

“Who Is the Best Fisherman in Your Family?”

Luke 5:1-11

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Who is the best fisherman in your family? That’s easy for me to answer. It is my oldest child, Jason. He is an outdoorsman who would have loved being Daniel Boone’s sidekick. When his birthday rolled around as a child and adolescent, he would ask for fishing equipment more than anything else. One of the happiest mornings of his life was the day he left to go to Canada on a fishing trip with a group of men from our community. He was only eighteen.

If I were to go fishing with Jason this afternoon and try to tell him how to catch fish, he would be amused and annoyed. While I have done some fishing in years gone by, I would not classify myself as a fisherman. I certainly don’t know as much as Jason about fishing.

I suspect that Peter was amused and a bit annoyed the morning Jesus tried to tell him how to fish. It occurred on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus had used Peter’s boat as a floating pulpit. “Put out in deep water and let down the nets for a catch,” Jesus said. 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.”

What do you think you know more about than Jesus? I think Peter felt superior to Jesus when it came to fishing. After all, Peter was a fisherman and Jesus was a carpenter. Fishing was Peter’s area of expertise. Jesus knew a lot, he reasoned, but he knew more about fishing. Turns out Peter was wrong. He probably caught more fish that morning than any other.

Let me ask again. What do you know more about than Jesus? How to arrange values and priorities? How to handle conflict or temptation? How to deal with problems and challenges? How to earn and manage your money? How to run your business? How to parent your children? How to have fun? How to pick friends? How to deal with your enemies? Do you sometimes get amused or annoyed when someone suggests that you seek His will when you are facing a decision? You might want to take a lesson from Peter and reconsider. Jesus knows a lot more than you think. He’s more than a good carpenter.

The first thing that caught my attention when I read this story in Luke 5:1-11 was Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ instruction about fishing. The second was Peter’s reaction to Jesus after he caught the net load of fish. “When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘Go away from me Lord; I am a sinful man.’ ” Why this reaction? I am not sure. Perhaps Peter was overcome with a sense of guilt and shame for thinking that he knew more about anything than Jesus. I am confident this was not the first time they had been together. All indications point to a previous meeting. Simon even referred to Jesus as “Master” rather than the usual term, “Teacher.” Peter knew Jesus to be a holy man with exceptional skills. He just did not realize how exceptional and maybe how holy.

However, Peter knew how sinful he was and felt very uncomfortable in the presence of one who was not like him. His solution to those feelings of guilt was to order Jesus to leave so he would not be reminded of his glaring inadequacies.

I've felt that way, haven't you? I can identify with Peter. Did you want to show your parents a bad paper or report card? Did you ever run out of the room or ask them to leave your room? I think that's how Peter felt that day. He couldn't leave this big catch of fish, or so he thought! So, he told Jesus to leave. Been there. Felt that. Done that. Imagine you have, too.

The third thing that I noticed in this story was Peter's reaction to Jesus' command that Peter leave everything behind and follow him. "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men.' So, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

Jesus did not obey Peter's command, did he? He refused to leave the seashore but instead invited Peter and his companions to follow him, which they promptly did. Why?

I think Peter saw in Jesus one who could make the world a better place to live because of his wisdom, power, and authority and he wanted to help him. I also think Peter learned that day the importance and value of unquestioning obedience. It was time to trust Jesus, not doubt him. It was time to follow not fish. So, Peter left everything, and that was a lot, to follow a man who would give him more than he could have ever provided for himself.

What is it time for you to do today? Is it time for you to realize that God knows more about life than you do and seek His will? Is it time for you to quit running away from Jesus when you do wrong and repent so he can forgive you? Is it time for you to make a commitment to follow him and get serious about helping him to make the world a better place? I hope so and also hope you will.