

Launchout Into the Deep

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being guided by the Lord and being dependent on him for fruitful service, and that problems are the price of progress and can lead to a greater sense of dependence on the Lord.

Duration: 28:15

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 5:1-11, John 6:1-14, Acts 2:14-41, Acts 9:1-19, Acts 16:25-34, Acts 17:16-34

Topics: "Venture Of Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of a lifetime of preparation for preaching the word of God. He uses the example of the disciples in the Book of Acts who had spent their lives with Jesus before they were able to effectively minister. The speaker encourages the audience to 'launch out into the deep' and step out of their comfort zones in order to fulfill their calling. He also highlights the unconventional pulpits used in the Bible and emphasizes the need to give what we have to the Lord, as He can use even the smallest offerings.

Transcript

Turn in your Bibles for this closing message to Luke 5 1 through 11. Luke 5 1 through 11. Came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, that he stood by the lake of Gennesaret and saw two ships, really boats.

If you're a Navy man, you'll know it was a boat, not a ship. I see some smiles. Two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitude out of the ship, out of the boat. When he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, put out into the deep, let down your nets for a draft.

Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing. Nevertheless at thy word, I will let down the net. When they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their nets break.

Really their nets were breaking. They began to break. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other boat, that they should come and help them.

And they came and filled both the boats, 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, O Lord. For he was astonished, and 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, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, fear not, for henceforth thou shalt catch men. When they had brought their ships, their boats to land, they left all and followed him.

I think this is kind of thrilling. Use a little sanctified imagination. Picture the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is about seven miles across, fourteen miles from top to bottom, shaped like a fiddle. And I think Jesus was up at the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, and the crowd was following him. It came to pass that the people pressed upon him.

Why did they press upon him? Tell me why they pressed upon him? To hear the Word of God. To hear the Word of God. Preach the Word of God, there's an attractiveness to it.

But he not only taught the Word of God, he taught it with authority. You know, the scribes peddled kind of a second-hand religion, and Jesus wasn't like that. He really preached the Word of God with authority.

That's the way we should preach it, too. Years ago, Billy Graham was having a, in his early days, he was having a tremendous struggle with the Lord. He had gone to seminary, and I guess he had indulged some doubts about the Word of God.

Is it really the Word of God, you know? And one time he was down at the Forest Home Conference, and there was a duel going on between his soul and God. A real battle going on. He walked up the mountains and back of the conference grounds, and he really headed out with the Lord.

And you know what he did finally? He finally accepted the Bible by faith. And he went forth to Los Angeles Crusade, which was really the beginning of the great ministry, wasn't it? The Los Angeles Crusade. And that's when he started to say, the Bible says.

And Billy Graham realized that there was a new authority to his preaching that he never had before. And multitudes were swept into the kingdom of God. And you know, when I read that, I thought, well, that's true of me, too.

I accepted the Bible by faith. Nobody convinced me by evidences and apologetics that the Bible was the Word of God. Nobody convinced me by logic that it was the Word of God.

I accepted it by faith as the Word of God, and then God showed me that it was the Word of God. Somebody said, he who has felt the force of it is not likely to doubt the source of it. And I'll tell you, no book has ever affected me like the Bible.

He who has felt the force of it is not likely to doubt the source of it. So here's the Lord Jesus, and he's up there at the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, and he's preaching the Word, and he's preaching it with authority. And the people are out there, they're thronging him.

I like it. Spurgeon said, get on fire for God, and the world will turn out to see you burn. And Jesus was on fire for God, and the world was turning to see him burn.

As he got there, as he was working there, the disciples were washing their nets. I wonder if this is spiritual, meaning that after all, those nets are in fresh water all day long, aren't they? And you wouldn't think they'd need to be washed. They were the Sea of Galilee's fresh water.

You'd think that would be plenty. But of course, you see, the nets are enclosing fish, and the smell and the oil of the fish get on the nets, and if they don't wash them, they'll rot. They even tell me that nowadays they use nylon nets, but it doesn't make any difference.

