

## The Lifting-Up Of Peter.

Text: Luke 5:1-11

Suggested Hymns:

302, 305, 263, 291, 303

- 1) Peter Was Elevated From Sinner To Saint  
And From Fisherman To A Fisher Of Men.
- 2) The Means Through Which This Elevation  
Was Accomplished.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 5:1-11, <sup>1</sup> *So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, <sup>2</sup> and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> 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.*

<sup>4</sup> *When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> 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."*

<sup>6</sup> *And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. <sup>7</sup> 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.*

<sup>8</sup> *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; <sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

This was a decisive day in the life of Peter. If it had not been for what is recorded here, Peter might never have been heard from. He might have lived and died like thousands of other people — unknown and unsung. But the occurrence recorded in our text changed the whole course of Peter's life and formed one link in a chain of events that made of Peter a man of renown, and gave him a place and a glory for all eternity in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

It is important that we note such decisive events, because they occur in our lives as well. Even the world recognises something of the significance of critical moments.

True, worldly-minded people think only of opportunity for gain, money, influence, temporal advancement, and glory. Christians, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, think of spiritual values,<sup>2</sup> spiritual opportunities, and visitations of God.<sup>3</sup> It is certainly a sad moment when such a day of visitation is not recognised!<sup>4</sup> Lest we foolishly miss such an opportunity, let us give attention to what we are told in this text.

The theme of our sermon is *The Lifting-Up of Peter*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Peter Was Lifted Up From Sinner To Saint And From Fisherman To A Fisher Of Men.**

Peter was a great sinner. He certainly spoke the truth when here in our text he said, "*I am a sinful man.*" He had an impulsive nature and gave way to impulses without carefully considering their nature, whether good or bad. That is sin. His murderous act,<sup>5</sup> his satanic rebuking of Jesus,<sup>6</sup> his foolish self-confidence,<sup>7</sup> his shameful lack of faith,<sup>8</sup> his arrogant self-seeking,<sup>9</sup> his disgraceful flight at the time when Jesus was taken prisoner in Gethsemane, and his appalling sins of denial, lying, and perjury,<sup>10</sup> his hypocritical deception,<sup>11</sup> — what a humiliating catalogue of sins!

And these are only the sins which have been recorded in the Bible. It shows the outbursts of a weak and corrupt nature. How often did Peter sin before and after this without having his transgressions actually recorded in Scripture? Peter certainly told the truth when he said, "*I am a sinful man.*"

And Peter was an uneducated and ignorant man.<sup>12</sup> He had not received such an education as Paul, for instance. He had been brought up to live the life of a plain, simple fisherman. He followed the business of supplying neighbouring cities with fish from the sea of Galilee or Tiberias.

Peter was not left in his sin, ignorance, and humble station, but rather was made a saint, a writer of great power, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, who is known and esteemed throughout the entire Christian world and will shine as the brightness of the firmament throughout all eternity in the glory of the Messiah's kingdom.

Peter's sins were all washed away and forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> He tells us of that precious blood in his first epistle, as we read in 1 Peter 1:18-19, <sup>18</sup> *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,* <sup>19</sup> *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

Through repentance,<sup>14</sup> and through faith, this very sinful man was cleansed and pardoned and made a saint in the sight of God. And not only was he forgiven, but there came into His heart God's Holy Spirit, who transformed his nature. He became a new creature. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Instead of his ignorance there was given to him the very wisdom of God, the revelation from the heavenly Father.<sup>15</sup> Instead of his cowardice there was given him wonderful boldness to confess the Lord,<sup>16</sup> cheerful willingness to suffer for the sake of Jesus' name.<sup>17</sup>

To the grace of God which is bestowed on every believer there were added in Peter's case many graces, and much spiritual power. Not only did he become a follower and disciple of the Lord Jesus, but Jesus made of him a fisher of men, made him a preacher of the Gospel and an apostle.

What marvellous success Peter had in this great and glorious work! You can read about Pentecost Day in Acts chapter 2, and about Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. He also wrote the two epistles of Peter.

Some people have even wished to make Peter a successor of the Lord Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ has no successor. Among His disciples none is lord, but all are His brethren, as we read in Matthew 23:8, <sup>8</sup> ***“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.*** Nor is there any need to raise Peter higher than Jesus raised him when He gave him the commission to feed His sheep and to feed His lambs.<sup>18</sup>

Is that not a wonderful lifting-up and transformation, in the life of this sinful man? How poor he was; how rich he became! How unclean and filthy he was; how pure and strong he became! How helpless, fearful, and cowardly he was; what a preacher of power, what a shining light, God made of him!

But this sermon is not preached for Peter’s sake. That Same One, Jesus Christ who lifted up Peter can lift you up. And He is ready to do it. We read in Isaiah 59:1, <sup>1</sup> ***Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.***

That Fountain from which Peter drank and survived is still flowing, and you are invited to drink from it. The dress of righteousness which covered Peter’s sin is also to cover your sin. The hand that was outstretched to lift up Peter out of his sin, and make a saint of him, is outstretched to lift you up and to make a glorious saint of you.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:31, to ***earnestly desire the best gifts.*** Let it not be said of us that we have not because we ask not. No, let us seek that we may find; let us knock that the door may be opened to us; let us ask that we may receive. And in order that we may receive, let us now consider the means through which this lifting-up was accomplished.

