

5C 2019 SML  
LK 5:1-11

This evening's/morning's gospel is an odd story about Our Blessed Lord and Peter. Read with spiritual eyes, this story reveals the essential feature of sainthood. For a Galilean fisherman his boat was everything; it was:

- ✓ his livelihood;
- ✓ his work;
- ✓ the means by which he supported his family.

To Peter, his boat was more like a ship. It was his key to survival.

And Our Blessed Lord simply gets in the boat, commences to give orders, and the result is the greatest catch Peter the fisherman ever made. Read through spiritual eyes, Jesus' uninvited boarding of the boat represents the invasion of grace, the incoming of divine love into someone's life. Precisely because God does not compete with creation, precisely because He wants us to come fully alive, this inrushing of grace neither destroys nor interrupts nor invades, but rather enhances and raises us to a new pitch.

Peter, after all, had been successful enough as a fisherman. This past year, we visited Capernaum and saw what

was left of Peter's house. The foundation of his house was huge compared to his neighbors' houses. Yes, Peter did well for himself as a fisherman. But now, under Jesus' direction, Peter puts out into the deep and brings in more than he could ever have imagined possible. Keep in mind however, this happened only after Peter cooperated with God's grace, only after Jesus was allowed into the boat that through spiritual eyes, represented his entire life.

*Duc in Altum! Duc in Altum!* This is Latin for "Put out into the deep" and it is a phrase that has been used over and again by St. John Paul II, Our Holy Father Emeritus Benedict and Pope Francis in their call for a new evangelization. *Duc in Altum.* Put out into the deep.

We are not talking about fishing, but about casting out into the depths of our spiritual life. The classicists have always interpreted Our Blessed Lord's exhortation "put out into the deep" to mean perfection. Put out into the deep, set aside human constraints, human frustrations and pursue perfection. When we talk about perfection we think of being sinless. A better way of saying it is giving Our Lord our best effort, and while we may never be sinless, we will sin less. But how? Here's how.

Picture your Mother, you and your little brother. My younger brother Tim and I shared a bedroom. We used to fight, and as a result, we often got in trouble together. And because I was older, I was often told, “I expect more out of you,” because I was older. Well, Our Blessed Lord isn’t far from Nancy Swift. Those of us who are baptized, those of us who are confirmed are “spiritually” older. And Our Blessed Lord “expects more out of us.” Those of us who have been privileged to be Godparents or Confirmation sponsors. More is expected of us. We are expected to model faith. We are expected to have so strong a devotion to the Eucharist that we are here weekly. For us, Jesus is important.

Let’s pinpoint this a bit more. David Brooks wrote his book Bobos in Paradise. Brooks calls bourgeois bohemians “Bobos.” Bobos combine 1960s bohemian values of self expression, pleasure seeking and general distrust of authority with the 1980s bourgeois values of selfish consumerism. According to Brooks, Bobos are not looking to be called to any higher moral ground. They don’t expect an America shining on a hill. All they want is a comfortable, cozy, convenient, tolerant complacency. Bobos will never be saints. Those who put out into the deep are not Bobos. Who are those who put out into the deep?

Those who pray. Those who are committed to pray. Those who put time aside to pray. I cannot wait for our Adoration Chapel: Our Blessed Lord sitting with us, and us sitting with Him 24/7. Those who have committed to making a regular holy hour are putting out into the deep. Keep in mind Peter did not make his great catch of fish until after Our Blessed Lord got into his boat. Don't expect a great catch of fish until after you let Our Blessed Lord into your boat.

When it comes to putting out into the deep, a game changer for me was a short book I read, not even 100 pages, the pages are small, the type is big. It's a quick read. It's called The Prayer of Jabez by Bruce Wilkinson. Since I read this book years ago, it's has become my spiritual motto. The motto is: Lord, put me out into the deep. Lord, give me more, so I can give You more. Give me the opportunity to do greater works for no other reason than to give You greater glory. It's the kind of thinking I mentioned two weeks ago in my homily that would bring the Kingdom of God in the here and now, today. As I said last night/Friday night at the volunteer dinner dance that makes SML a great parish. It's the kind of thinking that says, "Lord, give us more at SML for no other reason so that we can give You more!"

And you might be thinking, holy shmoly, I can't even make it to Mass because of the daily grind, being crushed by life's "rush hour," and you want me to make a "holy hour?" You want me to ask for more? Yeah, well, yes, life is messy.

Yes, because you'll find, as I have, that God helps you to be a better steward of your time: to get rid of the stuff on your schedule that doesn't matter and replace it with what does matter. Reading this book was my game changer and it works!

Flipping through the pages of The Prayer of Jabez, I underlined sentences like:

- ✓ The Jabez blessing focuses like a laser on our wanting for ourselves nothing more and nothing less than what God wants for us.
- ✓ Throwing ourselves entirely into the river of His will and power and purposes for us.
- ✓ MT 7:7: "Ask," promised Jesus, "and it will be given to you."
- ✓ JAMES 4:2: "You do not have because you do not ask."
- ✓ Ask God to enlarge your life so you can make a greater impact for him.

- ✓ If you're doing business God's way, it's not only right to ask for more, but He is wanting you to ask for more. Your business is the territory God has entrusted to you.
- ✓ O God and King, please expand my opportunities and my impact in such a way that I touch more lives for Your glory. Let me do more for You!
- ✓ God, please give me more ministry!
- ✓ ZECH 4:6: "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."
- ✓ As your life transcends the ordinary and starts to encroach on new territory for God, guess whose turf you're invading? Satan's!
- ✓ Our petition is for (grace) to protect us from Satan's proven ability to make us come in second.
- ✓ God favors those who ask.

The prayer of Jabez comes from the Bible, 1 Chronicles 4:9 to be exact:

Jabez prayed, "Oh, that You, O Lord, would bless me indeed and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil."

And God granted his prayer.

Let's be more intentional about putting out into the deep. By that I mean, let's adopt a spirituality of putting out into the

deep. Picture yourself in the waters of your life with the Lord, your life, for the Lord and notice where the water is:

- Big toe
- Around your ankles
- Knee deep
- Waist high
- Chest high
- Up to your neck

If we are serious about putting out into the deep so we can make a miraculous catch of fish for the Lord, then big toe, around your ankles, knee deep or waist high isn't going to cut it for you or for the Lord. Why? Perhaps taking a lyric out of context from 1985's "One Night in Bangkok" says it best. "I get my kicks above the waistline Sunshine!"