

# Peter 5 of 10

## *Catch Men*

#0379

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 13, 1969

Let us turn to Luke 5 this morning. We'll study some more about Peter.

“And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, 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 draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him” Luke 5:1–11.

Peter had been catching fish. Now he was going to do what? Catch men. You know when I read this, I think of some months later when this same man let down the net on the day of Pentecost, and 3,000 souls were added to the church that day. This is what Jesus was looking forward to, and He was calling Peter away from ordinary things to extraordinary things.

My dear friends, there are people here this morning that if God can use them as He wants to use them, they will have a wonderful part in some of the most glorious soul-winning in the history of the world. I read in the comment on this story in *Desire of Ages* this:

“In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would

raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse those dormant faculties. It was such men that Jesus called to be His co-laborers; and He gave them the advantage of association with Himself" *The Desire of Ages*, page 250.

Yes, I believe Peter was a good fisherman, but God had something more important for him to do than that. Other men could catch fish. The fishing industry in Galilee didn't stop when Peter and John and Andrew and James left their boats and their nets and followed Jesus. That went right on. Doubtless, if we would go over there today, we'd see men still fishing.

But Jesus had something more important for them to do. And to every soul here this morning, I would give this challenge: are you *sure* that you are doing the thing which will result in the most souls in the kingdom of God? Is your daily experience such, that you are learning how to win souls so that you can have a part in the great latter rain, loud cry, ingathering of souls?

Some months ago, down at Wildwood, a young man and his family joined our group there. This man was a nurse and had had some successful experience in hospital work administration, but he wanted to get some spiritual training. So he came there to Wildwood.

As he and I prayed together during the early months he was there, there was a great burden on his heart. He was burdened for his sister, who was also a nurse, and who was working in a large city some distance from Wildwood.

This girl had had training not only as a nurse, but as an anesthetist. And you know those people who give anesthetic make pretty good money. She was up there in this hospital and making her money. She was losing her Christian experience. She was being drawn more and more into the world. She was going with a worldly young man. In fact, she was engaged to him.

So this brother of hers who was down there with me, was greatly burdened for her, and he and I used to have prayer together. This was one of the burdens on his heart that we prayed together about.

Well, in the providence of God, she came to visit them one weekend. She attended our Friday night vesper service and the Sabbath morning service. She got a blessing. Some weeks later, she came back again. Well, one Sabbath morning as she was there in our meeting, the Lord spoke to her heart, and she came to the altar and poured out her heart to Jesus with tears, giving her life to Jesus.

Well, then the question was what was she going to do for the future. Would she just simply give up sin and go ahead with the work she was doing? The time came when she sat down and counseled with me a bit. And the Lord impressed me to say something to her. I'd never said this to anybody before, but I know the Lord impressed me.

I said, "Lorraine, you've been putting people to sleep. The Lord would like to have you in something to wake people up.

Now, I said, "I realize that somebody has to put people to sleep, if they're going to have their gallbladder out or their appendix out, but up there in that big worldly hospital, they'll find somebody to do that whether you are there or not. They'll get the aesthetics given. But there's a work you could do for God in soul-winning.

And I said, "Lorraine, I believe that if God could help you to see the vision and throw your life into the work one hundred percent, I believe God would give you at least a hundred souls between now and the coming of Jesus."

Well, she had some things to think about, of course. She was paying for a car. That's what a lot of people are doing. And this is a test that's *hard* for people to meet. But bless the Lord, that young woman met that test. She went back, made arrangements to give up her work there, and she came down. When the time came, which it soon did, that she was faced with the problem that unless the Lord worked a miracle she'd lose her car, she sold the car.

Now, for some time, she's been there, getting a training in soul-winning, and helping bear the burdens of the place without an automobile. You know, to some people that would almost be like being without a hand. It made me so thankful to see that God had put the call in her heart, and the *answer* into her heart, that she was willing even to be without a car, in order to get into soul-winning 100 percent, full time.

She could go back anytime, you see, pull down those hundreds and hundreds of dollars a month in what she'd been trained for.

You notice, friends, in our story this morning that Peter left what kind of nets when he answered the call of Jesus? Empty nets? Full nets.

You know there are people that suppose that the signal to get into the Lord's work is when you've made a failure of everything else. "I've tried this, and I've tried that. And that didn't work, and this door was closed, so maybe I ought to get into this." And it could be that the Lord in His mercy leads some people that way. I wouldn't say He doesn't.

