

"...on Earth, as it is in Heaven"

Text: Luke 5:1-11

Grace and peace be your constant possession from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians:

The closer you examine man-made things, the less amazing they appear. On the other hand, the closer you examine God-made things, the more amazing they become. That's nowhere more true than when you really study God's Word. Written by different authors over several thousand years, it is a complex web of interconnected truths, all of which point inexorably to Jesus Christ, and to salvation by grace through faith in him alone. It is, in every way, an absolute masterpiece according to any criteria.

One small aspect of the genius that is God's Word is the timelessness of its messages. Think about how difficult it would be for anyone here today to write something that could be readily grasped and comprehended by a reader 4000 years into the future. Yet God's Word consistently does just that. The Creator knows his creation intimately, and therefore knows just how to communicate timelessly with his creation. To this end he gave us timeless points of reference that are as easily applied today as they were when first written. When he wanted to teach us how we are supposed to love our neighbor, for example, he used man's own self-love as his touchstone or standard. **"And you shall love your neighbor as yourself."** When he wanted to teach us about the fleeting nature of man's life, he pointed to the withering grass and the fading flower. When he wanted to teach us something about the unsearchable movement of the Holy Spirit, he pointed to the characteristics of the wind.

This morning we look at yet another timeless standard set down by God in his Word. This standard was established so that human beings of every age would have no doubt whatsoever of the sort of obedience he wants to see in his children. That standard was set by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer: **"Your will be done on earth..."** How? **"...as it is in heaven."** God's will is carried out in heaven by his angels, and they act without hesitation, reservation, complaint, or delay. Like the perfect soldiers that they are, what God tells them to do, they do. No questions asked.

We will examine our text for this morning with this perfect standard in mind. The Word of God that will guide and instruct us this morning is found in the Fifth Chapter of Luke's Gospel:

^{ESV}(Luke 5:1-11) On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ 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. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

So far the verbally inspired words given to us by our holy, righteous God. How truly blessed are all those who rightly regard these words as the voice of God himself, and who treasure his words accordingly. That our God would bless us through the study of these words - as he himself has promised - so we pray, **"Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth."** Amen.

To obey God here on earth *just as he is obeyed in heaven* is at the same time profoundly simple and monumentally difficult. Can you envision any downside to obeying your God without first contemplating the result of your actions? The angels have a perfect comprehension of God's will. That's often our problem though, isn't it? We don't. Because we are both old man and new man, we need to compare every impulse to God's revealed Word and will, which is found only in our Bibles. Our consciences need to play a role (we need to listen to them) but they are often an unreliable guide. In fact the old Adam in us thrills to the recklessness of just going with our gut. *"Don't think about*

it; just do it!" In fact that is the passionate plea of our sinful flesh every time we are tempted, every time we are confronted with the prospect of sin. The sinful side in us hates it when we stop to consider the consequences. It doesn't want us to ask questions like: *"What would my Savior want me to do in this situation?"* or *"Would this action serve to the glory of God or the benefit of my neighbor?"* The old Adam wants you to yield, without judgment, and deal with the consequences later. *"Oh just do it. If it turns out to be wrong, that's what forgiveness is for."*

Hardly a Christian sentiment, is it? That's why the idea behind doing something without thinking it through is so appealing to the devil and his ally within each of us. How livid he must become whenever a child of God stops to prayerfully contemplate a thought or action. How enraged whenever a Christian considers Jesus' attitude over against a potential action, or weighs an action based on whether or not it will glorify God.

This is a problem for all, but especially for young people, where their greatest assets can actually work against them. Their strength, energy, optimism, and perceived invulnerability all work together to blind them to anything but the here and now. Unfortunately, we all need to be knocked about a bit by life to make us cautious. We need to learn that our thoughts naturally tend to focus on the desire of the moment and the assumption of a positive result. The possible consequences and downside don't tend to enter the picture.

Jesus would obviously never have advocated for a "Just do it" attitude, would he?

Actually, that's exactly what he taught us in the Third Petition of the Lord's prayer. But not the way our old Adam does it. Our text gives one such example.

