

On the Shore Or In the Boat?

SPIRITUAL
GROWTH

Quick Backdrop

Before Jesus invited Simon Peter to be a disciple, Peter was just a regular guy who worked hard to support his family using his talent for fishing. That was his view of life: work hard, fish hard, use your talents to make a living. Luke's gospel shows how Jesus changed Simon Peter's point of view and helped him understand what it means to use your talents in God's kingdom.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Read in the passage below how Jesus called Simon Peter to follow Him. You may want to print out the passage. As you read, highlight the words "catch" and "caught." If you've printed out, draw the mesh of a fish net over these words.

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV)

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."

¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Fold or Cut

Now look at the words you highlighted. What's the ultimate catch?

Write out a short description of Peter's mental state right before Jesus asked him to put down his nets. Think about the timing of Jesus' invitation.

What do you think made Peter willing to say "yes"?

When Peter said "yes" to Jesus, what happened to his catch?

Based on Peter's reaction to the catch of fish, why do you think he responded the way he did?

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

We don't know what Jesus was teaching the folks by the lake, but we can guess that Peter was listening as he washed his nets. He'd been up all night, casting and casting with no luck. He felt wiped out and vulnerable. Then Jesus showed up. Maybe you feel the same way: tired and vulnerable.

Put yourself in the Luke 5 scene. Were you just one of the crowd that day? Or was Jesus asking to use your boat—your gifts? Would you rather stay onshore with the crowd, or are you ready to answer Jesus' invitation to head out for deeper waters? Pick one.

___ Stay onshore with the crowd

___ Head for deeper waters

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

Based on what happened to Peter, think of some ways (and jot them down) God could use you and your gifts if you decided to say, "Yes, Lord, I'll follow you!"

The scene in this passages ends with Peter, James and John pulling their boats up on shore and walking away with Jesus. Eventually, Jesus then used them to change the world. Write down a practical action step you can take for each way God might use you—an action step that says to Jesus, "I'm ready for you to use me."