

# The Local Church That God Blesses - Evangelism in Depth

by Peter Brandon

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*The sermon explores the depth of evangelism through the parable of the miraculous catch of fish, emphasizing the importance of spiritual preparation and reliance on the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 49:30

**Scripture:** Luke 5:1

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Spiritual Preparation"

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## Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of evangelism through the parable of the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5. He illustrates how Jesus used this miracle to teach the disciples about their new mission to 'catch men' and the importance of being prepared and cleansed for effective ministry. Brandon highlights the necessity of washing the nets, launching out into the deep, and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to see true growth in the church. He encourages believers to engage actively in evangelism, emphasizing that genuine repentance and a heart for the lost are crucial for experiencing God's blessings. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a humble response to God's work, recognizing our need for His grace and power in our efforts to reach others.

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## Transcript

Now tonight we're going to look at this subject of evangelism in depth and I'm going to take you back to Luke's gospel and we're going to look at a parable of it but I'm sure you will see in this parable and miracle a wonderful picture of evangelism. Luke 5 and we shall read from verse 1 And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Janezareth and saw two ships standing by the lake but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets.

And he entered into one of the ships which was Simon's and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land and he sat down and taught the people out of the ship and when he had left speaking he said unto Simon launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft and Simon answering said unto him master we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net and when they had this done they enclosed the great multitude of fishes and their net break and they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship that they should come and help them and they came and filled both the ships so that they began to sink when Simon Peter saw it he fell down at Jesus knees saying depart from me for I am a sinful man oh lord for he was

astonished on all that were with him at the draft of the fishes which they had taken and so was also James and John the sons of Zebedee which were partners with Simon and Jesus said unto Simon fear not from henceforth thou shalt catch men and when they had brought their ships to land they forsook all and followed him and God will bless to us the reading of his word thank you when we study the miracles of Christ we find quite easily on the surface that they were performed in three ways there were those miracles that were related to the earth and there were those miracles that were related to the sea and there were those miracles a few of them at least that were related to the air to show to us that the doer of these miracles were sovereign over the earth the sea and the air now if you

watch carefully nearly all the marine miracles with the exception of one or two have a strong evangelical lesson and that is why i want to speak upon this great miracle of the miraculous catcher fish in the daytime the miracles of the lord jesus as far as we know were performed for a threefold reason first of all they were performed to bring alleviation to those that were suffering with sickness and disease secondly they were wrought in order to show to us that the doer was the son of god and that is why in john's gospel the miracles are called signs because they were signs to his divinity and then lastly the miracles were performed in order to teach us a spiritual lesson we are materialistic people and we live in a materialistic society and sometimes we have to see some supernatural

event in order to see a spiritual lesson in fact if you sometimes follow the teaching of the lord jesus you will find that he spiritualized his own miracle just before the raising of lazarus he said i am the resurrection and the life he that lives and believes in me shall never die and here we find right on the surface that the lord jesus spiritualizes this miracle he says to the apostles from henceforth thou shalt catch men so you can see from that simple citation that this miracle has an evangelical lesson they were catching live fish for the purpose of killing now says the lord you're going to have a much better occupation you will catch dead fish for the purpose of living and isn't that a lovely thing in evangelism we don't catch the we catch the dead and we do so for the purpose of

living but i must say that some of them wriggle very much before they're caught perhaps they're dead but they won't lie down now what we're going to do tonight is to look at the beginning of this miracle and see almost a perfect introduction to evangelism and then we shall follow the teaching of the nets and first of all we shall see that the nets were washed then the nets were lowered then the nets were filled then one net was broken and then last of all we shall see the net was left and if i may put this in a much more poetic way the washing of the net the letting down of the net the filling of the nets and the leaving of the net now if we can get through that tonight we shall see evangelism in depth first of all i want you to note the people if we're going to have new testament

