

**Luke: Catch**  
**Sermon 1-20-2019**  
**Pastor Curtis Dehmey**

**Luke 5:1-11**

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!”<sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>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.” <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

**Message:**

Today I want to start by showing you a diagram that comes from a book by Skye Jethani called, “With.” After the 9/11 attacks the immediate response by many of us was “We’re in danger.” What does danger induce in us? What feeling comes about? Fear. What does fear cause us to do? And I’ll give you a hint, it’s not panic. Control. When we’re in danger or we perceive something as dangerous we naturally become fearful and because we’re fearful we naturally try to control things. We seek safety and security. Once we become “safe” or feel “safe” or we seem to believe that we have control, we’re always caught off-guard by the danger. So let’s go back to our example. What did we do in the wake of 9/11? After we experienced danger and felt fearful? We tried to control our airport security much more tightly. Baggage is thoroughly checked now and no one is allowed beyond the security checkpoint without a boarding pass. That will do it right? Just increase our security. But what if on any given day a pilot feels extremely depressed because of some life circumstances and in the middle of the flight

decides to crash the plane. Well...baggage checks and security checkpoints don't fix that. So we become fearful again and we try to control again. This time we decide to take the pilot out of the equation. We have come a long way with technology. So why not have a computer fly the plane from one spot to the next. But then someone, somehow hacks the computer and sends the plane crashing. Now, I'm not trying to induce your fear of flying. In fact, statistically speaking, flying is safer than driving your car every day. What I'm trying to point out to you is that this cycle will never end. You could apply this cycle to many parts of your life. And this cycle will only get crazier and crazier as life goes on. There is always going to be something that undermines your sense of control and safety. Control and safety, then become an illusion.

Also in Skye Jethani's book he retells a story of Henri Nouwen, the Dutch priest, professor and author. In Jethani's words, "While in Germany, [Nouwen] attended a performance out of curiosity and found himself transfixed by the artistry of the acrobats. But in the flying and spinning Nouwen saw more than an exhilarating show—he saw theology in motion. Nouwen observed that the flyer—the person soaring through the air—is really not the star of the trapeze performance. While everyone is focused on the flyer's aerial maneuvers, they sometimes fail to see that the maneuvers are only possible because the flyer fully trusts that he will be caught. Everything depends on the catcher." If we take a look at our passage, we learn that the fishermen were done for the day, they were washing out their nets. And imagine their disappointment, Simon, also known as Peter, later indicates that they had caught nothing that day. Fishing was a major source of their diet. So no fish, meant no food. This wasn't for sport. But then this random Rabbi comes along in Jesus. "Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God [It was too crowded for all to hear Him], <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, [Why not? They were done for the day.] and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing.'" Now let's stop there for a second. What's the danger in this scenario for Simon? They won't eat or they may waste valuable time fishing when they could be finding other sources of food. So the fear is, Jesus is crazy and He's wrong and Simon has wasted valuable time. Simon could have said to Jesus, "We already tried that Jesus. I don't appreciate you wasting our time with this request. There is no way there is all of a sudden fish in the sea. I'm out of here." That would have been an action of control. And the next day Simon may come out to the sea and try the

same thing and have a different result. He may catch fish the next day, but he will miss Jesus. But Simon doesn't respond that way. Pay attention to this carefully because this is the key to our passage. He says, "Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." Simon says in some many words, "Why not?" Simon has every reason not to do this, yet he obliges and surrenders to Jesus' request.