They still have to wash them. I've heard, I cannot authenticate this, but I've heard that fish can detect the smell of deadness from the nets unless they're washed. What does that say to me? It says to me, Bill, in your service for the Lord, you better keep your nets clean.

Yesterday's devotions won't do for today. Last year's study of the Bible won't do for this year. You've got to stay in touch with the Lord moment by moment, day by day.

And I see that, as I see the disciples here washing their nets. So actually, they're pushing the Lord Jesus into the water. Isn't that nice? What a nice thing to have such a crowd that the Lord Jesus doesn't have any place to stand, and they push him into the water.

And he used Peter's boat as a pulpit. That's an interesting study in the New Testament, the unconventional pulpits. I don't think there was one like this in the, I'm glad it's here so you won't see my quaking knees, but I don't think they ever had one like this in the New Testament.

The pulpit was wherever there was the opportunity to proclaim Christ. The prison was a great place for a pulpit, wasn't it? Some of the best preaching was done in prison. The marketplace was good, too.

The early disciples had the notion that there was no place where Jesus Christ was out of place. And so whenever situations arose in their lives, they really opened their mouths and let out the word. Little did Peter know that day, when the day started, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would use his boat for a pulpit, did he? Little did he think that a group of believers in Spokane, Washington, would be thinking about it years later.

There's a lesson there. Give what you have to the Lord. It's surprising what he can do with it.

I know a little boy that had five loaves and two fish, and he gave them to the Lord. It's multiplied them and fed 5,000 men plus women and children. You know, we all have things that can be put to work for the Lord.

Garage sales. It's great to have a garage sale every once in a while, or a patio sale, and get the money and put it to work for Jesus. Just a missionary garage sale, and all the proceeds go to the work of the Lord.

Give Jesus what you have. He can use it. You say, oh, I don't have very much.

No, you've got something that he could use. And I notice also the unconventional pulpits in the book of Acts and in the Gospels. Unconventional pulpits.

And I notice that the preaching, somebody said it was not the performance of an hour, but it was the preparation of a lifetime. Do you understand that? In other words, these men had accompanied with Jesus, and they had been with Jesus, and then when a crisis arose, they let out the message. Not the

preparation of an hour, not the performance of an hour, but the preparation of a lifetime.

After George Verwer had given a stirring message, some young person went up to him and said, George, how long did it take you to prepare that message? And he said, all my life. That was a good answer. All my life.

And I think that's what you have here. The disciples are ministering in the book of Acts, and it took all their life. Then the Lord Jesus said to them, launch out into the deep.

First of all, the boat was there in the shallows. And then Jesus said to them, launch out into the deep. And I believe that that is what he would say to us today.

And if we wanted a title for today's message, I would call it that. Launch out into the deep. Why? Well, I'll tell you why, because we all like the shallows.

But it's in the deep, it's in the depths that there's fruitfulness. We don't like to think of the depths of trial. We don't like to think of the depths of tribulation, of trouble, of difficulty, and all the rest.

How often have you met a Christian who's gone through a terrible period of trial, and he says, I wouldn't want to go through it again, but I wouldn't give it up for anything. Why? Because of the lessons he learned from the Lord in it. There was a lady in Illinois, and she's been through enormous tragedy in her life, including the birth of a little fellow, born defective.

And she said to me, Bill, if I had the last 10 years to live over again, I'd choose them just the way the Lord has planned them. That's it. Launch out into the deep.

Somebody said it was in deep waters that the net were filled. We must quit hugging the shore and launch out in full surrender's tide. Faith has its deep waters, and so do suffering, sorrow, and loss.

These fill the nets with fruitfulness. It's true, isn't it? And I think many here today can say that. I thank God for the bitter things.

They've been a friend of grace. They've driven me from the paths of ease to storm the secret place. When do you pray better? When the going is easy and when the going is rough.

I pray better when the going is rough. I didn't really know how to pray then. And it's in the deep trials of life that that's wonderful, because, you know, for the unsaved, the difficulties of life are only a foretaste of what's going to come.

