

3. A LEADER WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. LUKE 5:1-11

A survey once asked a bunch of teenagers if God could understand how computers worked. Supposedly 68% said no God wouldn't understand computers.

But seriously, do you reckon Jesus knows much, at all about your life or your work, what you do day to day? Does Jesus know stuff about your life that matters – to you and to him? Is he interested at all?

Really, the question is “who is Jesus – to you?” not to others, but to you?

One thing I learnt very quickly when I first went to Hong Kong was that in traditional Chinese religion, the spirit world was largely a scary place and the basic idea was to keep it all at a distance.

If you have bad luck, or if you want to assure good luck you placate the spiritual world/gods.

It's the same in all religions. The gods are capricious, scary, even angry. Best keep them happy and away from you.

But from Genesis 1 onwards God is up close and personal. And in the gospels God has come into our world as one of us.

But is Jesus close to you or us - Personally close? And if he is, what does that mean for us day by day?

Who is the Jesus that we love and follow? LORD? Master? Friend?
Our servant?

This is the question that Peter is faced with in Luke 5. Who is the Jesus that Peter met? That Peter knew? Turns out in Peter's experience the Jesus he thought he first met is a different Jesus than at the end of this event recorded by Luke in Ch 5

1. Jesus my Friend. I know him well. 5:1-3

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,^[a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Just to set the scene, in the previous chapter, Jesus had met Peter and his family, and even eaten at his home.

So now, some time later Peter and his brothers have finished fishing for the day, and they were washing their nets and packing up.

Jesus was teaching the crowds about God from scripture but from his own word as well. Not in a synagogue, but out in the open. And Jesus was being crowded by people who wanted to hear, and he needed to be able to get back so he could be heard.

So, he asked Peter if he could use his boat as a pulpit, and Peter agreed.

So, can you see in your mind's eye, the crowds of people thronging around the boat just out from the edge of the water?

There's Jesus sitting there in the boat, speaking about what the Bible says, and what it means, about God and them.

Now, can you see Peter? Looking quite happy.

He has "a very-popular-Jesus" in Peter's boat! Maybe he's nodding now and then, looking very wise.

Peter must have been quite proud to host Jesus, "my good friend" ...

2. Jesus – the Carpenter and amateur Fishermen. Vss 4-7

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

So, there's Peter paying attention to what Jesus says, and perhaps enjoying some kudos from Jesus in his boat.

And then Jesus does something entirely unexpected.

"Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Now at this point I'm going to ask you to trust me for a few minutes in trying to read Peter's mind. I promise you I will explain why I think Scripture encourages us to do just that here.

Jesus says *"Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."*⁵ Simon answered, *"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything.*

In other words, Peter is thinking “Do you think we’d be cleaning up after fishing all night and catching nothing if we thought now was a good time to fish?” “This is what we do for a living! We’re fishermen. You’re a carpenter and teacher/rabbi. A good one, but not a fisherman.”

“I mean it’s all well and good when you heal my mother-in-law so she can serve dinner, but now you’re stepping on my toes a bit.”

Is that too harsh? Putting too much into Peter’s mind and mouth?

You may say “But John, doesn’t Peter say next: *“because you say so, I will let down the nets.”*? *Isn’t he being obedient?*”

Well let’s see. They do go out and let the nets down and nearly sink 2 boats with fish and almost wreck their nets.

On one reading of what happened Peter got it right, trusting Jesus.

Peter might have got away with “well I always believed that Jesus knew what he was talking about. I never doubted him for a moment ...”

But what happens next blows the whole thing wide open. Peter confesses to what was really in his mind, because something just happened that has changed his mind about who Jesus is.

3. Jesus – My Lord and God vss 8 -11

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Three things we’re told, that give us permission to read Peter’s mind.

i) Peter and all the fishermen were **astonished** at the catch of fish.

He and they would not have been astonished if they expected it, but they didn’t. They were astonished that they caught fish, and even more the size of the haul.

ii) Peter confessed to not believing Jesus even when he said *“But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”*

He says *I am sinful man*. He didn’t expect to catch anything at all. He didn’t believe that Jesus knew what he was talking about.

On occasions people in the Old Testament encountered God and were afraid:

Isaiah 6:5 Then I said: "Woe is me, for I am ruined

Moses was hidden by God in the cleft of a rock when he passed by. When God approached Elijah the prophet, Elijah stood up and covered his face, Job is afraid, Elijah is too, Jonah's boat mates were too.

Peter had that sort of fear. "Lord! Let me get away. I am a sinful man ..."

Peter realised at that moment that he was standing in the presence of someone he had seriously underestimated.

iii) *Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid."*

Many things happening here.

a) Peter has a real inspired epiphany about who Jesus is. = much more than he originally thought.

God is present here ...

b) Up until now Peter's view of Jesus was somewhat **UTILITY Jesus**. A Rabbi, and good man, but a kind equal sort of person. - **Someone who could do things for him.**

Someone who could heal his mother-in-law ... but now Peter himself had to confront who is Jesus?

c) Peter realised as did the others, that Jesus was a whole lot more than he imagined. Master ... Lord ...

Conclusion.

Let's pull this together.

My question; why did Jesus take them fishing and do this miracle catch?

To show off? Because he felt Peter was a bit condescending?

To repay Peter for the use of his boat?

No; to show Peter and the others what sort of teacher/Master/Lord he was.

He was calling them to follow him and be disciples/students/apprentices in the business of gospel ministry.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him

What an object lesson! Jesus the Lord of nature/creation – more fish than they could almost cope with.

Over The Top Jesus – whatever he does seems abundantly excessive ...

Wine at the wedding –

Food for thousands – lots left over

Jesus the Lord of Jam-packed-and-running-over (*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*” Luke 6)

As Jesus leads his new disciples into the business of catching souls for salvation, they can't help but remember what sort of fisherman he is ...

It's a good lesson for us as well.

What sort of Jesus do we follow and love?

Is it the Jesus who makes us look good, feel good?

Jesus who does stuff for us?

Or Jesus who is Lord – of our life?

Can we take stock today? As we follow Jesus and bend our will to his in our life: can we believe that he is a generous and gracious God?

Temptation – do what's best for me! Our response? Trust Jesus at his word.

He knows more about us and our life than we do. Our relationships, our work, our leisure, our thoughts.

He is a magnificent master and Lord

Can we trust that he blesses jam packed and running over?

Will we be faithful here at St George's and believe that as a church family Jesus will bless us according to his will, just as he caught the fish that day?