**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 11** Luke 5:1-11 Jesus Calls His Disciples!

**Questions:**

1. What important truth did you learn from the lecture and how does it apply to your life?
2. Read Wiersbe page 59-62.
3. What was Jesus’ purpose as He took time to share His message with individuals? What is our purpose when we share the good news with others?
4. What are some qualities of fishermen that followers of Jesus need to serve the Lord?
5. Read Luke 5:1-11 along with Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20 and John 1:35-42.

**Calling Fishermen!**

Luke is indefinite as to when this event too place. Note, however, the following: (a) Jesus is still in Galilee; (b) the disciples are still being “called”—there were several steps in   
this calling; (c) it would seem that Levi (Matthew) has not yet joined the group (Luke 5:27-32: cf. Mark 2:13-17); and (d) The Twelve, as a body, have not yet been chosen and charged (cf. Luke 6:12-16; 9:1-6; and see also Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13). On the other hand, “the calling of four fishermen” (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20) has already taken place.

Taken as a unit, the story found here in Luke 5:1-11 is peculiar to Luke; it has no parallel.   
The incident is meaningful and even thrilling. It is all this because it shows what a wonderful Savior is Jesus. He stands revealed here in a fivefold aspect, each of the five little paragraphs setting forth one phase of his greatness as follows:

* his practical wisdom Verses 1-3
* his penetrating knowledge: Verses 4-5
* his lavish generosity: Verses 6-7
* his ineffable majesty: Verses 8-10a
* his profound mission-mindedness: Verses 10b-11[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Note that Luke set out to record an orderly and detailed account of everything   
   that happened surrounding the life of Christ from the very beginning (1:1-3).   
   What additional information does Luke provide that the other gospel writers omit?

Peter, his brother Andrew (cf. Mark 1:16), and his partners James and John had spent the night fishing with dragnets. It was backbreaking work because it involved laying out a great net in a semicircle, encompassing over 100 feet, drawing it hand-over-hand, then repeating the procedure again and again. It was hard work that only strong men could perform.

The group had sweat though the night without as much as a fish. So, at dawn they beached their boats, ate breakfast, and under the warming sun engaged in the tedious and necessary process of washing, mending, and arranging their nets for drying. Once dry, they would be folded and placed back in the boats for the coming night.

On this particular day, the monotony was broken by the presence of a large crowd pressing around Jesus “to hear the word of God” (v.1). Jesus was preaching “the good news of the kingdom of God” (4:3). His preaching with characteristic authority and power drew a packed crowd. So, Jesus asked if he could use Simon Peter’s boat as a floating pulpit, and Peter and Jesus and probably Andrew too anchored the boat a few yards from shore, where Jesus resumed his teaching, his voice carrying effectively over the waters to all gathered on the shore.[[2]](#endnote-2)

1. In verse 1, Luke writes that “Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret   
   (Sea of Galilee or Tiberias), with the people crowding around him and listening   
   to the word of God.”
2. According to the following references, why do you think so many people   
   gathered around Jesus whenever and wherever he preached?

Matthew 7:28-29

Luke 4:38-44

John 6:5-14, 25-26

John 6:63

John 18:37

1. Why did Luke write that as the people listened to Jesus preach, they were “listening to the word of God?”

John 1:1-2, 14, 18

John 8:57-58

John 10:30

John 14:6-10

Hebrews 1:1-8

1. When had Peter had the opportunity to observe Jesus before this event in Luke 5?

Luke 4:38-41, Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-18; John 1:35-42 (See Hendriksen’s commentary above concerning the timing of the calling of the disciples.)

1. Read verses 4-5 again. What was Peter, a seasoned fisherman, probably thinking when Jesus asked him to “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch?”