evangelism we must speak to the people quite frankly it's ridiculous for us to preach the gospel to be initiated it's absolutely vital in evangelism that we get the people and therefore we find something that's quite new in scripture the people pressed upon him you will never find a statement like that in the old testament immediately man sinned the presence of god was almost a repellent some of you will recall the occasion when the lord came down on mount sinai and he told them come not near and even if an animal touched the mount it was put to death some of you will remember that when the tabernacle was erected and the temple the way into the holiest was not made open because the veil was that petition that prohibited man from coming into the presence of god so in the old testament you

will never find that the people pressed upon jehovah but the moment god is manifest in the flesh what a difference the people press upon him in view of the cross and his atoning sacrifice he was going to offer

forgiveness to the whole world and because of the coming of the holy spirit men were going to be regenerated and in view of that tremendous fact the people press upon him dear friends wherever you find in a building the real inductive presence of the lord jesus you will always find a great congregation when it's noise that jesus is in the house you will always find the place packed with people seeking him so there's our first lesson secondly i want you to note the preacher the preacher is the lord jesus and he was there in order to preach the word of god you see the crowds did not

come to see a healing the crowds were not there to see visions and signs and wonders in john chapter 2 he did not commit himself to the people because really they were after the spectacular and they were not after the simple principles of faith so jesus did not commit himself to them but you will notice the difference here the people press upon him to hear the word of god now i believe that is tremendous as evangelicals we only have two authorities and no more one is the authority of the word of god and the other is the authority of the holy spirit and when we begin to announce and preach in the power of the spirit the word of god you will find blessing but you see first of all we have to get back to the word and then secondly we have to get back to the power of the spirit and then

thirdly i want you to note the pulpit it was peter's ship now of course we don't read of this in the old testament but during the maccabean period when they were having a kind of a revival they added to the law of god and so the historians inform me during that period they said that a fishing boat was unclean well you will never find that in the old testament so immediately the lord cuts right against tradition note this the lord jesus never violated a scripture but he always violated tradition and therefore we find him now sitting in peter's boat rendered unclean by the pharisaical world and there he is preaching the word of god beloved in gospel preaching we must be flexible when we preach the gospel allow me to emphasize this we must preach the gospel from the scriptures but when we

preach the gospel we must be flexible we mustn't be hidebound by tradition we must go everywhere with the word of god and quite frankly sometimes in the most unusual places i've experienced the mighty power of god i remember once having a coffee meeting in a home in scotland in a place called tobol and there would be only about 12 people in the room but whilst i was just quietly announcing the gospel i felt the unusual power of the spirit and then suddenly three people cried out to be saved in that room and they were gloriously saved you see we got away from the mere traditional platform we went into a little home and there we saw the mighty power of god i remember one night there in the red lion public house in cumbran again i want to say this i never frequent a public house to drink i

am a total teetotaler but if they give me the opportunity to preach the gospel and they're all unsaved in a public house and a few backsliders i go in and in that public house i felt the unusual power of god and one man was gloriously saved and that man is quite a well-known preacher in wales today you see the moment we get among the people and we move among the people there's always blessing so you can see now this is a beautiful background to evangelism the people the preacher and the pulpit and when he had finished preaching now that's a good lesson in gospel preaching we must never be too long now of course quite frankly i'm stabbing myself on the platform but we must never be too long we must know when to start and we must know when to finish in ministry that's a different matter but

in gospel preaching it's far better to give the whole message within 40 minutes and then finish for the unsaved man and woman are not used to long so so when he had left speaking he said unto simon peter after they had washed their nets launch out into the deep now that little expression washing their nets fascinates me first of all why were they washing their nets now i know this is not a good exegesis but this

is thrown in by your poor preacher i'm going to suggest they were washing their nets because they had toiled all night and caught nothing and so right they said we must wash our nets now my dear friends there are three ways in which we can look at baroness first of all when we're barren and our gospel meetings are not very productive we can say something like this we're living in

