

"You Don't Really Mean That"

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 basic premise of the film industry has always been that their movies simply reflect "the human condition" or "reality." Not even they actually believe that, of course. With few exceptions, what oozes out of Hollywood today is designed to influence reality, not reflect it, and that influence is virtually always designed to increase Godlessness and immorality. This is demonstrably and undeniably true, since true morality is ridiculed and genuine Christianity is *never* promoted. Tragically, the forces of evil are enjoying appalling success at drawing our society ever deeper into the cesspool. One obvious example is the shifting public opinion on homosexuality. Depending on the reputable source consulted, between 1 and 3 percent of the US population identifies as gay. Yet when asked in a poll, Americans now believe the number to be 25-33%, or more than ten times higher than it actually is. Hollywood is primarily responsible for this dramatic misconception. No one living in the real world would ever say that one out of every three or four people that they know is homosexual. That's not reality, it's just the impression they've adopted based on what seeps from their screens. As public perception is altered, what was once rightly regarded as a sinful abomination shifts first to normalization, then acceptance, and finally experimentation and adoption.

The attack on true Christianity itself has been no less relentless and effective. I have yet to see a single example of a movie that accurately portrayed or explained the true Christian faith. The "Christianity" of the movies is either ridiculous work-righteousness or loveless judgmentalism – never sin and grace, never salvation by God's undeserved love through faith in Jesus Christ alone. "Movie Christians" are all sniveling idiots, pompous fools, or hypocritical reprobates. Satan would have it no other way, since only true Christianity can rescue souls from his slavery.

All of which makes me wonder what else is both affected and effected, rather than reflected, by these demonic forces that are now so prevalent in our lives. There is little doubt they affect how we dress, our worldview, even our speech. To that end, I'm not sure if the subject of this morning's sermon is a creation or a reflection, but Hollywood is certainly fond of it. That doesn't make it bad, in itself, but given the world in which we live it's clearly wise to carefully weigh everything that is shared by the world. In this case, whether from a movie or from our own life-experience, we can

all easily envision the situation that is implied whenever the phrase is used.

The basic concept of this expression, "*You Don't Really Mean That*," is what we will examine this morning on the basis of our text. That Word of God that will guide and instruct us 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. All who rightly regard these words as the voice of God himself, and who treasure them accordingly, are blessed. That our God would bless us through the study of these words also this morning, so we pray, "***Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth.***" Amen.

Our text offered several "*You don't really mean that*" moments – some obvious, some maybe not so much. Our text begins with Jesus asking Peter for the use of his boat to address the crowd gathered on the shore of what our text refers to as Lake Gennesaret (another name for the more familiar Sea of Galilee.) This was not a "*You don't really mean that*" moment for Peter. Every fisherman knows how well sound carries over water. The first "*You don't really mean that*" moment came

when Jesus told him to cast his net into the deep part of the Sea. Peter was a professional fisherman. He knew that what Jesus was suggesting was just silly.

I can't help but wonder what Peter was thinking as he went about the work of doing what Jesus told him to do. 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, haul the nets back onboard, 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 in the best location had yielded them nothing.

There are lessons here. 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. The problem is not always that we think we know better. More often than not the problem is that that evil side in us simply does not want to submit to God's Word and will. Don't waste your time praying for an answer that God has already provided in his Word.

The second *"You don't really mean that"* came after Peter realized that simple obedience had netted what amounted to a small fortune in his world. You heard his reaction in our text: ***But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."*** Now it would have been Jesus' turn to use the phrase, only as a statement rather than a question: *"You don't really mean that."* What Peter had said was, at best, an odd thing to say, wasn't it? It was the worst sort of foolishness, masquerading as humility. It was the terrible consequence of ignorance on full display.

At that moment Peter *did* mean exactly what he said. Peter lived in a society that believed they could face the holy, eternal God on their own merits or goodness. Isaiah was filled with the same dread when he witnessed the glory of God in the temple, and his reaction was the same: ***"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!"*** ^{ESV}(Isaiah 6:5) When natural man comes face to face with true holiness, all pretense is immediately stripped away and he imagines his only recourse, his only hope, is separation. Jesus

obviously knew better. The solution is never to deny sin or to attempt to run away. It is to cling in faith to that Savior for forgiveness.

At this point, Peter was undoubtedly floundering every bit as much as the fish in his net. I could well envision the next *"You don't really mean that"* coming again from Peter when he heard what Jesus said next: ***"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."*** Had I been in Peter's position, I would have been completely lost at this point. I would have been unable to envision anything other than a net full of flopping, gasping human beings. We today understand Jesus' words only because we know what happened from this point forward.

More lessons here. The fact that we are dazed, confused, and uncertain does not mean that God is. Trusting God includes trusting his Word and wisdom *even when it makes absolutely no sense to us*. Trust actually begins with the confidence that God always knows what he is doing. Always. Our natural inclination is to trust only what makes sense, only what we can verify – which is actually the *opposite* of trust. Time always fixes the problem, because God is always proved right. Sometimes that means waiting until he calls us home to heaven. In this case, Peter understood long before that.