Before we jump into what happens next between Simon and Jesus, let's return to Henri Nouwen and his experience with the trapeze artists. Jethani says, "This led Nouwen to a new way of understanding his life with God. 'I can only fly freely when I know there is a catcher to catch me,' [Nouwen] wrote. To more fully engage his new metaphor for the Christian life, Nouwen was fitted with a harness and ascended the trapeze himself. The sixty-something former Yale and Harvard professor giggled as he flew. And like a child, after each descent to the net, he would ask to go up again and again. Knowing he was safe allowed any fear of heights or injury to be replaced with childish joy. [Nouwen] said, 'If we are to take risks, to be free, in the air, in life, we have to know there's a catcher. We have to know that when we come down from it all, we're going to be caught, we're going to be safe. The great hero is the least visible. Trust the catcher.'" If we return to our diagram from Jethani, the way we get out of this crazy cycle of danger, fear and control is we stop trying to control everything and we do what Nouwen and Simon does in our passage, we surrender to Jesus. If we surrender our insatiable need to control and the illusion of safety, we will embrace a new cycle, a healthier cycle. A cycle that brings life and promise. A cycle that brings hope that is beyond our making. See, the Danger, Fear, Control cycle is that of the World. The Surrender cycle leads us to safety because we are in His arms and we trust him. Which leads to faith. The more we surrender, the more safe we feel, the faithful we are. This trinitarian, Godly cycle with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, strengthens us and strengthens our faith in Him. If we return to our passage watch this Godly cycle at work. "6When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7So 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." Their surrender leads to what they couldn't imagine. They gain so many fish that they need help from others and their boats began to sink. Surrender lead to safety, in terms of having food to eat. Surrender also lead to faithfulness and further surrender in Simon. A new sense of trust was established. "8But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'9For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon." Simon's initial surrender with the net lead to further surrender to Jesus. Simon exemplifies repentance and whole-hearted devotion to Jesus. His actions represent belief that Jesus is the Messiah. And

because of Simon's surrender and eventual faithfulness not only does he surrender his life to Jesus, so do his companions, James and John. Surrender leads to more surrender. Surrender leads to others surrender and faithfulness. "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.'<sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him."

Let me ask you this, "How trustworthy is Jesus?" Do you believe He will catch you? I think many of you know the intellectual answer to that one. So let me ask a second question that's like it but it isn't the same, "How much do you personally trust Jesus?" Think about your life circumstances. Think about what you're walking through right now. How much are you living by the crazy cycle of the world? How much are you living by the Godly cycle of surrender? In all the things that scare you and you're concerned about, do you personally trust Jesus in those things? See, what Simon exemplifies at the end of our passage, is that following Jesus isn't an add-on to our lives. Jesus isn't just something extra we bring into our lives as if it's just another activity. Simon, James and John left everything and followed him. They totally re-prioritized their lives. Jesus and faith wasn't just a reason to live their lives, Jesus became THE reason that they live their lives. Now you might say, "woah, I don't want to commit to that much." Then maybe you need to check if you really believe in Jesus. Because those who believe in Jesus understand that their whole lives are re-ordered and reprioritized around Jesus. It's not just about getting what you want out of Jesus. Exploiting Jesus. It's not because that's the right thing to do though. It's because we/they have experienced the sweet peace of surrender. We know that the more we surrender to Jesus and trust in Him in every aspect of our lives, the more He leads our paths and the more we have peace. Now, that doesn't mean we don't have any troubles in our lives, but surrendering to Jesus takes the sting out of our troubles because we trust Him and know that He is faithful. We live within the peace of His communion. We no longer engage in the worldly cycle.

When Simon agrees to lay out his net at Jesus' command, he does as Henri Nouwen referred to, he trusts the catcher. And because Simon trusts the catcher, He catches a sinking boat of fish. Which causes Simon to be more faithful. Simon took a risk to trust the catcher. We, too, can take risks in trusting Jesus, to surrender to Him and I can guarantee you, you will not be disappointed. And then Simon takes the next risk and surrender his whole life to Jesus. And what happens because Simon surrenders His whole life to Jesus? We see it in the book of Acts, especially. Simon Peter becomes the rock on which the church is built. Simon Peter becomes the conduit in which the entire world will know Jesus. We were just studying this on Wednesday night. Peter fulfills what Jesus foretold in Luke 5 in Acts 2. 3,000 people come to Jesus on Pentecost because of the movement of the Holy Spirit through Peter's preaching. The Holy Spirit's fire penetrates and

convicts the hearts of the crowd and brings them to their knees to repent. Peter catches people. Imagine what could happen if we surrender our lives to Jesus and the movement of the Spirit. Imagine what could happen if every fear and concern we ever have we surrender to Jesus. How would your family be transformed? How would this church be transformed? A life surrendered to Jesus leads to more lives surrendered to Jesus. It's contagious. It's infectious. As we see in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit, the movement of God spreads like wild fire in the hearts of men and women. So, I implore you to get out of the crazy cycle of control and get into the peaceful cycle of surrender to Jesus. To trust in Him. To grow in faith in Him. To trust the catcher. I guarantee you, you won't be disappointed. He will catch you if you fall. He will guide you on every step if you trust in Him. Amen.