But for us, they're a foretaste of glory. What a difference, huh? What a difference. Foretaste of glory.

Somebody has said life is filled with blessings, cleverly disguised as trials. That's good. Life is filled with blessings, cleverly disguised as trials.

Comes into your life as a trial, but you look back and you say, what a blessing. What a blessing that was. Note the omniscience of Jesus.

He says, launch out into the depths and let down your nets for a draft. The Lord Jesus knew where all the fish were in the Sea of Galilee. I believe that.

You know, there are some men today that say that when Jesus came into the world, he laid aside the attributes of deity. One man said he'll never take them up again. I don't believe that.

I believe that when the Lord Jesus came into the world, he veiled his deity in a body of flesh. I believe it was all there. You can't be God and be anything less than God.

And I believe the Lord Jesus was just as omniscient, just as omnipotent, just as much omnipresent when he was here as he was before he came. And he knew where all the fish were in the Sea of Galilee. He said, let down your nets now for a draft.

Well, that's really wonderful. Tells me that I want to be dependent upon him in my service for the Lord because he knows where the fruitfulness is. Hell, I could go around and pass out tracts to everyone in Spokane.

I don't suppose I could, but I could try to pass out tracts to everyone in Spokane today, but it might just be a waste of effort. You know, there might be some soul at some corner waiting to hear the message of life. And the great thing is to be in touch with God so he can say, go join yourself to the chariot, like he said to the Ethiopian eunuch, the omniscience of Jesus that came up in our question period this morning.

How, how is it that Jesus didn't know that hour of his coming? Well, and it was answered too. And I agree. John says the servant knoweth not what his master doeth.

I think as God, the Lord Jesus knows everything. But as was pointed out as man, he grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. People say you mustn't separate the deity and humanity of Christ.

And I know that's true. Yet we have to separate them in some ways. Jesus died, but God cannot die.

And so we have to separate them. And I think that in his humanity, it wasn't given to him to know the time of his coming again to reveal it to us, which is just as well. Well, he says, let down your nets for the draft.

And Peter says, Lord, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. There's the fisherman talking, you know, the fisherman is talking, he says, Lord, we've toiled all night and caught nothing. It's possible to toil all night and catch nothing.

What? Service carried on by our own wisdom can be fruitless. It's only spirit-ordained service that counts. As I look around in the evangelical world today, I see a man, he has a great idea, forms a big corporation.

Pretty soon it becomes an empire. I wonder, did the Lord ask him to do it? And if the Lord asked him to do it, why does he have to beg for money all the time to carry it on? God pays for what he orders. If God tells me to do something, he pays for it.

The money comes to the penny. Absolutely. So it's possible for us to engage in Christian service and in our own wisdom, in our own strength, and it's futile.

The secret is to be guided by him. They had fished the Sea of Galilee the night before in their own wisdom, in their own strength. They didn't know where the fish were.

They were grappling. Now the Lord says, let down your net for a draft. A woman, 75, said, I am 75 and I have done nothing with my life.

That's sad. It doesn't have to be said of any of us here today. We can go from the conference, we can get down on our knees, we can commit our lives to the Lord and say, Lord Jesus, live your life through me.

I'm just the empty glove. You're the hand. You move the glove the way you want to move it.

But I think it's lovely here that though Peter was an experienced fisherman, he took advice from a carpenter. Huh? Well, I know Jesus is more than a carpenter. He's the son of God.

But nevermind, from the human standpoint, he was the carpenter from Nazareth. And here he comes and he tells Peter, let down your net for a draft. And I suppose Peter could have said, look, I'm a fisherman.

I've been fishing this lake for years and you're telling me to let my, he didn't say that. What it tells me is that the benefit of being teachable, the benefit of being open to instruction. I don't believe there's a Christian that I can't learn something from.

We're all members of the body. Every member has its usefulness. If I can take our charismatic brethren for an example, I do not agree with their doctrine.