The third *"You don't really mean that"* in our text came neither from Jesus nor Peter. It is, in fact, only implied, and it is really only recognized when it is *applied* individually by each of us. In fact you and I are actually the ones tempted to use the expression.

Jesus had to disabuse his disciples, including the Apostles, of the notion that Christianity promised earthly power, fame, and wealth. His followers needed to learn the cost of true discipleship. So also Jesus warned them: ***"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."*** ^{ESV}(Luke 9:23-24)

Though Peter, James, and John still had much to learn, here they shined. Note that although we hear of no command from Jesus to do so, we read in our text, ***"And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."*** What they abandoned there on the shore was more than just a good catch. It was more even than a small fortune and their means of feeding themselves and their families in the future. What they simply abandoned there represented their hopes and dreams. How many hours had they struggled and dreamed of just such a day? How many times had they fantasized

about just such a windfall – seeing it in their mind’s eye as the solution to virtually all of their problems and desires? Having finally realized their dream, how could they just leave it all behind?

The answer, of course, is that they had found something of infinitely greater value. They had found their Savior – the Promised Messiah – and also therefore their life’s true purpose. The right thing for them, as Jesus’ chosen Apostles, was to abandon both their fortune and their former way of life for an infinitely greater treasure and purpose.

Suppose, however, that instead of just abandoning all and following Jesus they had lingered for a bit. What if they had paused to look back at their incredible windfall. What if they had stopped 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 learn something here, which is why this instance of *“You don’t really mean that”* we apply to ourselves and to a wide variety of situations in our own lives. The phrase doesn’t come to mind when we find God’s idea of dedication and obedience easy does it? It doesn’t occur to us when following God’s will costs us little or nothing. We tend to use it when dedication and obedience are difficult, or when such things cost us dearly. Would you and I so easily turn our backs on a fortune and career? Our comfortable lives? Our reputations and relationships, if called on to do so? *“You don’t really mean that, do you Lord?”*

This is law, and it rightly condemns our selfishness and worldliness, but there’s one final example we absolutely must apply to ourselves, which is the natural reaction of every single sinner when confronted with the true, pure, simple truth of the gospel. *“You don’t really mean that, God – that there is absolutely nothing that I need to do or to pay to satisfy my debt of sin. No good deeds that I need to supply to what you have already done for me. You don’t really mean that because you punished your Son in my place, I now stand sinless, holy, and righteous in your sight. You don’t really mean that even coming to faith and remaining in that faith is a work that you carry out in me. You don’t really mean that you did it all?”*

His reply: *That’s exactly what I mean.*

God preserve each of us in this simple, life-saving truth. Amen.

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 6, 2022

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 400 (Red 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.

Psalm 111 (On Screens Only)

The Second Lesson: (1 Corinthians 14:12b-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 – revised (On Screens only)

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)

"You Don't Really Mean That"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Prayers

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 worshipping with us this morning and invite you to join us each Sunday at this time. We are glad you are here! **To our Visitors seeking Holy Communion** – In obedience to God's Word, we practice "Close Communion." This practice stresses both our concern for others, not wanting anyone to receive the sacrament to their harm (1 Cor. 11:27-30) and the importance of unity in confession and faith (1 Cor. 10:16-17). For this reason we ask that anyone who has not established this unity through membership in a CLC congregation please meet with the pastor to discuss this Scriptural doctrine before communing. This is a practice that we follow out of love and concern for you, and out of obedience to God's Word, not in judgment of anyone's Christian faith.

Attendance – Sunday (26) Average (30)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school and Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service w/Holy Communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour
Wednesday		- No Midweek Classes
Next Sunday	-9:00 a.m.	– Sunday school No Bible Class
	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship Service
	-11:00 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour

CLC News – Pastor Mark Tiefel is considering the call to Immanuel of Winter Haven. Teacher Michaela Winters is considering the call to Berea School of Inver Grove Heights. Redeemer School of Cheyenne has called Mrs. Dawn Mayhew, a current member, to be their teacher.

Care Package – Today is the last day to contribute items for the care package. See Cindy for more information.

Easter Flower Order – There is a sign-up sheet on the mailbox table for this year's Easter flower order. Please see Sandy Roehl if you have any questions.

Pastor Out of Town – Pastor and Sandy are scheduled to be out of town for a week, leaving on Tuesday. As a result, there will be no midweek classes this week, and no Bible Class next Sunday. Sunday school will be held as scheduled, as will the Sunday Worship Service.

Special Assessment – Today is the last day to voice any comments on the Church Council's proposal to use our Reserve Roofing Fund to pay off our Special Assessment bill. Forward comments to any Council member.