You heard the story in our text. The disciples had fished all night without success. (Many fishermen among us can relate to the unsuccessful part.) They were tending to their nets on the shore when Jesus commandeers Peter's boat. Jesus not only needed some space so that he could address the crowd, he was also well aware of how effectively sound carries over water. After teaching the people from Peter's boat, he rewards the owner by telling him to go out to the deep water and let down his net.

Understand what is going on here. Peter, James, and John (and perhaps Peter's brother Andrew) were dog tired. They had fished through prime time – in the dark when their nets were not so easily seen and avoided by the fish – and now they were ready to be done for the day. What is more,

the Sea of Galilee has a maximum depth of 157 feet, and any fisherman knows that that is *not* the place to catch fish.

But Jesus told them to do, so this was not the time to contemplate or argue.

Ever wonder what Peter was thinking as he went about his work? Don't overlook the fact that he had a good deal of time to think about what he was doing. To obey Jesus, he had to go back to the shore, load the nets, row and or sail out to the deep part of the Lake, and then drop or deploy the nets. What went through his mind all this time we are not told, but I can tell you what would probably have been going through *my* mind. At best, I would have been focusing on one central thought: *"What a colossal waste of time."* Was this what Peter was thinking? We are given something of a clue in his words: ***"Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing..."*** Peter complies, but not without pointing out to Jesus that the best part of the fishing day had yielded them nothing. The rest, as they say, is history.

What is it that we are supposed to learn from this? Several things. First, when we have a clear command from our Savior to do something, the very last thing we want to do is to question why or to look for an alternate solution. How sinfully ridiculous to think that we might know better than Jesus. Certainly everyone here today knows this to be true, yet it is also true that timeless truths like this tend to hold little practical value for us until we actually *use* them; that is, until we actually plug them into our everyday lives. Each individual must do this for himself, but our text offers a few examples to start us in the right direction.

What those Galilean fishermen in our text finally dragged to the shore represented a small fortune in their world. They had, nonetheless, found something of infinitely greater value. They had found their Lord – the Promised Messiah – their Savior. The right thing for them, as Jesus' chosen Apostles, was to leave their former way of life behind and to be about the Father's business. Suppose, however, that instead of just following Jesus they lingered for a bit. Suppose they didn't carry out his will "on earth as it is in heaven," but paused as they began to follow Jesus from the shore and looked back at their incredible windfall. What if they had paused to consider whether or not they might have their cake and eat it too? On how many fruitless outings had they dreamed of a day like this, a catch like this, and now it was here and they were simply abandoning it. They didn't pause, however, did they? The holy call of Jesus the Messiah was certainly the right time to obey

without hesitation, reservation, or complaint. The material could never compare to the eternal.

You and I can relate here, can't we? We face similar situations every time we set aside our offerings and then drop them into the offering box. Is that the time to contemplate all of the other self-centered ways we could spend that money, or is it the time to just do it?

The Bible is full of similar examples. When Naaman was told to wash seven times in the Jordan River, was it time to contemplate water quality, or was it time to jump in? When Saul was told to slaughter every living thing in the city, was it time to think about feasts and sacrifices, or time to kill? When the disciples were told to fetch the donkey on Palm Sunday, or to go by twos into the countryside without extra clothes or money, or to wait in Jerusalem after the Ascension – think, or do?

Carry these things forward. God has told us to **"teach all things, whatsoever he has commanded us."** Understanding God's command, are we to obey without question, or should we first contemplate what might happen to our young people, and to our visitors, if we do? Are we supposed to figure out how water connected to the Word can do such great things, or are we simply to baptize? Are we supposed to test whether or not our neighbor is truly sorry for what he did to us, or are we simply to forgive.

