Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide February 23, 2025

To Follow Jesus

Our Vision

Luke 5:1-11

KEY VERSES

Once while Jesus[a] was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and 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 way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

To reflect on the second part of our vision statement, *to follow Jesus*, we turn to Luke 5 where Jesus calls his first disciples. Weary and discouraged from an unsuccessful catch, the fishermen trust Jesus' advice to "put out into the deep water." Being in the presence of the divine especially overwhelms Peter: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" And almost simultaneously, the moment of their commission comes (v.10); Peter's inadequacies not excluding him for relationship or service to the Lord. **Can you relate to Peter's feelings of unworthiness? How have you experienced the Lord asking you to follow him in spite of yourself?**

"Following" has become such a common part of our modern-day vocabulary, as we're bombarded with endless sources to inspire, teach, and entertain us. Following Jesus, however, involves a faith built around a person rather than concepts or strategies. These first disciples were called to *just be with him* – which is why we center our worship and congregational life here at Covenant around Christ as our focal point. Even though he might lead us in places we don't choose to go, his exciting invitation invites us also to a whole new way of life. This call begins when we respond to his call to repent and believe the gospel to be true. **When has following others inspired you and also disappointed you? How ready are you to truly follow Jesus?**

Between the goodness of creation and the promise of eternal life, we are called to follow Jesus in these "middle times" -- the everyday, mundane, routine parts of our lives. Mark Labberton, in his book "Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today," says, "The vocation of every Christian is to live as a follower of Jesus today. In every aspect of life, in small and large acts, with family, neighbors and enemies, we are to seek to live out the grace and truth of Jesus. This is our vocation, our calling. Today." **Reflect on the people and places God has called you to during these in between times. Knowing**

that these middle times will be full not only of joy, but of conundrums and meaningless routines, how does the truth of the gospel help you live more intentionally?

Today's passage from Luke 5 and also John 21 are similar stories involving fishing, and show us how we are each like Peter – called by grace before we truly believe, and then affirmed in grace even after we deny Jesus. This post-resurrection story from John 21 shows us the change in Peter after three years of following Jesus. **This change invites us to reflect on our own journey with Jesus. How did you become a person of faith? What difference has God made in your life because of your faith?**