the last days the church is in Laodicea and therefore we mustn't expect blessing we must just go on being faithful now if you excuse yourself like that the lord will never give you blessing or secondly you can say well we have preached the gospel we have been faithful the people will not come in and therefore we must just leave them and so you can be totally indifferent and apathetic to your baroness now if we're like that the lord will never give us blessing but if there is a of baroness and we come to the lord with a broken heart then he will bless us you see there's always a reason for baroness it's the will of god to add constantly to the local church now as you know there are two kinds of growth there is the false growth and there is the true growth for instance an assembly might

grow because of the transportation of believers believers like the style of the assembly and they say right we'll go there and people move from a to b and an assembly can be filled up because of the transportation of belief but that is not true real growth in a local church is when souls are saved and added to the church so it's built up with new believers and you will find it new believers will never give you any trouble oftentimes through the transportation of believers into the area division can come but you will find that when the local church is being built up with new converts you will find this that it always brings blessing to that local assembly so you can see when there is no blessing there should be a period of net washing now look at the manner of net washing now so they tell

me as far as the historians concerned first of all they would go over their nets and they would take out the seaweed and they would take out all the foreign bodies and if the net was a little damaged they wouldn't end it you remember in Matthew chapter 3 that's what James and John were doing they were mending their necks here they're washing their necks but secondly once they have gone over the net with a casual eye they went over the net sometimes with a kind of thing that enlarged the net so that they could see small things on the net that could do damage to the string work and therefore if we may use modern language they had a telescopic view of the net and then they had a microscopic cleansing of the net now what do we mean by cleansing now in the bible there are two kinds of washing

there's the washing of regeneration and then is the renewal of the holy spirit now what does that mean when Paul wrote to Titus well it simply means this before the holy spirit could bring about regeneration in our hearts there had to be that once and for all washing that comes through the blood of grass so that God could justly put away our sin in such a way that he could give us a once and for all forgiveness because of a once and for all sacrifice so when God initially forgives you he doesn't do it in bits and pieces we do for instance when you forgive a particular Christian of some kind of offence you forgive him of that offence that he has committed to you if there is an apology and then should he do it again you will give him another apology or he'll give you another apology and

you'll give him another forgiveness but God doesn't forgive sin like that when he forgives you he forgives you once and for all through the blood of Christ so that after that forgiveness you are so clean in his sight he can perform in your body the marvellous work of regeneration and then through that work of regeneration there is the constant renewal of the Holy Ghost that we need day by day but then the second kind of washing is found in Ephesians 5 where Paul speaks of the washing of the water by the word now the word there is the spoken word you say what does that mean well of course it does mean the written

word but it's the written word that's spoken to you and whether it's the written word or the spoken word it should all come from the final authority from God's precious word and

therefore when we hear the word of God and when we read the word of God it should have a washing effect do you remember the disciples came into that upper room and unfortunately not one of them would do the slave's duty and wash the other's feet so before the Lord Jesus spoke about the great doctrine of the Holy Spirit that was completely new he got down and washed their feet and you will remember when he came to the Apostle Peter the Apostle Peter objected he said you'll never wash my feet and the Lord Jesus said to him Peter if I wash thee not thou has no part with me now notice the difference there is a difference in being right with God and having a part with God through the blood of Christ praise God we're all right with him but it's through the application of the washing of the

water by the word that we can have part with him that means to be used of him and therefore when God is going to move mightily among his people there is always the washing of the word someone comes along and waits upon God so that he might receive the message of the Lord and he stands before the people of God and he gives them the spoken word he gets it from the written word that his word becomes the spoken word and when that spoken word is given there is always a twofold effect you can receive it and be washed by it or you can just hear it and do nothing about it now you will notice now they were washing their nets beloved before we go into this gospel mission let everyone wash his nets now why can we condemn sin in the lives of the unsaved and condone it in our own hearts you see the

