

Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

“Revise Your Vision”

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If you can use anything, Lord, you can use me. Touch my heart and my mouth, and through me speak. If you can use anything, Lord, you can use me. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to thee, our creator and our redeemer. Amen.

“But Simon answered him and said to him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night, and we have caught nothing.’ You know, this is a statement of disappointment and frustration. The amplified Bible gives us an even more vivid description by adding, “We have toiled all night exhaustingly and caught nothing.” Is there anybody in the house who has ever worked themselves to exhaustion and come up with nothing for your efforts? I like the story of the small farmer in Iowa, the Iowa wage and hour department claimed that he was not paying proper wages to his help, so they sent a no-nonsense agent to investigate. The agent got straight to the point. The agent said, “I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them.” “Well,” the farmer drawled, “there are my hired hands. One has been with me for four years, and the other for three. I pay them each \$600 a week plus free room and board. And the there’s my cook. She’s been with me for eighteen months, and I pay her \$500 a month, plus free room and board.” He paused, and then he said, “Then there’s the half-wit who works about eighteen hours a day. He takes home \$10 a week, and I buy him a bottle of bourbon every week.” The agent said, “That’s the one, that’s who I want to talk to, the half-wit.” The farmer said, “That would be me.”

I’d say the farmer knew something about frustration. Peter, James and John also knew about frustration. They toiled all night to the point of exhaustion, and they came away with nothing. You can say it in Spanish. They came away with *nada* in their nets. You

can say it in Russian, they came away with *nyet* in their nets. You can say it in slang, they came away with *zilch* in their nets. No matter how you say it, they came home with empty nets. That's frustration. Is there anybody in the house that knows what it means to be frustrated? Webster's Dictionary says frustration is "a state of insecurity and dissatisfaction, arising from an unresolved problem or an unfulfilled need." That didn't get some of you. Maybe this will. Reverend Doctor Freddy Haines, pastor of Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas said, "Frustration is when your 'want to' is overruled by life telling you what you 'can't do.'" Uh-oh, uh-oh, I think I'm in somebody's Kool-Aid and I got your flavor this morning. You want to open up your own business, but as you know, current economic circumstances are telling you, you can't do it. You want to get a new home or a new car, but current economic circumstances are saying that you can't do it. You want to find a new job, but the current economic situation is telling you, you can't do it. You want to sell your home, but the current economic situation is telling you, you can't do it. You want to, but the 'want to' is overruled by life telling you what you can't do. Somebody say "Ouch" if you now what I'm talking about.

Some people will tell you that Christians ain't supposed to get frustrated. But let me tell you, just because you know Jesus, that does not provide an immunization shot from frustration. The reality is, that at any one point in time, all of us know something about frustration. We know about the aggravation from frustration that makes us want to turn in our resignation. I know I'm preaching to somebody in here today. Somebody is ready to let aggravation from frustration make them turn in their resignation. So I want you to turn to your neighbor and shake them, just shake them and say, "Wake up, neighbor." Go ahead. "Wake up, neighbor." Now I want you to say, "Neighbor, I don't know what you're going through, but if I were you, I'd hang on in there." Now, don't leave me out. I need to hear the good news too, so say, "Pastor, I don't know what you're going through, but if I were you, I'd hang on in there." Now, here's the good news. Here's where we get to the theme of the day, "Revising Your Vision." You see, if you are at the point where the aggravation from frustration is causing you to hand in your resignation, you may need to revise your outlook on your situation. By that I mean, you may need to hold on and let God finish with your situation. By that I mean, you should never say a situation is hopeless, before God is finished with it.

You see, in this world of instant gratification, where we encounter problems or roadblocks, we often lack the patience to wait for our breakthrough, and the corresponding blessing that comes with the breakthrough. That didn't get some of you, so let me say it another way. This will get you. You see, sometimes your frustrating setbacks are setups for God to show up and show out. Let me put a little Bible into this now. Watch this, this is good. Luke said, Jesus was at the lake shore. The congregation was gathering, and he needed a place to hold church. He needed a pulpit where everyone could see him. And here is Simon's boat. Is this a co-incidence, or is this a God-incidence? The boat is empty because they had caught nothing, *nada*, *nyet*, *zilch*. And they had left with empty nets after toiling all night long. Is this a coincidence, or is this a situation where it's a setup for God to show up and show out? Now watch this. The boat is empty. So now, guess what? There's room for Jesus. You see, if they had caught their limit of fish, there would be no room for Jesus. Y'all still ain't feeling this. So let me

break it down a little further. Sometimes life's frustrations will break us down and empty us, so that there is room for God. Can anybody testify about a time when you were down to nothing, but God was up to something? And as soon as you stopped trying to work the problem out all by yourself, as soon as you turned it over to God, then things seemed to work out all right. Again I say, never say a situation is hopeless before God is finished with it. Can I get a witness?

Peter is a witness. After a night of frustration, Peter's boat is empty and Peter is empty. Jesus gets in the boat, and asks Peter to push out a little bit from the shore. Peter does this, and Jesus begins to hold church. Now, both the boat and Peter are empty, but Jesus begins to fill not only the boat, but begins to fill Peter with a different spirit. And after church is over, Jesus tells Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." I like that word, launch, because launch is an action verb. It implies, among other things, to throw oneself into something with reckless abandonment. To launch is to do something without question or pause. However, Peter's frustration from the night before causes him to hesitate as he contemplates handing in his resignation. And Peter goes as far as to begin his resignation speech. "Master, we have toiled all night exhaustingly and caught nothing." But then Peter decides to do what he's told. He says, "But because you say so, I will let down my nets." You see, when you are frustrated, you can either let aggravation cause you to hand in your resignation, or you can go back and try it again. That's a message God often gives us when frustration leads to resignation. Go back and try it again.