If you have ever fished with a professional guide, you will realize how outrageous Jesus’ request was, humanly speaking. Professional fishermen know that 100 percent of the fish are in the 10 percent of the water, and they definitely know where the percentages lie. I have been out with guides and caught my limit when no other   
fish were caught on the lake because professional fishermen know fish and how to find them…

So, we can sympathize with Peter’s expressed reticence—and enjoy his obedience. He had seen what Jesus had done in the local synagogue and in his own home. He   
had witnessed Jesus’ toiling through the night as he performed a wholesale healing   
of all the sick in Capernaum who came to him. So now, being sure of what Jesus wanted, he responded, “But at your word I will let down my nets” (v. 5b).[[3]](#endnote-3)

1. What was Peter’s response to Jesus’ request and why do you think Peter   
   responded this way?
2. What was the result of Peter’s obedience and what do you learn from this?

Proverbs 3:1-10

John 14:21

Ephesians 3:20-21

**Does God reward us for being obedient to His word?**

There is a saying: “Good is its own reward.” But we may also wonder whether God rewards   
us in other ways if we obey His Word. Does being good earn us additional blessings and   
benefits aside from the pleasant feeling? This question can have two answers, so we’ll look at both of them.

First of all, God’s pleasure at obedience is documented over and over in Scripture, especially   
in the Old Testament (Ps. 91:14–15; Isa. 58:13–14). God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai was   
very much conditional, as it was based on their obedience, and His promises to bless them depended on whether or not they kept His commands (Lev. 3). The Old Testament records the consequences Israel experienced when they kept or broke the covenant (Deut. 8:19–20; Dan. 9:11–12). When Israel obeyed, God prospered them (Exodus 15:26). When they defied Him,   
He brought judgment (2 Ki. 24:2–3). During that time in human history, God offered tangible rewards for obedience to His commands.

By the time Jesus came to earth, the leaders of Israel had added to God’s law and turned it into   
a religious system without the relationship. They believed themselves righteous because they followed the system of rules they had set up. They assured themselves that they were God’s favorites because they were descendants of Abraham and because they were so religious.  
However, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of the day, saying, “You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:7–9). The Pharisees were obedient to the letter of the law in some respects, but they nullified other parts of the law by their own traditions. They were rebuked because whatever show of obedience, they had was motivated by self-righteousness, not love for God. Those who were promised rewards for obedience were rebuked many times because their obedience was not from the heart and was incomplete (Isa. 29:13; Mal. 2:13–17; 3:8–15; Matt. 23:15–28).

So, what about now? Does God reward us for being obedient to His Word? We can better answer this question by recognizing that God’s Word is the instruction manual for our lives. When we apply its principles, our consciences are clean and our lives function as they were designed to function. Consider it this way: a man purchases an unassembled swing set for his children. He is not the engineering type and has no experience in working with tools. But if he reads the manual and consults with people who have assembled such things before, he will be able to set up the swing set the way it was designed, and he and his children will be greatly rewarded for his trouble. If he ignores the owner’s manual, however, he’s courting frustration and possibly disaster. There are built-in rewards for simply following instructions.

Psalm 1:1–4 explains it this way: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away.” When we follow the way of wisdom, we reap better experiences, and those better experiences produce rewards such as material provision, relational benefits, and mental and emotional health. Those are God’s rewards for people who follow His instruction.

God’s reward to those who obey His Word can seem like natural consequences. For example, a child obeys God’s Word and honors his parents. He finds that he is blessed with closer familial relationships, less conflict, and more trust. Are these the direct blessings of God for obedience or the natural consequences of treating parents well—or both? Another example: a teenager obeys God’s Word and avoids sexual immorality. She finds that she is blessed with less complicated romantic relationships, fewer heartaches, and an absence of STDs. Is she experiencing the direct blessing from God for obedience or the logical outcome of choosing the path of abstinence—  
or both?

God does not always define *reward* the same way we do. When we think of God rewarding us for behaving well, we usually think of tangible, material goodies. But God has eternity in mind. The Bible and ensuing history are filled with examples of people who obeyed the Lord at great cost to themselves. Scripture’s godly men and women often did not appear to reap any earthly rewards for their obedience, yet many are listed in the Hall of Faith as people whose rewards are in heaven. Hebrews 11:39–40 summarizes: “All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.”