point if we talk about bad temper one night and lying and lusting on another night if we talk about unfaithfulness to partners when we deal with the subject of sin and those same sins are resident among the people of God you see basically it's hypocrisy so first of all judgment must first of all begin in the house of God and when it begins there and if i may use the illustration and there's the washing of the net then God will begin to move mightily in the hearts of the unsaved now what about the act of washing in Britain I think it's true to say we have seen I trust I'm saying this for the glory of God large numbers hearing the gospel I remember in one place we started a mission just like this and finish with four thousand we had to hire two of the largest buildings in that city but that

wasn't revival six months after that mission and you went back to the local church you would hardly know there had been a mission apart from a number of newcomer but in one place in Scotland called Medicine we did really see a touch of real revival and I want to share it with you I had been preaching for a fortnight the hall was packed every night and many unsaved were present but no one was getting saved the saints in those days came and gave me helpful information and I tried to put that information into practice in the preaching but no one got saved some nights they told me preach the cross I preached the cross but no one got saved another night a man said to me you're in Scotland and we're not like you English people we've got skin of a rhinoceros preach hell well I preached hell and

no one got saved and that went on for a fortnight and then on that particular Sunday after a fortnight of preaching one of the senior elders his name was Mr Black he said Mr Brandon would you mind if I just had a word with the assembly I said certainly Mr Black he said would the assembly please stay behind after this meeting so a number of people left and the assembly stayed behind and this is what he said prior to this mission we were seeing a few souls saved since the mission has been underway we haven't seen a soul saved apart from one now brothers and sisters he said to me this is an indication that something is grieving the spirit and I'm going to ask you to stay behind and search your own hearts so that we might see the Lord really moving well we all prayed with our guard up we

prayed for Mary Smith to get saved Mr Macdonald Bill Johnson and all the names that we were constantly mentioning to the Lord but no one would say Lord search me and that kind of prayer went on for an hour and 40 minutes do you know even in prayer brethren and sisters it's amazing how mechanical we can be and then a boy got up he was only 12 the first time a boy had ever prayed in that prayer meeting and he got to his feet and he prayed for three and a half minutes now that's a miracle and it was a prayer of confession and the little boy broke down and sat down immediately he finished his prayer a man got up and in a loud voice he cried out Lord I'm gripped with tobacco give me deliverance and he got it but no one ever mentioned tobacco then another brother stood up and he said Lord it's

not tobacco it's bitterness and unfortunately in one way he mentioned the man's name but they were reconciled that night and then that confession went on for about two and a half hours and I had never heard anything like this in my life and I was sitting near the front and I was criticizing some of these confessions because it was new to me and all I remember this the Spirit of God coming to me showing to me that I was a downright modern pharisee I was criticizing what the Spirit of God was doing and I remember getting up in that prayer meeting and pouring out my heart to the Lord in confession and after that time with the Lord I knew God had met with me I looked up and it was half past two to half past three in the morning the exact moment I cannot just remember at the moment but it was

half past two or half past three and there wasn't a brother sitting on a seat they were all prostrated on the floor weeping now I have permission to say this Mr.

Black was weeping more than most asking the Lord to forgive him because of his Laodicean heart neither hot nor cold and after that period of cleansing and purging we started to pray and I've never heard praise like it round about half past five we all went home and that night I preached the gospel at 20 past or half past seven at 20 past eight 10 minutes before the service was over four men jumped up and disturbed the whole service and ran into the inquiry room crying out to be saved and then it started in less than a week we had baptized 19 some nights we would get to the hall and there would be six to seven people in the inquiry room had been there an hour before the service started wanting to be saved saints were being knocked up two o'clock in the morning by people who had been at the meeting who couldn't sleep asking them for help and beloved it was a mighty move of the spirit do you think we could stop that mission after the third week never it went on and on and the more it went on the more the momentum grew and in those meetings I want to say this for the glory of God the mighty presence and power of God was seen and felt and we saw God moving in mighty power when eventually after cancelling two missions I had to return home for 10 years after that mission nearly every Sunday night someone was saved in the Madison assembly you see it was a work that had permanent effect in fact they had two prayer meetings a week and I had letters from Mr.

