

## **From Master to Lord**

**Luke 5:1-11**

**February 10, 2019**

Today is Scout Sunday. I'm not sure if I am the best choice to be preaching on Scout Sunday because my own experience of Scouting is somewhat limited. As a boy, I was in Cub Scouts. My greatest achievements were making it all the way to my Bear Badge and finishing next to last (but not last!) in the Pinewood Derby. But Scouting was not really for me.

At least not until I became a dad and Zach became a Tiger Cub. We faithfully attended the meetings, participated in the popcorn sales, made Pinewood Derby cars, worked on his badges. Zach earned his Tiger Cub badge, his Bobcat badge and moved up to the Wolf Den. And then somehow, I guess because we were in a really small Cub Scout Pack, I became the Den Leader for the Tiger Cubs. I am proud to say that all 4 boys in my den that year (including Sam Spach) earned both their Tiger Cub badge and their Bobcat badges.

But that is about the extent of my Scouting expertise. Our Cub Scout Pack soon folded because it was so small. And Zach and I moved to other interests. However I always enjoy Scout Sunday because even though my own involvement has been very limited, I have great respect for the entire Scouting program. And I appreciate the opportunity to honor them and recognize their importance to our church.

It takes great commitment to be a Scout and to do well in the Scouting program, especially to become an Eagle Scout, which is the highest honor in Scouting. I admire those who have made the commitment to Scouting and I admire those committed to be leaders in the Scout program.

Especially the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster is the one who is in charge of the entire Troop. According to Boy Scouts of America, the Scoutmaster is responsible for training and guiding youth leaders in the operation of the troop, and for managing, training, and supporting his or her assistant Scoutmasters in their role.

I think that the title "Master" is well deserved in this case. It is a great responsibility that can only be done well by someone who has "mastered" the ins and outs, the ups and downs of scouting. It takes someone who really knows what they are doing and has the respect of those working with them to be able to train and guide and support others. I'm sure that Scott Sheldon is a great Scoutmaster.

In our Gospel lesson this morning, Jesus is referred to as "Master" when he first speaks to Simon. But then, just a few moments later, Jesus goes from being called "Master" to being called "Lord". This morning I want to look at the difference between the two titles, what they meant to Jesus' followers then and what they mean to us as his followers now.

Last week, we left with Jesus having barely escaped the enraged crowd in his hometown of Nazareth. Following that he continued to travel around Galilee, teaching and preaching and healing. One of the people he healed was Simon's mother-in-law, who was suffering from a high fever. So when he encounters Simon in our reading today, we can know that they were already acquainted with each other. Simon knew Jesus as a teacher and a healer.

Jesus is by Lake Gennesaret, which is what Luke calls the Sea of Galilee. The crowds gathered around him are growing larger and larger as

the word of his teaching and healing is spreading throughout the region. Jesus has the great idea to go out in one of the boats and teach the crowd from there. This allows everyone to see him and hear him better. He goes out in a boat belonging to Simon, whose mother-in-law he had healed.

After he is done teaching the crowd, Jesus tells Simon to let his nets down in the deep water. Simon answers, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." This is the first time that Jesus is called "Master" in Luke's gospel. And it is a recognition of what was generally believed about Jesus up to that point. He was known as a teacher and as a healer. But there really wasn't much evidence that he was anything more. He had not made the transition from "Master" to "Lord" yet. At least not in the eyes of the people.

Up to this point in Luke, the only people who know that Jesus is something other, something more, than a teacher, preacher, and healer are the people who were there when he was born (his parents and the shepherds), Anna and old Simeon in the Temple, those who were at his baptism and saw the heavens open and heard the voice of God proclaim "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Perhaps the people at the Synagogue in Nazareth knew what he meant when he said the "Spirit of the Lord" was upon him and had anointed him. And then there were the demons.

One of the interesting things in these early chapters of Luke (and also in Mark) is the way that demons and evil spirits that Jesus confronts and casts out of people respond to him. They all recognize him as the "Son of God" or the "Holy One of God". They know that he is more than a teacher, preacher, and healer. They know that they should be afraid of him. Even

Satan himself, when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, acknowledged that Jesus was the Son of God. Or at least he challenged him to prove that he was the Son of God.

But even though the demons and Satan recognized him as Lord, as the Son of God, the people did not. At least not yet. Not until he was out on the Sea of Galilee and he told Simon to lower his nets into the deep water. They had been out fishing all night but had not caught anything. So Jesus, after he had finished teaching, instructed them to give it another try. They lowered their nets and they caught so many fish that the nets began to break and the boat began to sink.

