

## **Let Us Launch Into the Deep**

Luke 5:1-11, the 5th Sunday After the Epiphany, 9 February 2025

Today, we hear a powerful story in the Gospel where Jesus calls His first disciples. Simon Peter and his companions had spent the entire night fishing, working hard, exhausting themselves, but catching nothing. As morning breaks, Jesus steps into Peter's boat, teaches the crowd, and then gives an unusual command: "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Peter, though tired and perhaps doubtful, responds: "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." And in that moment of obedience, the impossible happens. Their nets overflow with fish—so much that they need help to carry the abundance. But the miracle is not just about fish. It is about trust, surrender, and a deeper calling.

This Gospel speaks directly to us, here and now, as a small but faithful congregation with limited resources, diverse people, and many challenges. We, too, have been working, giving our best, doing what we can. And yet, perhaps, we look around and say, "Lord, we have worked, but we are still only half-capable. We are trying, but we remain small. How can we do more?"

And today, Jesus answers us as He answered Peter: "Put out into the deep."

### **What Does "Launching Into the Deep" Mean for Us?**

First, it means trusting Christ beyond what we can see. Peter was an experienced fisherman. He knew the waters, the seasons, and the best techniques. And yet, his human expertise failed him. But when Jesus told him to cast the net again, Peter trusted not in his skills, but in Jesus' word.

For us, this means trusting that God's work in our church is not limited by our size, our budget, or our capacity. What we lack in resources, God can multiply. What we think is impossible, God can make possible—but we must be willing to act in faith.

Second, launching into the deep means going beyond our comfort zone. Jesus did not tell Peter to stay near the shore. He said, "Launch into the deep." It is easy to stay where we feel safe, to remain where we know what to expect. But growth, transformation, and miracles happen when we step beyond the familiar.

For our congregation, launching into the deep means asking:

- Where is Jesus calling us to step forward in faith?
- How can we serve beyond our limits?
- How can we reach those outside our usual circles?

Maybe it means reaching out more to migrants and refugees, or opening our hearts and doors to those who have not yet found a church home. Maybe it means dreaming bigger than what seems possible.

Third, launching into the deep means believing in God's abundant provision. The disciples' nets were empty—but when they obeyed, they overflowed. The miracle was not in their fishing ability; the miracle was in their trust and willingness to obey. For us, this means believing that God will provide what we need to continue His work. We may feel financially limited, but God's grace is never in short supply. We may be small, but God has used small communities throughout history to change the world. We may think we are not ready, but God does not call the equipped—He equips the called.

On this Racial Justice Sunday, we are also reminded that stepping into the deep means confronting the injustices that persist in our world. Just as Jesus called Peter beyond his expectations, He calls us to go beyond the boundaries that divide us—to deepen our commitment to justice, dignity, and equality for all people. The church is called to be a community where **no one is excluded, no voice is silenced, and no one is judged based on race, color, or background**. It is in these deep waters of justice and reconciliation that Christ calls us to cast our nets and embrace the abundance of His kingdom.

### **What Does This Mean for Our Church?**

We are at a turning point, much like Peter was. We have worked, we have labored, we have remained faithful. And today, Jesus is standing in our boat, speaking to our church, telling us: “Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people.” This is an invitation—not just to sustain ourselves, but to launch into something deeper. To go beyond simply surviving and step into a mission of faith, growth, and transformation.

So today, let us ask ourselves:

- Where is Jesus leading us to go deeper?
- What is holding us back from casting our nets in faith?
- Are we willing to say, like Peter, “Lord, if you say so, we will do it”?

We have to launch into the deep. Not to fear the unknown, but to trust that Jesus is already ahead of us, preparing an abundance beyond what we can imagine. May we, as a church, say YES to Christ's invitation. May we be a community that steps beyond limitations and into faith-filled action. And may we discover, just as Peter did, that when we trust Jesus, our nets will never be empty.

Dear friends, let us launch into the deep with faith, with courage, and with trust. Our congregation may not have everything, but we have Christ—and that is more than enough. Amen.