Black saying that we have heaven on earth and my dear friends that was not an exaggeration you see the net was washed and therefore God bless and then immediately the net was washed the Lord Jesus gave the command launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft now notice two things distance launch out then depth launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft notice those two words the deep and letting down the net now the idea of that word to launch out according to Mr.

Darby means to row out it's the idea of arduous labor especially when the sun was on the sea much cooler at night when normally fishermen go fishing but now the sun was on the sea and on them and they were told to launch out now even in the midst of revival evangelism will always be hard work you see in evangelism we have to put in the power of the spirit our hearts and souls into it and what does it mean for

us to launch out well it really means this to get a compassion for souls and to say this Lord in that mission help me to so launch out that night after night I will try and bring some of my neighbors to the mission it will be hard it will be difficult but I'm sure you're going to do it as God gives us the word I feel confident we're going to wash the nets and we're going to launch

out and every brother and every sister will do their utmost to bring someone to the mission that they may be brought to Christ do you remember what the young man prayed in the prayer meeting on Sunday night help the preacher to do his very best and that really moved Matt now let that prayer refer to every one of us let's launch out let's take hold of the oar as it were and seek to do our utmost to bring our friends to the mission then you will notice they had to launch out into the deep get away from the shallows and let down their nets for the draft now what do we mean by that we want to see again don't we a deep sense of the presence of God every night in the meeting can I wet your appetite if God gives us touches of the Holy Ghost we shall never forget it if we have a few meetings

where the glory of God fills this place to such an extent that people just can't leave the feet you'll bow your head and worship and you'll say God is in this place let's pray that we shall get into the deep as far as the presence of God is concerned let us also pray that we shall get into the deep so that we might see men and women boys and girls coming under deep conviction of sin now you may think I'm old-fashioned but I love to see people broken in a gospel meeting when you see people weeping in the forms and sometimes they have to be helped into the inquiry room you see they get such a glimpse of the holiness of God and they get such a vision of the personal horrible manifestation of sin that they're just broken before God let's pray that we shall see their real repentance let's pray

too that we shall see the deep as we preach the cross so that as the cross is preached God will say to darker minds let there be light and the man will be able to say for the first time Christ died for my sins let's pray that we shall get into the deep as we preach repentance as we preach faith so that we shan't see just superficial mechanical decisions so that after the mission they all go back to the world but we shall see some born of God and becoming real men of God and women of God so that we make disciples of all nations now can you see the brilliance of that launch out into the deep let down your nets for a drop now I want you to note now the filling of the net and we're almost through and Simon answering said unto him master now that's a unique word it means almost like elder

overseer the one who oversees master we have toiled all the night and have caught nothing beloved we can toil for years and not see a soul saved if there's unconfessed sin in the church if you've got a moral sin in your church you can preach and preach but you hardly see any blessing if you've got a young man in that church that's got one foot in the world one foot in the church and he's playing fast and loose here's a specked apple and you will find this that that person can grieve the spare if there are two brethren and sisters at loggerheads maybe privately like those two brethren were there in madison whilst you have a problem like that you can toil all night and catch nothing but when the net's cleansed when the church of god is pure then he'll give you the word of god launch out

into the deep and let down your nets for a drop and we read this nevertheless at thy word i will let down the net and when they had this done they enclosed a great multitude of fish and their net break for that bumper harvest they thought somewhere along the line the net was stuck on a rock you see quite frankly you never catch many fish midday not when the boiling sun is on the water the fish go right to the bottom and quite frankly when you hear peter the master fisherman saying master we've toiled all night and have taken nothing that was the right time to fish nevertheless nevertheless at thy word i will let down the net

