

Sermon Notes – February 9, 2025
The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 5: 1-11
Peace Lutheran Church
“Hospitality, Obedience, and Risk”

God reveals himself to humanity in love. This is the recurring theme of all narratives, including those in this week's lectionary, from David (1 Sam. 16: 1-13) to Isaiah (Isa. 6: 8); to Simon, James, and John (Luke 5: 9-10); and Paul (1 Cor. 15: 8). Moreover, these are ordinary people through whom God reveals the extraordinary. David is a young shepherd boy, Isaiah and Simon describe themselves in terms of sinfulness, and Paul confesses that without God's grace he would be “unfit to be called an apostle” (15: 8-10). God's revelation is a complete gift!

But that is often not how those who receive His call process it at first. Many are fearful. Isaiah cries, “Woe is me!”, and the phrase “I am lost” speaking more to his confidence in his impending doom than to any misdirection (Isa. 6: 5). Simon pleads for Jesus to “go away” (Luke 5: 8). Paul is blinded (Acts 22: 11). Such hesitation comes, at least in part, from the belief that one could not see God and live (Exod. 33: 20), although there is no evidence of such a punishment ever being meted out. Receiving a call from God, while a gift, also carries extraordinary responsibility.

So Paul speaks of working diligently for the sake of the Lord (1 Cor. 15: 10), and Jesus instructs the fishermen, “From now on you will be catching people” (Luke 5: 10). The immensity of Isaiah's task is such that the people are unwilling to change. The optional extended verses (Isa. 6: 9-13) reflect retrospective polemic that seeks to explain the hardness of heart that Isaiah encounters. In truth, it is difficult to answer God's call. It is not simply about saying yes, but about living lives transformed by that answer - even when the forces of this world are at odds with God's will for love and peace.

Today, to that end, the gospel text's iterating overflowing nets of fish provides a fitting metaphor. Jesus' call is a blessing. At the

same time, the actual work of bringing that blessing to completion and catching the fish requires stamina, interpersonal corporation, and still, the boats almost sink under the weight of the catch. It is not human strength that sustains those who answer, but God's faithfulness (Ps. 138: 3, 1 Cor. 15: 10).