

Sermon for July 5th. 2026
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

READINGS

1 Kings 19:9-21

9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **10** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” **11** And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. **12** And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. **13** And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **14** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” **15** And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. **16** And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. **17** And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. **18** Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

19 So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. **20** And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” **21** And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

Psalm 16

1 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

2 I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.”

3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.

4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.

5 The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

7 I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.

8 I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.

11 You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Luke 5:1-11

1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 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. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Our text for meditation this Fifth Sunday after Trinity is on our Gospel reading.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduction

There are many kinds of fish, and they are all different one from another. Some are large, some are small, some eat only algae while some eat other fish. There are fish with beautiful coloring and graceful movement, while there are others like the deep sea angler or the barracuda that we would rather not look at. Not only this, but the *behavior* is different from species to species. Tuna tend to swim in schools, or groups, for safety. The mighty shark is a more solitary creature.

A fisherman in the first century A.D. cannot see into the water when he casts his net inside. He does not know whether he will catch salmon, pollock, tuna, eels, spelt, or some mix of different

creatures, but he throws his net in anyway. He knows that he cannot be picky, or else he will waste precious time and resources trying to find the perfect fish. If he decides to wait for exactly the right fish at the right time, or if he throws out what he doesn't want, then he will starve. So what does he do? He uses his net, catches everything he can, and brings it all into the storehouse for dividing and processing.

Christ's Evangelism

Jesus tells Simon (later called Peter) that he and James and John will be “catching men.” We understand this to mean that Christ called them to be among the twelve chief evangelists of the early Church, whom we call Apostles. He inducts them into the membership with a great miracle, bringing forth many fish into their nets – near to bursting. With this act, He shows them that He is Lord of creation, able to guide the fish right where He wants them. But this miracle comes *after* our Lord does something far more magnificent.

Before Jesus calls Simon and James and John to be evangelists, He shows them what evangelism looks like. St. Luke records that Jesus got into Simon's boat and had him put it out a bit from the land. He did this so that He could preach to the crowd that followed Him, a great mass of people whose number easily surpasses the number of fishes that would enter Simon's net just a while later. The message is clear my friends: evangelism is like fishing, because men are like fish and the Word is like a net.

There are many kinds of men, and they are all different one from another. Some are large, some are small, some are from one culture, and others have a different origin point. There are men with good apparel and riches, while there are others are poor and appear debased. Some are strong, others are weak. Not only this, but the *behavior* is different from man to man. Some men tend to stay in groups for safety. Other men are more solitary creatures.

An evangelist cannot see into the souls of men when he preaches. He does not know whether he will reach the poor, the skeptical, the pagan, the backslider, or the cynic, but he proclaims the Gospel anyway. He knows that he cannot be picky, or else he will waste precious time and resources trying to find the perfect candidate for conversion. If he decides to wait for exactly the right man at the right time, or if he rejects people he doesn't want, then his ministry will be fruitless. So what does he do? He preaches the Word, helps whoever he can, and brings as many as possible into the Church for Baptism and discipleship.

Conclusion

Jesus tells Simon (later called Peter) that he and James and John will be “catching men.” As St. Peter would later lead the early Church, this means he represents us in that moment – men and women who will witness to others and bring them into the faith. He inducts us into the membership by that same Word which brings every believer into eternal life. When He ordains St. Peter, He shows us that He is Lord of all men, able to draw all humanity with the Gospel. But this miracle is predicated on something far more magnificent than the power of proclamation.

Before Jesus calls all of us to be evangelists, He shows us the salvation that He provides. By going to the Cross for us, He brings about the Atonement by which our sins are forgiven and all who believe shall be saved. The message is clear my friends: evangelism is predicated on there being one *crucial* difference to fishing: having good news to preach. A fisherman catches fish so he can kill, sell and eat them. The Church is called to evangelize so that people may believe, and in believing have eternal life. May we thus bring others in, for while the fish might die the men shall live.

Now the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.