Can I put a little bit more Bible into this for you this morning? You see, when Moses wanted to hand in his resignation, God said, "Go back and try it again, and this time, know I am with you." When Hannah was weeping bitter tears of frustration, and resignation, because she could not conceive, God, through the prophet Eli told her to "Go back and try it again, and this time, know God is with you." When the prophet Elijah wanted to hand in his resignation, because Queen Jezebel threatened to take his life, God said, "What? Go back and try it again, and this time, know I am with you." I want to see if you're paying attention. When Jeremiah the weeping prophet wanted to hand in his resignation, God said what? "Go back and try it again." "And this time, know I am with you." Have you caught the theme yet? In each of these situations, the person had to revise their vision to include God. Y'all still ain't feelin' me yet.

When frustration causes you aggravation that makes you want to hand in your resignation, go back and try it again, and know that God is with you. You see, frustration can either make you give up, based on what has happened to you in the past, or you can revise your vision and step up out of the box of your past programming. Hmmm. I think I just said something here. You're mighty quiet. I want to make sure you're awake. Turn to your neighbor and shake 'em again, say, "Wake up, neighbor." Then say, "Neighbor, if you want to revise your vision, then you have to step out of the box of your past programming." Don't leave me out. Say, "Pastor, if you want to revise your vision, you have to step out of the box of your past programming."

Now, what do I mean by stepping out of the box of your past programming? I'm so glad you asked. Too often we are programmed by past failures and past mistakes, and we keep doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. Churches - are you ready for this? Churches - Lord, you going to make me say this? Churches are particularly notorious for living in the box of past programming. That past programming can include your past successes, meaning you want to keep on using the things that worked in the past, but may not be adequate for the present generation. Somebody say "Ouch."

That's why in response to something new, you will always have someone in your congregation that will spout the seven great last words of the church. You know what the seven great last words of the church are? "We never did it like that before." See, God often invites us to step out of the box of our past programming, and try things a new way. To envision the situation with God in control. With Jesus in the boat, Peter recognized the situation was different. But he still had to overcome his past programming. Peter's past programming as a fisherman told him it violated the fisherman's rule book to go fishing during the day. Every good fisherperson knew, fish, were caught at night. But Peter dared to step out of the box of his past programming. He dared to do something in a new way. He dared to envision what can happen when you revise your vision, and leave your past behind. He cast his net, and he came away with nets so full that he had to signal the other boat to bring in, so they had two boats to bring in the catch. You see, Peter got a vision of new possibilities. It's what Jordan M----- observed, that a vision is when you recognize as a Christian you are possessed with possibilities. A vision is when you as a Christian recognize you are possessed with possibilities. Peter recognized with Jesus there are all kinds of new possibilities.

Now, this was the first time Peter had to revise his vision, but it would not be the last time. Peter thought he was going to be a career fisherman, but with Jesus, he had to revise his vision. With Jesus, Peter became a fisher of men and women. Peter was the first to recognize that Jesus was the Christ, but he had to revise his vision and see the Christ not as a messiah who conquered with force, but as a Messiah who conquered with love. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter saw Jesus transfigured. He wanted to stay on the mountain and begin a building program, but Jesus had to help Peter revise his vision yet again. He had to send him back down the mountain to get to work. Peter's biggest test came on Good Friday, when he was challenged to revise his vision of Jesus yet again. You see, on Good Friday, it looked like death had the upper hand. On Good Friday, Peter's vision of who Jesus was, and his dreams for a future ministry with Jesus, seemed to have come to an end. On Good Friday, Peter learned once again, never say any situation is hopeless before God is finished with it. On Good Friday, Peter and the world had to revise their vision about God and death.

The minister of Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Philadelphia put it this way: "It was Friday, it was Friday, and my Jesus was dead on the tree. But that was Friday. Sunday's coming. It was Friday and Mary was crying her eyes out. The disciples were running in every direction, like sheep without a shepherd. But that was Friday, and Sunday's coming. It was Friday and the cynics were looking at the world saying, 'As things have

been, so they shall always be. You can't change anything in this world, you can't change anything.' But those cynics didn't know that it was only Friday. Sunday's coming. It was Friday, and on Friday those forces that oppress the poor, and make the poor to suffer, were in control. But that was Friday. Sunday's coming. It was Friday, and on Friday, Pilate thought he had washed his hands of a whole lot of trouble. The Pharisees were strutting around and laughing and poking each other in the ribs. They thought they were in charge of things once again. But they didn't know it was only Friday, and Sunday's coming."

On Easter Sunday, God insisted on a resurrection, and the world had to revise its vision of death. On Easter Sunday, God insisted on a resurrection so that we might never pronounce a situation as hopeless before God is finished with it. On Easter Sunday, God insisted on a resurrection, so that Jesus might tiptoe out to the edge of eternity and tiptoe back and tell the whisper in the believer's ear, "Don't be afraid, I am the first and the last, I am the living one who died. Look, I'm alive for ever and ever, and I hold the keys to death and the grave. On Easter Sunday, God insisted on a resurrection so that even though you may be going through the darkest of times, and even when you're going through your own Good Friday, you might remember that Sunday is coming. And Sunday brings a future so bright, that you ought to wear shades, baby, you ought to wear shades.