

## Small Group Leaders February, 2010

February 7

### Luke 5:1-11

<sup>5</sup>Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

### Discussion Questions

1. What does it feel like to work and work at something and accomplish nothing? ("we have worked all night long but have caught nothing") What are some current-day examples of this, perhaps in your own life or your church life?
2. Peter follows his statement with this: "yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." The Greek is actually "yet *at your transforming word*, I will let down the nets. What *is* Jesus' "transforming word?"
  - a. What needs to be transformed?
  - b. What is the true meaning of "word?"
3. Our conservative-fundamentalist brothers and sisters tend to explain Jesus' term "from now on you will be catching people" (or "I will make you fishers of people") like this: we must fish people out of the ocean of sin, to ensure they are saved. Since we tend not to interpret Scripture this way, what else might Jesus have meant?
  - a. How have you been a fisher of people in your own life?
  - b. How might you be in the next two weeks?

February 21, 2010

## **Romans 10:5-15**

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.”<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down)<sup>7</sup> “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);<sup>9</sup> because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.<sup>11</sup> The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.”

<sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.<sup>13</sup> For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”<sup>14</sup> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?<sup>15</sup> And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Have three different people read the first paragraph (verses 5-11). Listen carefully – not for interpretation, but just for what jumps out at you. Share around the circle the parts that jumped out, as though in “bold print” for each person.
2. Do you think this paragraph was intended to reassure people who already were believers, or warn/judge people who were not? How could it be heard the opposite way to what you originally thought?
3. The second paragraph speaks of the value of those who proclaim the good news. In Paul’s day these people were apostles – those who had seen the risen Christ. Previous to that, the people would have been *prophets* – those who spoke for God. Are there still prophets today? Who are they?
  - a. The United Church of Canada has always believed in an educated clergy, and still supports six theological colleges nation-wide. There are a huge shortage of ministers, however and this is an ever-increasing shortage as the “Baby Boom” retires. Is there still value in theological education? What is it? Do we need clergy?
  - b. What will be the result reflected in the church if we were to no longer have an educated clergy? (Would it be positive or negative?)
  - c. If we did away with educated clergy, in what other way could we preserve our tradition of interpreting the Scriptures in a scholarly manner?