Obedience to the Word includes obedience to the gospel, and that carries great reward. When we accept God’s offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, we are pronounced righteous in His sight (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). There is no longer any condemnation waiting for us because, in His grace, God considered the sacrifice of His Son as sufficient payment for the great debt we owed Him (Rom. 8:1; Eph. 2:8–9; Col. 2:14). As part of that salvation, we are promised an eternity in glory with Him.

None of salvation’s benefits are a reward for our performance. Forgiveness and heaven are   
gifts granted to us because of God’s great love. The most unworthy criminal who cries out in repentance on his deathbed will receive the same pardon and eternity in heaven as the missionary martyred on the mission field (Luke 23:39–43; Matt. 20:1–16). However, Jesus does promise many different kinds of rewards in heaven for every deed done in His name on earth (Mark 9:41; James 1:12; Rev. 22:12). When we walk in fellowship with Him, keeping our sins confessed and our lives free of besetting sins, we are rewarded daily with fruit from the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23), communion with God (James 4:7–8), and power to resist the attacks of Satan (Eph.s 6:10–17). Whatever struggles we face on earth in order to obey God’s Word will   
be overly compensated in eternity with rewards we cannot even imagine (Rom. 8:18).[[4]](#endnote-4)

**The Divine Catch**

If Peter was yawning and rubbing his eyes as he dropped the nets over the side, he was soon shocked into being wide awake; “And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink” (vv. 6, 7). Peter could hardly hang on to his dragnet as an incredible catch of fish filled the nets and the boat was pulled toward the fish. Frantically, he nodded to his friends on shore, and a second boat was quickly launched. As they harvested their catch, the two boats, each seven and a half feet wide and over twenty-seven feet long, filled to the gunwales and began sinking. Several tons of fish hauled ashore that day amid the roar of the delighted crowds. All their fishes had come true!

It was a raw outpouring of power—a massive nature miracle. The onlookers saw that the fish of the sea were as obedient to Jesus’ will as the frogs and flies and locusts were to Yahweh in Egypt centuries earlier.[[5]](#endnote-5)

1. What was Peter’s reaction and how was it similar to the following men who saw   
   the power and glory of God?

**Isaiah** in Isaiah 6:1-5

**Job** in Job 42:1-6

**John** in Revelation 1:9-18

1. What should be our response when we encounter the living Christ in His Word?

Psalm 51:16-17

Matthew 5:4

Luke 7:36-50

Acts 3:19-20

1. What has been your response to the preaching of the Word this year in The Men’s Study? Have you ever come to a true place of repentance in your life? If yes, would you share this with your group?
2. Verses 10b-11 state, Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on   
   you will catch men.” So, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.”
3. Wow! Don’t you find this amazing. They pulled their boats up on the shore,   
   and then, left everything behind, to follow Jesus. How is this a picture of what   
   it means to be a Christian—a disciple of Christ? What is your definition of   
   a disciple?
4. How did Jesus want to use these four fishermen, Andrew, Peter, James and John?
5. Read the following verses and describe how Jesus wants to use us?

Matthew 28:16-20

John 21:15-17

Acts 1:8

1. What is often the cost of following Jesus?

John 15:18-25

Acts 9:15

Hebrews 11:32-38

1. What should we do before we decide to follow Christ?

Matthew 10:32-39

Luke 9:57-62

Luke 14:25-33

1. Have you counted the cost? Are you willing to take up your cross and follow Jesus? Do you believe the compensations far outweigh the costs? If so, how?

**The Testimony of a faithful follower of Christ: Darlene Diebler Rose**

By Dr. Danny Akin, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Promises**

“Remember one thing, dear: God said he would never leave us nor forsake us.” Those words were spoken on March 13, 1942 and were the last words Darlene Diebler would ever hear from her husband, Russell, as they were permanently separated in Japanese prison camps during World War II. She was a missionary in her early twenties. She did not even have a chance to say goodbye. Consider her own reflection on that heartbreaking day:

Everything had happened so fast and without the slightest warning. Russell had said, “He will never leave us nor forsake us.” No? What about now, Lord? This was one of the times when I thought God had left me, that he had forsaken me. I was to discover, however, that when I took my eyes off the circumstances that were overwhelming me, over which I had no control, and looked up, my Lord was there, standing on the parapet of heaven looking down. Deep in my heart he whispered, “I’m here. Even when you don’t see me, I’m here. Never for a moment are you out of my sight” (*Evidence Not Seen*, 46).