It is after this that Simon (now called Simon Peter) falls down at Jesus' knees and says "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" And Jesus goes from being "Master" to being "Lord". It may not seem significant but it is. There is a big difference between being a Master and being The Lord.

A Master is someone that we can listen to and learn from. They have literally "mastered" their particular field or area of expertise. Whatever that area or field may be- from mathematics to language to science to religion. They are the ones that we look to share their knowledge with us and impart their wisdom to us. They are important, but they are not unique.

Then, and now, masters were not hard to find. There were, and are, lots of masters, lots of teachers, lots of leaders. We should listen to "masters". They have a lot to teach us and a lot to show us. But we don't necessarily have to follow a master. Yet we are called to follow our Lord.

And there is only one Lord, one God. When Jesus instructed Simon Peter to let down his nets, even though they had not caught anything all day, and Peter listened to him and did what he said, Peter showed faith in him as a Master. But when they saw how many fish they instantly caught, Peter realized that they

weren't in the presence of a typical master. They weren't even in the presence of an ordinary healer.

This miraculous catch of fish wasn't the first miracle that Jesus had performed. He had driven demons out of a man in the synagogue. It wasn't even the first miracle the Simon had seen him perform, remember that Jesus had healed his mother-in-law. But this was different.

The other miracles were miracles of compassion. Jesus was helping to ease the pain of those who were suffering. I don't think that they were something that Jesus had planned to do. He simply responded to the needs of those he met. But that day on the boat in the Sea of Galilee was different.

Peter and the others didn't NEED to catch that many fish. Certainly being fishermen they wanted to catch as many fish as possible. But they also knew that some nights were like that. Some nights you catch fish, and some nights you don't. While they were likely disappointed that they hadn't caught any fish, they knew that tomorrow was another night. They would take their boats out, lower their nets, and try again.

So the miracle that Jesus worked among them that night was more of a sign, like changing water to wine was in the gospel of John. He was using it to send a message to Simon Peter and the others about himself. Jesus was telling them that he can give them all they need and all they want and give it to them abundantly. As he said to the disciples later, "I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly."

With that action, when Jesus filled those nets to overflowing, Simon realized that Jesus was more than a Master, he was more than a teacher, he was more than a rabbi. In that moment, Simon Peter knew that he was in the presence of the Lord, he was in the presence of God. So he did what anyone would do, he fell to his knees and confessed his sinfulness. "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

Actually, maybe that is not what anyone would do in the presence of God. Actually, maybe that is not what WE would do in the presence of God. Because we have gotten used to God's presence in our lives. We have gotten used to having Jesus in our lives. Having spent our lives as his followers, we have gotten used to the blessings that he gives us. And we take them for granted, we take him for granted. So when we find ourselves in his presence, or at least when we recognize that we are in the presence of God, we don't do what we should. We don't fall on our knees and confess our sins.

We are pretty good at seeing other's sins, or what we perceive as the sins of others, but not so good at seeing our own. We need to follow the example of Simon Peter and realize that when we are in the presence of God, our immediate reaction should be to fall on our knees and confess our sins. For we are all sinful. We all fall short of the glory of God. We all do things that move us further away from God's presence. We all need to come to Jesus, to fall on our knees and confess our sins.

And then we can be forgiven. Then we can be made whole. Then we can have the life that he offers to us. And we can have it abundantly. And then we can go forward and follow our Lord. The passage from Luke ends with Jesus telling Peter and James and John to not be afraid and that they would be "catching people" from then on. So they left everything and followed him.

If we truly believe that Jesus is our Lord and not just our master, if we truly believe that he is the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, if we believe that he is more than just a great teacher and preacher, then we will do what Peter did. We will listen to him and we will "let down our nets", we will let down our egos, our certainty, our arrogance, our pride, our desires, we will let down our empty lives, and we will allow Jesus to fill our nets, to fill our lives.

Jesus will fill us with humility, with faith, with hope, with peace, with joy, and with love. And that is what we get, that is what we have, when we follow him.

Jesus is calling us to leave everything- to leave our former lives, our lives of sin- and follow him. And he is giving us all that we need, and even all that we want when we do. So we do not need to be afraid. We are not following a master but we are following our Lord. And he will never lead us astray. But he will lead us into everlasting life.

Amen