

GIVE JESUS YOUR BOAT

Devotional for Labor Day Weekend, September 2, 2018, based upon Luke 5: 1-11

I have heard that one-third of all Americans say that they hate their job. According to many, the worst part is the commute. Many feel that they are working in the wrong career. Many who have found success in their employment say that they have not also found – or no longer find – satisfaction.

In Luke 5 Jesus has a word for frustrated and unfulfilled workers. As Jesus is preaching, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John are cleaning their nets. As the crowd grows, Jesus has an idea. He gets into one of the boats, the one belonging to Peter, and asks Peter to put out a little way from the shore. Then He sits down and teaches the crowd from the boat. Jesus does not ask Peter if He can use his boat. He simply gets into the boat, asks Peter to put out a little bit from the shore, and then starts using Peter's boat as a pulpit. Jesus can do that because all boats belong to Jesus. Your boat – my boat – Peter's boat – everybody's boat. All boats belong to Jesus.

Your boat is wherever and however you spend your day, making a living and living your life. Your boat is the office you work in, the classroom you teach in, the department you manage, the family you feed and drive around, the things you volunteer for. All that is your boat. On this Labor Day weekend Jesus is tapping you on the shoulder because He wants you to give Him your boat.

And so Luke 5 tells us that when Jesus finished speaking, He says to Peter, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Peter answers Him, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet, if you say so, I will let down the nets."

Who can blame Peter? His shoulders ache. The nets are put away. A midmorning fishing expedition has no appeal – especially after a fishless night. And yet he complies. In full daylight and in full sight of the crowd, he dips the oars into the water and hoists the sail.

Somewhere out in the middle of the lake, Jesus gives the signal to drop the nets. And when they do, they catch so many fish that their nets begin to break. They signal their partners in another boat to come and help them. They come and fill both boats so full that the boats begin to sink.

So here they are - Peter and his partners standing knee deep in fish. The size of the catch nearly sinking both boats. What is the message here?

Some would say, Take Jesus to work with you and you will get rich. The presence of Jesus should guarantee more sales, bigger bonuses, longer vacations, and earlier retirement. With Jesus in your boat you will be able to go from Galilean fishing to Caribbean cruising.

But that is not the message that Peter got. Surrounded by fish, Peter does not see dollar signs. Rather he sees his Lord. Mighty enough to control the seas. Compassionate and kind enough to help a very frustrated fisherman.

Suppose you do what Peter did and take Jesus to work with you and to wherever else you go. Jesus showed Peter where to cast the nets. Let Jesus show you where and how to do your work. Let Jesus be the reason you do your work. Because, you see, everything changes when you give Jesus your boat.

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