**Obedience to God’s Call in All Circumstances**

Darlene Mae McIntosh was born on May 17, 1917. At age nine she put her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as her light and salvation. One year later, during a revival service, she sensed God’s calling to give her life to missions. On that night she promised Jesus, “Lord, I will go anywhere with you, no matter what it costs” (46). How could that little girl know what the Savior had planned for her in the not-too-distant future?

*“Through it all, Darlene was sustained by God, who never left her nor forsook her, just as he promised. He remained her light and salvation.”*

Darlene married a pioneer missionary to Southeast Asia named Russell Deibler on August 18, 1937. She was only nineteen years old. He was twelve years her senior. The Deiblers eagerly returned to Russell’s pioneer missionary work in the interior of New Guinea. Darlene accompanied Russell into the jungle to establish a new mission station near a previously unevangelized, primitive tribe that had only been discovered just a few years earlier. Darlene, the first white woman any of them had ever seen, grew to deeply love the local people.

When World War II broke out in that part of the world, the Dieblers chose to stay. And when the Japanese soon took control of the area, the Deiblers were put under house arrest. Later, Japanese soldiers herded all foreigners into prisoner-of-war camps, separating the men from the women and children. During the next four years, Darlene endured separation from her husband and, eventually, widowhood.

The brutal conditions of a WWII Japanese internment camp included near-starvation, forced labor, inhumane conditions, false accusations of espionage, serious illnesses, solitary confinement, and torture. Through it all, Darlene was sustained by God, who never left   
her nor forsook her, just as he promised. He remained her light and salvation.

**God Is Sufficient in All Circumstances**

After receiving the news of her husband’s death, Darlene was falsely accused of being a spy and taken to a maximum-security prison where she was kept in solitary confinement. Written over the door of her cell were the words in Indonesian, “This person must die.” Frequently she was taken to an interrogation room and accused of spying. Upon her denial, her interrogators would strike her at the base of the neck or on her forehead above the nose.

There were times she thought they had broken her neck. She walked around often with two black eyes. “Bloodied but unbowed” (141), she never wept in front of her captors, but when she was back in her cell she would weep and pour out her heart to the Lord. When she finished, she would hear him whisper, “But my child, my grace is sufficient for thee. Not *was* or *shall be*, but it *is* sufficient” (141).

*“When she finished, she would hear him whisper, ‘But my child, my grace is sufficient for thee. Not was or shall be, but it is sufficient.’”*

Time and time again God showed himself to be powerful and faithful to Darlene. Once, within moments of being beheaded as a spy, she was unexpectedly taken from the maximum-security prison back to her original prison camp. The Lord again had heard her prayers, leading her to a level path against her enemies. Over and over again, Darlene could look back at her life and see how God had strengthened and sustained her

* as a young bride at age nineteen
* when she headed to the jungles of New Guinea at twenty
* when placed under house arrest by the Japanese when she was twenty-five
* when she and her husband were separated into separate prison camps in 1942, never   
  to see each other again in this life
* as she ate rats, tadpoles, dogs, runny oatmeal, and maggots, and other   
  unimaginable foods
* through dengue fever, beriberi, malaria, cerebral malaria, dysentery, beatings, torture, attacks of rabid dogs, false charges of espionage, the promise of beheading, solitary confinement, Allied bombings, and many other inhumane abuses
* when told of the death of her beloved husband and his own tortures and sufferings
* when he brought her home to America but kept the fire of missions burning in her soul
* when he brought another missionary into her life, Gerald Rose, whom she married (1948) and returned with him to New Guinea in 1949
* as she labored on the mission field of Papua New Guinea and the Outback of Australia for over forty years, evangelizing, teaching, building landing strips, delivering babies, facing down headhunters, and loving them to Jesus

On February 24, 2004, Darlene Diebler Rose quietly passed away and entered into the presence of the King she so deeply loved and faithfully served. She was eighty-seven years old. All throughout her life, when sharing her story, Darlene would say, “I would do it all again for my Savior.” No doubt many in New Guinea are grateful for her devotion.

