

Sunday evening February 10th 2019 at CBC
Sermon outline: Luke 5:1-11

*“A **vocation** (from [Latin vocātiō](#), meaning 'a call, summons'^[1]) is an [occupation](#) to which a person is specially drawn or for which they are suited, trained, or qualified. Though now often used in non-religious contexts, the meanings of the term originated in [Christianity](#).”*

So says Wikipedia. This evening we are going to look at the subject of being called within a Christian context as it emerges in Luke 5 in the experience of Peter.

Three observations to explain how we will use these verses:

[1] The calling of one disciple is relevant to the calling of all disciples

Although Peter’s experience is unique, the concept of being called was associated with Christian conversion from the very beginning. See Acts 2.39, 7.38, Ephesians 4.1, 2 Thessalonians 1.11, Hebrews 3.1, 2 Peter 1.10.

[2] The change of mind that occurs in one disciple is relevant to the change of mind that must occur in all disciples – as we will see.

[3] The new enterprise in which one disciple is involved is relevant to the new enterprise in which all disciples are to be involved – as we shall see.

[1] Peter's call

Combining information from the other gospels with what we have here, we discover that the Peter's call was a process. It seems that his brother Andrew first brought his attention to Jesus (John tells us this) and that Peter had already heard Jesus issue a call to follow him (Matthew and Mark).

[a] gradual process

If that is correct, then what we have here in Luke 5 is the culmination of a process that had started earlier and which included the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. Perhaps you can identify with that – and you can think back to the various stages of the process in your own life...

[b] decisive moment

The essence of this decisive moment is a change of mind, that will lead to a new way of thinking. We will examine the nature of this for Peter in a moment.

But anyone who is listening to God will be drawn, sooner or later, to a decisive moment, essentially one in which a personal response is made. It may be that, at the time, it feels natural rather than decisive. But when you look back later, you come to see that in fact it was a significant moment where things changed and were not the same again afterwards. Can you identify with such a moment?

[2] Peter's change

The decisive moment occurs, in terms of Luke 5, in verse 8.

[a] The Lord speaks Peter's language

The miraculous catch of fish is a wonderful example of the Lord speaking to someone in the language that they can easily

understand. Peter (and his colleagues) were fishermen by trade.

No doubt Peter and all the others would always remember that day. But for Peter the day would be significant for another reason. The effect of the catch of fish is to make Peter see two things at the same time and to experience a strange spiritual paradox.

Peter realises who Jesus is and who he, Peter, is by comparison. And he enters into the strange paradox whereby he comes to Jesus in faith while at the same time wanting Jesus to go away!

[b] The Lord reveals Peter's nature

What is happening is that Peter is discovering what he is like – and you only really discover what you are like when you have a standard against which to compare yourself.

Peter's reaction indicates that he realises that Jesus has a moral purity which puts him, Peter, in the shade. John the Baptist did not consider himself worthy enough to undo Jesus's sandals. Peter does not consider himself worthy enough to share the same boat (as it were) with Jesus.

The Lord's method of communication here was unique to Peter. But the authentic effect of the Christian message on those who respond to it will always be that they realise what kind of people they are and at the same time what kind of person Jesus is.

[3] Peter's commission

The Lord does not go away from Peter and his colleagues. Although the display of his power has shaken them, his purpose is not to condemn them but to recruit them.

[a] A unique enterprise for Peter

The calling and commissioning as described here is clearly historically unique to Peter, and more broadly to the others who were with him.

[b] A joint enterprise for all

We must surely recognise that although Peter was uniquely called, both in the way that he was called and in the particular ministry that he would have, the calling of God upon all Christians not only brings a change of mind – as we have already seen – but also a commission to join in the great enterprise of catching people!

CONCLUSION

When the New Testament refers to the concept of calling, it is, as we have seen, a reference to someone hearing the Christian message and responding to it as their thinking is changed and their priorities rearranged.

In that sense, all Christians are called people.
Has this calling come to you?

May none of fail to hear, or respond to, the call of God on our lives to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and join the great enterprise of sharing his message with others.