you can almost sense there's reluctance and when they put in the net threw it overboard perhaps in a lethargic way and they poured it in probably their first words

were they it's cold and that would mean a broken net and then they poured it again and it moved and then as they were pulling it in they could see the whole net wriggling with big fish and all the joy there's no joy like so in it do you know brothers and sisters if the lord gives us a great harvest of souls you'll be the happiest people on earth let me give you a case in point we were having a mission in infield and there was one particular man who was praying for his mother and i shall never forget the tears of that boy every morning as he prayed for his mother a lad about 19 years of age and then he got up and he said my mum's coming tonight would you pray for her and you know the saints really laid hold on god for that fella's mother well she came to the service there seemed to be a

sense of power but he thought his mother had gone home and he was so upset he was sitting at the back of the hall with his head down praying and weeping well eventually she went into the inquiry room and when she came out with two others he looked and saw his mother and he could hardly believe it and he rushed up and said mum what's happened she said i've been saved and you know what he did he lifted her up and danced her all around the hall overcome with the joy of the lord there's no joy like so in it can i just stimulate your emotions can you visualize it say on a wednesday night a soul gets saved there a soul gets saved there a soul gets saved there perhaps someone might cry out sir i want to get right with god now could you help me my if we get in meetings like that there'll be

heavenly joy among the saints but of course in that same mission there was a problem one young man got up never forget this and he said i want you to pray with for a chap in my work that's coming tonight i've had many arguments with him and he's quite an infidel but he's coming tonight would you practice and we pray well would you believe it i was sitting in the inquiry room and there was a knock on the door and it's a lovely knock when you hear that come in and in came this christian with his friend and his friend said this could you explain to me what a christian is so i explained to him well he said that's funny my friends are christian aren't you yes and he smokes like ida and he swears sometimes like ida and he looks at nasty pictures like i do don't you do you know what he did he

got up with a red face and walked out can you see the difference one boy was sincere the other boy brought a friend but had no testimony joy may it be that when the people come in and we see the great catcher fish there'll be great joy we don't want to dance with our feet but may there be great dancing in the house and then another lovely thing the net break it was an overlook i know some teach the lord told them to launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a trout and they just let down the net and probably it was unbelief well i believe there's a lot in that but isn't it lovely to have a net so full of fish that it begins to break and you have such an overload of blessing you have to call for your partners you see they weren't exclusive they didn't say we'll keep it all for

ourselves but they leaned over the gummel of the boat and they called for their friends and they came and filled both the ships so that they began to sing now that's a lovely point with revival when god can get one church that's cleansed and purged and filled with the spirit then through that one church others can get a blessing and wouldn't you like to see our partners all blessed in the area not just one but many of god's people getting that fresh touch from the lord now the leaving of the net and with this our class when they caught all this fish what was the reaction did peter say right when we get ashore we'll blow a trumpet and we'll say let the hebrews hear and we'll tell them all about it we'll have a great report meeting and we'll tell them that we got six boatloads of fish oh

only two never mind we'll tell them six and we'll tell the whole world what we've done you say there's nothing there in the exegesis about that but that's what we evangelicals do we get a little bit of blessing and we tell the world about it and over and over again it's all exaggerated now brethren if there's two saved we won't say three if there's four saved we won't say five if we're not sure about it we say not sure we won't exaggerate it's a terrible thing to tell lies about the blessing of god in fact it's far better not to say anything about the blessing let the blessing speak for itself i love what paul says about the thessalonians he says we hear that your faith is being spoken of throughout the whole world people were telling him about the faith of the thessalonians and that's a

lovely thing you know immediately they got this tremendous catch what was the reaction peter fell at the feet of the lord jesus and said depart from me i'm a sinful man and shall we pray that god will give us such a bumper harvest that we'll all be broken and we'll all be at his feet saying forgive us for our unbelief we didn't think it was possible but we thank thee for every soul that's been saved and we'll give god all the glory may the lord give us some blessing like that

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