## **2. The Means Through Which This Lifting-Up Was Accomplished.**

It is very plain, and should be evident to every one, that God did this work in Peter. Peter’s own natural craving did not move him to seek the Lord, nor did he find Jesus through his own natural wisdom or strength.

No, Jesus came to Peter. Here in our text we are told of Jesus’ coming to Peter while Peter was washing his nets, and in John 1 we are told that Peter’s brother, Andrew, brought Simon Peter to Jesus. But it was not this mere external

contact with Jesus that produced the change in Peter. What was it? It was Jesus' Word.

Even before the event told about in our text Jesus had convinced Peter that He, Jesus, is the Messiah, the Christ.<sup>19</sup> It was just as true in Peter's case, as it is true in the case of any one, that a man cannot come to faith in Christ if he does not hear of Him.<sup>20</sup> In Peter's case, as in the case of every one who is blessed of God with repentance and faith, the seed is the Word of God.<sup>21</sup> Peter himself knew that and taught it.<sup>22</sup>

The importance of this fact can scarcely be overestimated. No man can be saved without the Word of God.<sup>23</sup> If you are waiting for God to use some other means upon you in order to convince you and bring you to Christ, to repentance of sin, to faith, you are waiting in vain.

Today His mercy calls you, today the same Word that was preached to Peter is preached to you. Today, as you hear God's Word, salvation is coming to the door of your heart.<sup>24</sup>

The hymnist writes<sup>25</sup>

Sinners, turn: why will you die?  
God, your Maker, asks you why:  
God, who did your being give,  
Made you with Himself to live;

But it would be a great mistake to imagine that any one word or sermon of Jesus, once heard, did all that we see in Peter. It is true that here in our text Peter was so influenced by the sermon which Jesus preached, that in spite of the inconvenience, difficulty, and apparent impossibility of success he was willing to launch out into the deep and to let down his net for a catch of fish, "*at the word of Jesus.*"

But Peter became an earnest disciple, that is, a scholar, of Jesus' Word. He now walked with Him, heard Him day by day, accepted instruction, admonition, correction, reproof, and guidance from this his beloved Master.

And in this way the work in Peter was continued and increased, and all those marvellous things were done for Peter of which we have spoken. Through the Word, Peter was made to see his sin; through the Word he was given repentance;

through the Word, faith; through the Word, the Holy Spirit; through the Word, courage, perseverance, and guidance. Oh, what great things the Word of God wrought for Peter! And through this Word Peter himself again regenerated others and saved them from their sins and made of them heirs of salvation, kings and priests under God.<sup>26</sup>

Now, this Word has not lost its power, this Word was not given for Peter only. It is true, God does not intend to make every one of us an apostle or a preacher, but it is His purpose through God's Word to enlighten you, make a Christian of you, preserve you in the true faith, and give you victory over death itself.<sup>27</sup>

God wants to make of you also fishers of men, through whose private testimony and through whose combined support of the Church, Christian schools, and Christian literature many are to come to the knowledge of the truth and thus will be taken in the net of the Gospel.

Do you not see the importance of the Word of God for you? Did Peter lose anything by taking time to stop his work and listen to Jesus' Word? Did Peter lose anything by lending his ship to Jesus for the purpose of a divine service there at the seashore? Did Peter lose anything by forsaking everything and following Jesus?

No, Peter discovered that David was right as we read in Psalm 19:7-10, <sup>7</sup> *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;* <sup>8</sup> *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;* <sup>9</sup> *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.* <sup>10</sup> *More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

Solomon prayed rightly as we read in 1 Kings 3:9, <sup>9</sup> *"Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"* God was pleased with his prayer and is pleased when we have family devotion in our homes, worship Him in spirit and in truth in public worship and read Christian literature.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,<sup>28</sup>

Father of mercies, in Thy Word  
What endless glory shines!  
For ever be Thy name adored  
For these celestial lines. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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- <sup>1</sup> Daniel 12:3
  - <sup>2</sup> Matthew 16:26
  - <sup>3</sup> Luke 19:9; Luke 10:38-42
  - <sup>4</sup> Luke 19:42; Matt. 25:1-13
  - <sup>5</sup> Matthew 26:51
  - <sup>6</sup> Matthew 16:23
  - <sup>7</sup> Matthew 26:35
  - <sup>8</sup> Matthew 14:31
  - <sup>9</sup> Matthew 19:27, Mark 9:34
  - <sup>10</sup> Matthew 26:72
  - <sup>11</sup> Galatians 2:13-14
  - <sup>12</sup> Acts 4:13
  - <sup>13</sup> 1 John 1:7
  - <sup>14</sup> Matthew 26:75
  - <sup>15</sup> Matthew 16:17
  - <sup>16</sup> Acts 4:8-13
  - <sup>17</sup> Acts 5:41
  - <sup>18</sup> John 21:15-17
  - <sup>19</sup> John 1:40-42
  - <sup>20</sup> Rom. 10:14-17
  - <sup>21</sup> Luke 8:11
  - <sup>22</sup> 1 Pet. 1:23
  - <sup>23</sup> Luke 16:31
  - <sup>24</sup> Luke 19:9, Revelation 3:20
  - <sup>25</sup> Hymn 302
  - <sup>26</sup> Acts 2:41; 1 Pet. 1:23-25
  - <sup>27</sup> 1 Cor. 15:55-57
  - <sup>28</sup> Hymn 263