May we follow this great saint to the nations, for the sake of their souls and the glory of   
our great King Jesus.[[6]](#endnote-6)

1. Read Luke 5:12-16 along with Matthew 8:2-4. The Man with Leprosy!
   1. Read the following article from www.gotquestions.org regarding leprosy.

**Why Is Leprosy Talked About So Much In The Bible?**

In the Bible, the word *leprosy* is mentioned upwards of 40 times, depending on   
the Bible version being used. Leprosy was common in Bible times, and the many references to it were well understood by those who lived in unsanitary conditions.   
The main reason why leprosy is talked about so much in the Bible is that it is a graphic illustration of sin’s destructive power. In ancient Israel leprosy was a powerful object lesson of the debilitating influence of sin in a person’s life.

God had given the Israelites very specific instructions on how to deal with leprosy and other skin infections (Lev. 13). Anyone suspected of having this disease had to go to a priest for examination (Lev.s 13:2-3). If found to be infected, “the leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp” (Lev. 13:45-46). The leper then was considered utterly unclean—physically and spiritually.

Incurable by man, many believed God inflicted the curse of leprosy upon people for the sins they committed. In fact, those with leprosy were so despised and loathed that they were not allowed to live in any community with their own people (Num. 5:2). Among the sixty-one defilements of ancient Jewish laws, leprosy was second only to   
a dead body in seriousness. A leper wasn’t allowed to come within six feet of any other human, including his own family. The disease was considered so revolting that the leper wasn’t permitted to come within 150 feet of anyone when the wind was blowing. Lepers lived in a community with other lepers until they either got better or died. This was the only way the people knew to contain the spread of the contagious forms of leprosy.

The Bible records the story of a leper who was the first to be healed by Jesus   
(Matt. 8:2-4). The key lesson to be learned from this incident is that sin defiles us   
in the sight of God, but through Christ, we can be healed of the plague of sin that separates us from God. God loathes sin; it is repulsive to Him. Sin bans us from the presence of God because God will not allow sinful man in His sight and presence   
(Ps. 5:5; Hab. 1:13; Rev. 21:27). This is not only true of sins with a sexual connotation that are normally regarded as filthy and repulsive, but it includes all forms of disobedience and rebellion (1 Sam. 15:23; Prov. 15:9). All sin is abhorrent to God. But those who have been redeemed from sin by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9) can stand in God’s presence in full confidence that we are accepted “in the Beloved,” and we praise Him for the grace He extends to us for that purpose (Eph. 1:5-7).

When we’ve captured a glimpse of the holiness and purity of God, we have to exclaim as did the prophet Isaiah, “Woe to me … I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isa. 6:5). Our attitude toward sin in the light of our Savior should echo the words of Peter: “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” (Luke 5:1-8). Another key lesson we learn from the leper in Matthew’s Gospel is that just as the leper did,   
we can confidently approach Jesus in all our need, with all our sin and defilement. When we plead for cleansing and forgiveness, He will not turn us away (Heb. 4:16;   
Ps. 103:12).[[7]](#endnote-7)

* + 1. How does leprosy serve as a ‘graphic illustration of sin’s destructive power?’
    2. Using James 1:13-15, describe the stages from evil desires to death.
  1. What do you learn about God by observing Jesus’ response to the leper?
  2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 along 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:7; and Isaiah 1:18; 61:10.
     1. What does it mean to ‘be clean’ spiritually?
     2. Have you been cleansed spiritually? If yes, can you share when and how   
        this happened?
     3. Reflect upon this truth about God as you close this lesson.

**Micah 7:18-19** says “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

How does this make you feel towards the Lord Jesus Christ who died for you?

1. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 279-280. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 165-166. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Hughes, 167. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.gotquestions.org/reward-for-obedience.html [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Hughes, 167. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Dr. Danny Akin, President of SEBTS: https://www.imb.org/2017/05/10/darlenedieblerrose/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-leprosy.html [↑](#endnote-ref-7)