

Catch

In today's Gospel, Luke 5:1-11, there is a whole lot of “**catching**” going on!

First, Jesus **catches** the attention of the crowd at the Lake of Gennesaret by using Simon's boat (Simon later to be renamed “Peter,” by Jesus) and teaching the huge group of people. It was ingenious of Jesus, since the crowd had been pressing in on Him, and He probably would not have even been seen nor heard by most of them if He was standing on the shore. The boat became the stage, so the crowd could **catch** His every word of the Good News.

Upon finishing teaching the crowd, Jesus said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a **catch**.” Simon was somewhat reluctant, stating he and his companions had fished all night and had **caught** nothing. But, in an honoring obedience to Jesus' request, Simon decided to lower the nets. They **caught** so many fish that they had to use both boats to haul in the gigantic **catch**—and even after filling the boats they were in danger of sinking!

Luke's Gospel goes on to say, “For astonishment of the **catch** of fish they had made seized him (Simon) and the others with him...” Then Jesus said, “*Do not be afraid; from now on you will be **catching** men.*” When both boats were brought in, Simon and his companions just dropped everything and followed Jesus—being **caught** up in Jesus' charismatic Presence.

The definition of “**catch**” is, “to hold or capture.” Jesus did both of these in Luke's Gospel. Jesus held the attention of the crowd, He held the attention of the fishermen as they hauled in their giant **catch**; He captured Simon's heart, as Simon went to his knees admitting he was a sinful man, and he captured the minds of Simon and his companion fishermen as they seemed so mesmerized by Jesus' miracle that they simply dropped their nets and left it all behind.

“...There's a whole lot of **catching** going on!” But how may this Gospel reading speak to you and me? How does Jesus “**catch** us” these days?

Are we willing to go out into the deep waters, in faith that, even though our attempts to **catch** God's message of Agape love may have failed, Jesus will provide? “Agape love” is the over all, unconditional love that God provides all of us. We, as humans, need God's Agape love to express unconditional love to others—even our enemies...remember—“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”?

Or are we so **caught** up in our own struggles that we don't become aware that others may be struggling around us, and that by helping them, we may just help ourselves also? Is it possible for us to "drop our nets and leave it all behind" as we hear the truth of the Good News, spoken by Jesus in the New Testament? Can we **catch** the sense of the Holy Spirit within us as we ease through our day?

I invite you to be **caught** up in the Spirit, in the Word of God, in the amazement of Jesus' miracles and in the goodness that surrounds you and is within you. It's your turn to make the next move...**CATCH!**

Rich Melcher