I simply show that the opposite of this is not always true. The fact that a man is making a success in a certain line of work is no evidence that God wants him to continue with that for always.

Peter, as a fisherman, was called from full nets to catch men. And oh, how he caught them through the years—hundreds of them, thousands of them—bright stars to shine forever in the kingdom of God.

Friends, soul-winning is the greatest work in the world. Let me read that here:

“The work above all work—the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul—is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this the main, the important work of your life. Make it your special life work” *Messages to Young People*, page 227.

Oh, this is the call that I hope will ring in some hearts this morning; that you’re going to be a soul-winner.

Now, let me make plain what I’m talking about. God has called everybody to be a soul winner, in a sense. God has called many people to earn their living in some vocation in life, and win a few souls on the side. He’s called everybody to do that.

Peter had been working on that program previous to this morning’s experience. He’d been fishing part-time and working with Jesus part-time. And this is good. This is a step. This is as far as many people get. It’s as far as some people are supposed to get.

But my point is, here was a man who had been engaged in *part-time* service for the Master, and Jesus called him now to what? Full time. He’d been working with his nets to make a living and then spending part-time in giving the Gospel. Now Jesus said, “Leave the nets and come with me *full time*, and I’ll make you a fisher of men. I want you to catch men. I want you to spend *all* your time, Peter, catching men.”

In the future, we’re going to see this more and more. The work of the Loud Cry is going to be given largely by men and women who are called from their ordinary vocations.

Now, of course, the question is, how would a person make a living? That’s another subject, and we won’t go into that this morning. But God has a thousand ways of providing for us, of which we know nothing. But it takes faith and sacrifice as well as hard work to find and enter into those providences.

My point is, it is established by our story this morning that God does call some people from part-time to full-time service for Him. And He does it on the basis of faith.

Now, it’s a great honor thus to be called. It’s true that those disciples who answered the call that morning, as the result of doing that, spent some hungry hours during the next three years. None of them ever rolled up a big bank account. None of them ever rolled around in a big car. No. They walked. They walked with Jesus. They were poor. They were despised. But they became soul winners, *great* soul winners. And the greatest thing in *all* the world, my friend, is to be a soul-winner.

Turn to Daniel 12:3. I want you to see this. Right here in this book of Daniel, that means so much to the remnant people. God has put a picture of soul-winning by soul winners that give their lives to His service:

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament” Daniel 12:3.

Do you know who the wise are? Proverbs 11:30:

“He that winneth souls is wise” Proverbs 11:30.

Here are the wise ones. Now you see the rest of the verse proves it:

“And they that turn many to righteousness will shine as the stars for ever and ever” Daniel 12:3.

Yes, you can be one of God’s stars—not a Hollywood star, up today and down tomorrow; not an astronaut, off to the moon today. If time tarries a few years, 99 people out of a hundred couldn’t tell you the name of a single man that went to the moon. Right? Something else, somebody else will be attracting their attention.

But oh, my friends, God’s stars, God’s soul winners, will shine as the stars of Heaven forever and ever. Oh, what it’s going to mean a million years from now, to have somebody come up and throw their arms around you and say, “You won my soul to Christ.” And another and another. And friends, it won’t be just once. It won’t be just on that trip we take with Jesus through Orion to the New Jerusalem. Doubtless, many a time on that trip somebody’s going to greet us with joy, recognizing us as the channel that God used to win them.

But the thing is this: as those dear people for whom we have labored go from world to world, as they take in, in ever-increasing capacity the glories of Heaven and the universe, the more they are happy, the more grateful they’re going to be again and again for those that God used to win them. Do you see? So, in a new way, they are going to come with enthusiasm and say, “Oh, I’m so glad you won my soul to Christ.”

Now friends, everybody’s going to have some star. There are no starless crowns. That isn’t to discourage you and think, “Oh well, I don’t know of anyone I have ever won. I guess I won’t be there. It’s the other way around. If you’re there, don’t worry, there’ll be somebody that God used you to win, whether you knew about it or not.” Leave that with God.

My point is, we are told to *aim* for the crown *heavy* with stars. Don’t be satisfied to think you will have one or two or three or four. There are people sitting here this morning, friends, that if they will catch the vision and enter into the experience with Jesus that is involved in this, they can win dozens and scores and *hundreds* of souls to Jesus before probation closes.

That’s the destiny of somebody here. Oh, I hope that somebody will get the message. I hope that somebody will have done with lesser things and *throw* your life into that program which will give you many stars in your crown—not just some, but many. Aim for the crown *heavy* with stars.

