

THE BIG IDEA: A big God calls small people to greater things.

The Take-Off

Admittedly I am NOT a fisherman. In fact, the only person brave enough to ever take me fishing was my Grandpa, and he only did it once because I caught his hat - as I was casting!

If there's one thing fishermen are known for, it's got to be fish tales, and the way that the fish grow as the stories are told over and over and over again.

I mean, there are catches, and then there are BIG catches. Like these...

[Big catch pictures]

Think about this: if you were going to pick the launch team for your new international venture, where are you going?

Well, I'm going to the best grad schools and picking the best students to interview and then picking the best of the best to help me get the thing off the ground. Right?

Not Jesus. Jesus went to men who smelled bad, told bad fish tales, and probably didn't have the best reputations.

He went to the fishermen, and that's the story we find in the first eleven verses of Luke 5.

Not just the calling of ordinary men to be a part of something extraordinary, but the big catch that Jesus orchestrated that would forever change the stories that these fishermen would tell.

Let's read it, and then I want to make around 10 quick observations about big catches.

Follow along as I read Luke 5:1-11.

1. **BIG CATCHES usually interrupt us**

- a. Ok parents, see if you can relate to this scenario: you've fixed supper, served it, cleaned the kitchen, put everything away and finally sat down to enjoy some time off your feet when the kids come in and ask, "What's for dessert?"
- b. How about this one? You work in a store and have just gotten everything straightened up and then - with 5 minutes before closing - a customer walks in.
- c. Ahh, now you're starting to get a sense of how the fishermen might have felt here.
- d. They've just finished washing their nets (probably as Jesus taught the crowd), and THAT'S WHEN Jesus tells them to go fishing...again!
- e. Letting Jesus preach from their boat was one thing, but to go fish again after having cleaned up from fishing? That was an inconvenience!
- f. When God wants to do something big in our lives, it will rarely happen on our timetable
- g. Usually, it will seem like an interruption. Big catches usually are.

2. **BIG CATCHES take us beyond what we know**

- a. Jesus wasn't giving a command to men who knew nothing
- b. Outside of the whole "I'm God" thing that Jesus had going for him, it's very possible that these men knew more about fishing than Jesus did
- c. They knew the best time to fish (night) and the best time not to (day)
- d. They knew the fish would see the net in the daytime, and that this would be pointless
- e. But they knew that Jesus might know something that they didn't know
- f. You and I may know a lot, but when God does something big in our lives, it will almost always take us beyond what we know
- g. Isaiah 55:9

3. **BIG CATCHES require more effort**

- a. This is the last thing you and I want to hear, right? Jesus didn't tell Peter to chill on the shore while he went out and did the fishing!
- b. He told Peter to go back out - even after he had "worked hard all night and caught nothing" (v. 5)
- c. There are fish to catch - a big catch that we don't know about - and Jesus looks at tired people and says, "Try again."
- d. Luke 10:2 - Jesus sends workers into the harvest
- e. Sure it takes effort, but how tired do you think Peter felt after the big catch? he was ENERGIZED!!!
- f. Nothing energizes the church like lost souls being found!

4. BIG CATCHES happen after simple obedience

- a. So many times, our big plans never materialize because we're waiting for big things to do in order to achieve them.
- b. Not big catches come after simple steps of obedience!
- c. I love, love, love the simple response of Peter to the command of Jesus: "But at Your word..."
- d. Psalm 119:24 - delight is in the Word, not the work

5. BIG CATCHES break things

- a. I'm reminded of the custodian in one of our churches who hung a sign in the bathroom that read "do not scuff floors!"
- b. She missed the point that a big catch of souls will break things, or at least, strain things
- c. It will strain the very structure of the church - how we communicate, who we are in community with
- d. This strain is normal; we can't afford to become offended over the strain of souls!

6. BIG CATCHES lead to better partnerships more than bigger boats

- a. The size of the catch we can handle is related to the size of the kingdom network we've developed
- b. If all we do is build bigger facilities, then we're in essence operating as if WE ALONE are the fishermen
- c. But we're not - God has a catch in this city and county that is TOO BIG FOR ONE BOAT
- d. We need to build partnerships - we do that first by praying for surrounding boats (churches)

7. BIG CATCHES reveal the greatness of Jesus

- a. Verse 9 isn't really as much a confession about how bad Peter was, but about how unworthy he felt he was in light of the great miracle that Jesus had just performed!
- b. Big catches will always reveal the greatness of Jesus, and the minute we don't allow the catch BY JESUS to fuel the worship OF JESUS, we'll stop catching fish
- c. Big catches show a big God, not a big pastor, Christian or church

8. BIG CATCHES change the course and purpose of our lives

- a. The bottom line is that this big catch changed everything for these fishermen
- b. Before the catch, their purpose was fish. After the catch, their purpose was souls.
- c. When we experience the big things of God, every other purpose of our lives will pale

9. BIG CATCHES are worth risking everything

- a. Don't miss the power of those last words: "they left EVERYTHING and followed Him"
- b. Big catches are worth risking everything for, and they reveal a God who takes care of us when we do
- c. Don't you know the catch of fish was worth enough to take care of the families of those men when they left their nets behind to follow Jesus?
- d. God will provide everything we need when we leave everything we have to follow him.

The Landing

No made up crazy fish tales for these men!

Can't you see them telling the story to their wives, their children, their friends as they explained why they were leaving it all behind? "No, really, it was THIS BIG!!! True Story!!!"

That Big Catch was all it took to hook a bunch of fishermen, and the rest, as they say, is history!

God is calling us, too, to follow him. I love the way the Big Idea says it: A big God calls small people to greater things. Let's respond to his call by doing exactly what the fishermen did: leaving everything to follow.

Let's pray.