

6. A Servant Who Leads by Developing People

In Luke 5:1-11, we see that Christ invited Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. This happened after Peter realized his own sinfulness. This passage begins by Christ ministering to the multitudes. Verses 1-3 tell us, “So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.”

In these verses, we see three things about the crowd of people that were gathered together that day:

- The multitudes wanted to hear the Word of God
- The multitudes caused Christ to request the help of the fishermen
- The multitudes were taught the Word of God by Christ

Notice that Christ always had time to teach people who wanted to learn about the Word of God. He also demonstrated a practical lesson. Christ did not have a sound system. As a result, He got in a boat and pushed out a little way from the land so that the water would act as a natural sound system.

Although Christ taught the multitudes, we see, in Luke 5:4-7, that Christ focused on the few. In Luke 5:4-7, we read, “When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink”

In these verses, we see four things about the fishermen. We see that:

- the fishermen were told to fish
- the fishermen said it was not the appropriate time to fish
- the fishermen chose to be obedient to Christ
- the fishermen saw Christ work mightily

When the disciples saw the way Christ worked, Peter and the other fishermen suddenly recognized something about themselves. Luke 5:8-11 says, “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 and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.” In these verses, we see four things about Peter and the other fishermen:

- Peter and the other fishermen recognized their own sinfulness
- Peter and the other fishermen recognized the power of Christ
- Peter and the other fishermen were called to become fishers of men
- Peter and the other fishermen responded to begin training for ministry

In these verses, we see that Peter focused on his sinful condition. At this point in his life, Peter had already known Christ for about a year. (see John 1) He and the other disciples had traveled with Christ to various places during that year. (see John 2-4) They had observed Christ teach and perform various miracles. In John 4, Christ had expanded their vision to see the spiritual needs of the Samaritans. One of the things Peter realized, during this year, was his own sinfulness. That was because he was forced to look at his past. However, on this particular day, Christ called Peter and the other disciples to begin looking to the future. Christ told them what they would become as they followed Him and obeyed Him. Christ said that, instead of fishing for food, they would become fishers of men who would catch men for Christ.

Christ ministered to the multitudes, but He chose to focus on the few. By spending time with Christ, these men would be transformed, from ordinary men to men who shocked the religious leaders. Acts 4:13 tells us what happened to those fishermen when it says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ their boldness did not come from education.
- ♦ their boldness did not even come from their training.
- ♦ their boldness came from spending time with Christ.

Let's notice how Christ transformed people and how Christ uses us to transform people today. Transformation happens as we follow Christ and show others, by our example, how to follow Christ. In Matthew 4:19, Christ said to these fishermen, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Notice the first requirement is for us to imitate Christ. Second, we are to invite people to imitate us, as we imitate Christ.

Transformation cannot happen in our own strength. In Luke 24:49, Christ said to the disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Transformation happens as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit and show others, by our example, what it means to yield to the Holy Spirit. Roman 6 gives us three key words to help us understand what it means to yield.:

- ♦ “know” - we have to know that our old man has been crucified with Christ (this means that we are no longer slaves to sin but are now free to follow Christ) - Romans 6:6
- ♦ “reckon” - we are now to act on the fact that we are now dead to sin (reckon is an accounting team and here means that *we can count on the fact that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ who lives in us* - Galatians 2:20) - Romans 6:11
- ♦ “yield” - we now make the choice to yield ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead (since we are alive we now have the choice to yield to God who gives us the power to yield to Christ and obey Him) - Romans 6:13, 16

As a spiritual leader, the Lord also equips us to develop others. In Ephesians 4:11-13, we read, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body

of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” In these verses, we see that God has given us a foundation (Ephesians 2:20) on which we develop others. That foundation is:

- * the apostles who gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection - Acts 1:21-22
- * the prophets who gave us the written Word of God - 2 Peter 1:19-21

Then, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ gave gifts to spiritual leaders to develop Christians so that all Christians can become involved in the work of the ministry. From Acts 14:23, we see that every church should have a team of leaders who are developing and equipping every Christian for the work of the ministry. Here, in Ephesians 4:11-12, we see that God has given:

- ♦ Evangelists - to equip the saints to share the Gospel
- ♦ Pastors - to equip the saints to minister to each other
- ♦ Teachers - to equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God

In Ephesians 4:13-16, we see that there are several results when every Christian is being shown how to do the work of the ministry. These include:

- the Christians come to the unity of the faith - verse 13
- the Christians grow in the knowledge of the Son of God - verse 13
- the Christians grow to spiritual maturity - verse 13
- the Christians grow in Christlikeness - verse 13
- the Christians do not remain as spiritual toddlers - verse 14
- the Christians learn to speak the truth in love - verse 15
- the Christians each learn to do their part of the ministry - verse 16

This raises the question of how this can happen, since it does not happen in many churches. The answer to that question is illustrated both by Christ and by Paul. Christ took the disciples with Him and showed them how to become fishers of men. In the process, they learned to depend on Christ and imitate His example of ministry. In the same way, Paul told the leaders of the church in Ephesus, in Acts 20:20-21, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, we see that Paul took the leaders with him and showed them how to minister both in public places and also from house-to-house. The key is that he showed them how to minister, instead of just telling them they should minister. Today, the Lord wants the leadership team, that is developing in each church, to develop people by taking other people with them as they minister. In the process, those who go along will grow both in godly character and also be shown how to minister effectively to others. This means that one of the things that is needed in churches is for the leadership team to spend more of their time in prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4) where they are showing others how to minister. Then, they need to give those who are being shown the opportunity to do the ministry they have been shown how to do. Ephesians 4:16 says that the result of such a ministry is that every part of the body will learn to work effectively.

The Lord has a ministry for every Christian. May the Lord richly bless you, as you continue to grow in your ministry of being a servant who leads by developing others to carry out the ministry that the Lord has prepared for them.