But it costs. Look here at Luke 5:10–11:

“Jesus said unto Simon [Peter], Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him” Luke 5:11.

That’s it:

“They forsook all, and followed him” Luke 5:11.

Why? Well, they were answering the call to soul-winning. This was Peter’s response to that invitation of Jesus. Did it take all? Oh yes, it did, friends. All through his life, Peter was pouring out all that he had for God.

It’s true he made some failures. And may I say to you, dear friends, this should encourage everybody here this morning. Just because you’ve made some mistakes doesn’t mean you can’t win souls. Peter made several along the way, even after this, didn’t he? But God didn’t throw him out. He kept teaching him, reproofing him, disciplining him. And if you mean business, God will do the same for you.

But my point is, before Peter got through it took everything. That’s what it’ll take with you if you want to be a mighty soul winner.

Let me tell you something that happened on August 25, 1950. An Italian fisherman, outside the Golden Gate out there in the Pacific Ocean, was making his way home. He’d been out in the ocean catching fish. He had a good catch. His boat was full of fish, nearly \$3,000 worth of fish.

He was on his way back to the harbor to sell the fish, but proceeding cautiously because there was a fog. And so as he was making his way cautiously, suddenly he noticed in the water around him, struggling men. And as the fog lifted a little and he looked down into the waters, he saw a ship that had been sunk. It was the United States Navy hospital ship, Benevolence, and it had been rammed by another ship in the fog and had just sunk. And these men struggling in the water were the survivors.

As he told the experience afterward, John Nepolli, that fisherman, said, “God said to me, ‘You’ve seen this, now go to work.’”

And so he reached out over the edge of his boat and laid hold of the nearest man and pulled him in. Then he reached out and pulled in another man, and another man. But, pretty soon, there was no more room. The boat was not large, and it was filled with boxes of fish. What should he do?

Overboard went some boxes of fish, and in came some men, some more men. That kept on, my dear friends, until his last box of fish was in the bottom of the ocean. But before the sun had set that afternoon, he had, personally, pulled out of the water with his own two little arms 70 men.

Was it worth it? Well, I can tell you this, friends. If any one of those 70 was your father or your brother, you'd say, "Yes, John Nepolli, it was worth all your work and sacrifice. It was worth the \$3,000 worth of fish you threw overboard. It was worth it all just to save my loved one." Agreed?

But suppose John Nepolli had consulted his own interests. Suppose he had said, "After all, I have to live. I have to feed my family. And these \$3,000 worth of fish will pay a lot of bills and keep me going for a while. I've pulled in several men to safety. I'd better steam to port, deliver those rescued men, and sell my fish.

Suppose he had. And it was your brother, your father, your loved one that was left to perish, would you have said, "Well done" to him?

Soon we're going to meet the *great* Savior of men who gave His life that they might be redeemed, and who is doing His part in the Heavenly Sanctuary. And He has left with us the great privilege, the great opportunity of actually rescuing men. Soon we're going to see Him face to face. Will He say, "Well done"?

Ah, my friends, I don't believe He'll say "Well done," unless we've done well. What do you say? Do you hear the call of Jesus sounding in your heart?

"From henceforth thou shall catch men" Luke 5:10.

Not fish, but men—human souls made in the image of the Divine; the ones that God, in Christ, gave Himself for, that they might be redeemed; the ones for whom Jesus sweat the great drops of blood in the garden.

Ah friends, it's a wonderful program. What does Jesus say to your heart this morning? What's He talking to you about? Does He put His finger on things in your life and say, "Have done with lesser things?"

It isn't just whiskey and cards and dancing and movies that keep people from soul-winning, friends. There're a lot of ordinary things, even things that somebody must do, that have got to go overboard if a man is going to fill the boat with men, instead of fish.

Isn't this something to pray about? Isn't this something to seek God about?

Now, tomorrow morning, God willing, I want to study with you the program that gets men ready to win souls. Don't think that it's just by dashing off here on some wild goose chase, like a pup that's out in the woods chasing a rabbit. The rabbits usually know how to keep out of their way, my friends. Soul-winning is a science. It's the greatest of all sciences. It's an art, the greatest of all arts. And as the servant of the Lord says, if young people would enter this work, by no means discourage them, but first let them learn the trade.

It's a trade, a science, an art. Are you willing to learn? What did I read here in *Desire of Ages*?

“In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world’s most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse those dormant faculties” *The Desire of Ages*, page 250.

“God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him” *The Desire of Ages*, page 251.

Will you yield?

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