I do not agree with the doctrine of tongues. I do not agree with their doctrine of healing. And I'm sure there are plenty of other places where I don't agree with their doctrine, but you know, I love them.

If they belong to Christ and I can learn something from them, I can learn warmth from them. I can learn zeal from them. I can learn enthusiasm in singing from them.

Right, John? Enthusiasm in singing, it draws people to them. Man, these people are excited about their faith. And it's true.

So we want to be like that too. We want to learn. Peter learned from Jesus.

Peter the fisherman learned from Jesus the carpenter. And you know what happened? The nets were filled. Why, that was wonderful.

It shows the value of humility and teachability. I'd like that, have my nets filled. Even if it was a charismatic that took me, that gave me the advice to do it.

But I'm not going to, I'm not going to sacrifice doctrine. If I see something from the word of God, I'm going to stick to it. It says there was a great haul, a great haul.

And now, supposing you were out in that boat with Peter and that day, and you're pulling on the nets and you think, oh, I've got the Loch Ness monster in here, you know, what would you have done? The other boats are all around, you know, green-eyed monster. They're not getting anything. The other fishing boats are all around.

What would you say? Stay away now. Look, this is my day. I don't want you to be interfering.

The fish are running here and this is my turf. Turf isn't a good word, is it, for water? They didn't say that. They beckoned to those in the other boat to come and help.

Does that teach you anything? It teaches me the value of cooperation in service. Look, we're all standing against the tide of the Antichrist. It's coming.

It's coming strong. And the time has come when Christians must stand unitedly without sacrificing doctrine. Be true to Jesus, but cooperate with other Christians.

But you know, when the boat came in, and I can just picture the boat coming into the dock there, maybe at Tiberias, and the boat is down to the gunwales with fish, you know, it's really down to the gunwales. Were Peter and his cohorts proud? Well, there's nothing to be proud about. You say, but it was a great fishing day.

I know, but it wasn't through their wisdom that they caught the fish. It was through the Lord's. And I feel that if you and I have the opportunity to lead a soul to the Lord, nothing to be proud about.

God does the work of saving. We can't be proud about it. I abominate the scramble for numbers in the evangelical world today.

It just seems so contrary to the Word of God and the Spirit of God as well. Jesus was the one who told them where to let down the nets. They let down the nets, brought up a big draft of fishes, and the glory was all gone.

One plants, another waters, God gives the increase. That's the way it is. Amazing, isn't it, when you stop to think? Somebody said, it's wonderful what you can do for God if you don't care who gets the credit.

Well, I guess we should care who gets the credit. I guess we should care that he gets the credit. But it means on the human level, it's wonderful what you can do for God if you don't care who gets the credit.

Well, then it says that their nets were breaking and the boats were sinking. Wow, problems. That's terrible to have nets breaking and boats sinking.

No, it's not terrible. It's the best thing that can happen to a fisherman. He loves it.

There are problems in the Christian life and in service. Some of you have come to the conference, maybe, and you're facing problems. You think it's terrible.

No, it's not terrible. It's wonderful. There was a great American industrialist who said, problems are the price of progress.

Don't bring me anything but problems. Good news weakens me. Well, that'll make you chuckle.

But it's true. There's an unsaved man, a worldly man saying, problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but problems.

Good news weakens me. Well, there's some good news that doesn't weaken you. That's the good news of the gospel.

That doesn't weaken you. But I know what he meant, just the same. It says, all of a sudden, Simon was overcome.

Now, this is a funny thing here. It says, verse 8, when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, depart from me, for I'm a sinful man. Well, you'd think his ego would have been inflated, wouldn't you? Instead of that, he falls down at the feet of the Lord Jesus and says, depart from me, for I'm a sinful man.

Oh, what does that mean? It means, when you see the Lord in all his glory, you have a vision of your own worthlessness. That's what it means. Job had that experience, didn't he? He said, I heard of him by the hearing of the ear, now my eye seeth him.

I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

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