospel to the people who need to hear it. So buildings and budgets and music and programs and whatever else we have must reflect a faithful commitment to the Gospel. Next, there must be...

2. AN OBEDIENT RESPONSE TO THE LORD

This is not about what we want the church to be; this is about what Christ commands the church to be. That’s what it means to follow Christ. We obey all He has commanded us to do. We see that in v.4 where Jesus commanded Peter, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” We’ll never feel urgency about the Gospel until we see it in response to our obedience to Jesus. Notice Peter’s response. **Read Luke 5:5.**

Normally fishing was done at night. During the day the boats were pulled up on the shore and the nets were washed and mended in preparation for the next night’s fishing. And now Jesus is telling them to go fish in the daytime when fishermen

typically don't fish. Yes, they are professional fisherman, but they understand exactly who Jesus is. He is "Master." The word means "leader" ... one with power and authority. Peter said, "Master, we fished that hole all last night with no luck, but *because you say so* (at your word), I will let down the nets." "Because you say so..." are the most important words in discipleship. It's a matter of obedience.

So the big question is this: Will we put aside our excuses and our agendas and simply obey Jesus? Is He Lord or not? This isn't some optional feature to the Christian life. It is Jesus' main thing. I'm not sure Jesus is all that concerned about the things we get bothered about ... the style of music we sing or the time we have Sunday School or whether the lights are dimmed or not. We will give an account for what we have done with the Gospel in obedience to the command of Christ. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love you'll do what I command."

There has to be a faithful commitment to the Gospel, an obedient response to the Lord, but also...

3. AN INTENTIONAL MOVEMENT TOWARD THE LOST

Notice in v.4 that the nets are to be let down "for a catch." This is a story about catching fish, but it's clear that Jesus is using it as a parable about catching people. He's casting the vision for the mission of rescuing lost people. He wants His followers to move toward the lost ... toward people who are headed to an eternity separated from God. They must be rescued. Put out into the deep. Push away from the shore and go where you can actually catch fish. Let down the nets. Try to reach them.

ILLUSTRATION – In my very first pastorate we had a godly man named Ellery Lawrence. One Saturday I was at the church office finishing up preparations for Sunday. I had been working in the yard and I was filthy, but I didn't think anyone would see me. I heard a knock on the office door and it was Ellery. He said, "Pastor, I feel we need to go see Ira and Wanda. Will you go with me?" Ira and Wanda lived near the church and had attended from time to time, but they had never been saved. I said, "Ellery, I can't go out in public looking like this." He said, "C'mon, let's go." So I went with him. That Saturday afternoon we sat in Ira and Wanda's living room and shared the Gospel with them and they both prayed to receive Christ. The very next week Wanda called to say, "Pastor, there was an accident at Ira's job and they just told me that he's been killed." I hung up the phone and sat there stunned. And then I thanked God that Ellery obeyed that prompting to go see them.

You see, these building and the ministries we have here are just the locker room where we get suited up and get the game plan clear in our minds and hearts. But the game is not played in the locker room; it's played on the field. And the time we have together here on the Lord's Day and other times is to prepare us for living the mission of Jesus in our homes, our neighborhoods, our jobs and in our schools. Jesus said in...

Mark 8:35 - For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

You see, established, historic churches like ours can find ourselves striving to save our life ... our traditions, our programs, our buildings, our reputation from the past. Jesus said that's the best way to lose it. It's only as give up all of that for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel that we will gain our life. Are we willing to lose "our life" to gain "His life"?

And v.6 says that "when they had done so they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break." Jesus performed a miracle. But it wasn't until they obeyed Jesus and moved out to where the fish were that the supernatural power of God was unleashed. Jesus could have just made the fish jump in the boat, but He doesn't usually do it that way. He uses us as we obey and move toward non-believers with the Gospel. And what a catch it was. **Read Luke 5:7.**

Nets breaking ... boats sinking ... calls for help. The task and the harvest was more than could be handled by one boat and crew.

Isn't that what we want to see happen? This kind of supernatural power was unleashed because they were doing what Jesus told them to do. But also, if we're going to be in on what Jesus is up to in this world there must be ...

4. A HOLY AWE BEFORE THE LORD

Notice how Peter responds to this. **Read Luke 5:8-10a.**

With their nets breaking and their boats sinking and their cries for help needed, the disciples knew better than to take credit for what had happened. Simon Peter's response is one of awe at having encountered Jesus Christ the Son of Almighty God. We must never lose our awe of the Lord and our own unworthiness in the work He has given us to do and in any success that may come from it. It is God who gives the harvest and He gets the glory. We don't want this so people will say,

“What an awesome church!” We want this so people will say, “What an awesome Savior!”

How do we stay in the middle of what God is doing to reach the lost? We need a faithful commitment to the Gospel, an obedient response to the Lord, an intentional movement toward the lost, a holy awe before the Lord and then ...

5. A HOPEFUL EXPECTATION FOR THE FUTURE

Now Simon Peter and the other disciples had never seen anything like this in their lives. They are absolutely astonished and Jesus knows it. **Read Luke 5:10b.**

Church, I want you to hear Jesus today like Peter did: “Don’t be afraid.” Don’t be afraid of taking risks. Don’t be afraid of rejection. Don’t be afraid of the future. Don’t be afraid of sacrifice. Don’t be afraid of catching the wind of the Spirit and following the leadership of Jesus into the future. Don’t be afraid.

Jesus said, “From now on you will catch men.” The account of this in Matthew’s Gospel quotes Jesus:

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

Think of all the things Jesus could have said in completing that sentence: Follow Me and I will make Bible scholars. Follow Me and I will make you great moms and dads. Follow Me and I will make you a beautiful choir. Follow Me and I will make you great worshippers. Follow Me and I will make you great social reformers. Certainly all of those things are desirable for us as followers of Jesus. But Jesus’ main thing is this: Follow Me and *I will make you fishers of men*. If we are following Jesus we will follow Him in what He is doing and where He is going. And where is He going?

Luke 19:10 - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

That was the point of His coming to this earth, dying on the cross, being raised from the dead, ascending back to heaven and sending the Holy Spirit. And He did that so that we would have power to be His witnesses and continue His mission to seek and to save the lost. We can never forget that or be distracted from that.

ILLUSTRATION – In 1932-33 there was a revival in the Shantung Province in northern China. Revival always seems to awaken a new obedience to the Word and to the mission of Jesus. Those Chinese believers took to heart Acts 1:8 where Jesus said, “The power of the Holy Spirit will come on you and you will be my witnesses starting in Jerusalem and going to the ends of the earth.” The gospel came to China at the “ends of the earth,” having begun in Jerusalem. So they had a burden to complete the circle and take the Gospel back to Jerusalem, which by then, needed the Gospel to be proclaimed again. So they began the trek from China toward the Middle East. They got to the border of China and it was closed. They were not permitted to go further. Rather than turning back and returning to their homes they planted their lives in the villages along the border, waiting for the border to open again. Many of them died before the mission could continue. But when they were buried they asked that their gravestones be facing toward Jerusalem to encourage those who came behind them to carry on the mission.

Luke 5:11 says that they pulled their boats up on the shore and traded one kind of fishing for another. They left everything and followed him. Nothing is more important than following Jesus in His exciting mission to seek and to save the lost. That’s the call of Jesus to you and to me. It’s the call of Jesus to Travis Avenue.