In so many ways, Jesus said, *"Trust me when I tell you."* This is what faith it all about, and it is nowhere more clear and true than in his message of forgiveness. Here we are not to doubtfully contemplate how a righteous God could simply declare a terrible sinner like me to be innocent of all charges – all because he has charged those sins to his Son. He has told me it is so; therefore I am forgiven. Here we are not to look at all of those who deny and pervert the Christian faith and doubt that you and I really do – out of all brilliant and gifted unbelievers in the world – possess that singular truth that can save mankind. That possession is ours through faith in Jesus Christ. To us, as to Jairus when his precious daughter lay dying, Jesus pronounces with infinite kindness and yet absolute power and authority, **"Do not be afraid; only believe."** (Mark 5:36) That is not the time for skepticism or doubt; it is the time to rejoice that we, like those Galilean fishermen, have truly found our great treasure in the person and promise of Jesus Christ our Lord. Your sins are forgiven. You are an heir of everlasting life. **"Do not be afraid; only believe."**

This is our hope. This is our confidence. Having granted us our salvation, may our Lord also now grant us the wisdom to know the right thing to do

when faced with all of life's trials and question – and to do that right thing without doubt or hesitation – according to the standard set by his holy angels. So also in us, O Lord, your will be done here on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

Scripture Readings

ESV (Isaiah 6:1-8) In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." ⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

ESV (1 Corinthians 14:12b-20) Strive to excel in building up the church. ¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

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The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany – February 10, 2019

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 786 (Brown Hymnal)

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The First Lesson: (Isaiah 6:1-8) The arrogance of mankind today is such that society now places greater trust and reliance on what man says *about* God and His Word than what the Word of God itself says. God grant to each of us both the reverence and the eagerness demonstrated by Isaiah in our first lesson. He recognized that nothing that came from his own lips was good and pure unless its source was God himself. Note too how God had to prepare and send Isaiah, as he has also prepared and sent us..

The Psalm of the Day – Psalm 2 (Supplement Page 30)

The Second Lesson: (1 Corinthians 14:12-20) There is a critical difference between child-like and child-ish. God is pleased with the former, but not the latter. As Christians we want to be childlike in our faith and in our ignorance of evil. We do not want the selfishness and immaturity that comes with being childish. God grant such maturity in both church and home, along with the faith and courage to share God's Word openly and clearly.

The Confession of Faith -

The Nicene Creed – page 5. (Brown Hymnal)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 784 (Brown Hymnal)

"Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me"

The Sermon – Text: Luke 5:1-11 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"...On Earth, as it is in Heaven"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Prayers of the Day, Followed by the Lord's Prayer

The Pre-Communion Hymn – 315 (Stanzas 1-2) Red Hymnal)

"I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table"

The Preparation for Holy Communion (Brown Hymnal page 17)

The Distribution

The Nunc Dimittis and Thanksgiving (Brown Hymnal page 20)

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 315 (Stanzas 12-13) Red Hymnal)

"I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States, as well as Canada, India, and Africa. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again!

Attendance – Sunday (34) Average (38)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service w/communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship and coffee hour
Wednesday	-6:00 p.m.	– Confirmation Class
	-7:00 p.m.	– Midweek Bible Study
Next Sunday	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship and coffee hour

CLC News – Teacher Paul Tiefel has returned the call to St John's of Okabena and is still considering the call to Faith of Markesan. Pastor John Johannes of St. Paul's of Ponsford has announced his resignation from the pastoral ministry for health reasons. Pastor Terry Stringer of the Independent Lutheran Diocese has requested to be considered for colloquy into the ministerium of the CLC. Missionary Peter Evensen continues to pursue ways to return to India to continue his work there.

Council Meeting Notes – Five members of the Council, plus the Pastor, were present for the February 3 meeting. Treasurer Mantz reported that income exceeded offerings by \$288 in January. A doorbell and silent (lighted) receiver has been purchased to notify the usher of late arrivals. The Council continues to formulate guidelines for our new Benevolent Fund. Our Welcome Folders have been updated. Mark Redlin and Mick Johnson will serve as our 2018 Audit Committee. This year's Lenten services will follow the format of our Advent services. The next Council meeting is scheduled for March 3rd.

CLC Women's Retreat – This year's retreat is scheduled for March 22-24 in Winona, MN. Additional information is available in the fellowship hall on the bulletin board near the storeroom.