

# LIGHT + LIFE

Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (John 1:4). Light is associated with knowledge. There is knowledge to share, insight to gain. When we are in the dark, we are blind; but when we are in the light, we see. Light is purifying truth. Life is a little different. When we think of life, we think of activity. Jesus brings a new way of life, a new way of living in this world. His ways are actually life-bringing instead of life-sucking. Following the mission of Jesus means being those who convey His light and His life to the world.

## LIGHT AND LIFE • Luke 5:1–11 • Tim McConnell • February 24, 2019

You all might know the name Jeff Foxworthy. He popped up in my social media feed recently. Back in 2005 he put out a book called the *Redneck Dictionary*. Words you know, but you didn't know. Words like "Mayonnaise: Mayonnaise a lot of people here at the mall today." Or "Aorta: Aorta mow that grass so them boys can play ball." "Initiate: first she ate two cheeseburgers initiate a whole bag of potato chips." But we have a favorite that has actually become such a part of the McConnell household, at this point I kind of forgot where it came from. We just say it all the time. It's "Sensuous." Don't get excited. It goes like this, "Sensuous already up, grab me another drink from the fridge, won't you?" Or, "Sensuous up, let that dog out." Or "Sensuous up, bring my phone over here." It occurred to me this week that I'm not sure Peter and Liam even know where that came from or why it's a joke! We just say it all the time. Sensuous.

You might think of this passage as a "sensuous here" moment. "Peter, sensuous not using it, can I use your boat to preach. Sensuous already out here, why not drop a few nets and see what happens." But, you know, this was not just a coincidental moment. Not at all. This is a moment where Jesus reveals Himself to be the answer to our deepest questions, the solution to our deepest needs. This is Jesus revealing to us that He is the light we've been looking for in the darkness, and the life we have always wanted. Someone asked me this week if I get discouraged about the next generations and how they see Christianity. I said, no. You know, I said, every generation thinks the ministry of Jesus is going to end with them, the next generation isn't going to get it. But you know what I've noticed? It's been two thousand years and Jesus is still reaching people. What Jesus offers is not a solution to a generational need—it's a solution to a universal need. And I just can't wait to see how Jesus starts to talk to the next generation to heal their hearts. See, we all need God. We all need to know the God who made us. We need peace and solid confidence in the spiritual realm. Without God, life just feels like a neverending journey to nowhere. Without God, our greatest achievements ring empty. Without God, our pain and suffering is meaningless. Without God, life is just pale, numbing, boring. Without God...well, there is a hole in every heart, a need in every soul—installed by God our maker actually—that will never be filled until we are at home with Him. We need Jesus, and we need to know our lives are in His hands. My life in His hands. How does it happen? Watch it happen to this man Peter.

"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Genesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God" (Luke 5:1). Jesus speaking is the Word of God. The Word of God does its own work, did you know that? You know when God is speaking to you. Jesus sees two boats left by the fishermen washing

their nets, and He gets in one. Peter sees Him get in, and comes over. Point number one: **Jesus gets in your boat**. If we were thinking in terms of religion, religious activity, I would be telling you how to get into God's boat. Do you know how to get yourself into Jesus' boat? That would be the question. But it's not. Religion is about us trying to get to God. This isn't a message about religion, it's a message about the saving work of Jesus Christ and His grace. Jesus moves toward you before you move toward Him. God is interested in you before you are interested in God. The fact that you are here this morning tells me, Jesus is already in your boat. You might not know what to do with Him, and maybe that's what you're looking for. But Jesus is in your boat.

"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" (Luke 5:3). Simon Peter becomes the first A/V team leader, using tech to magnify the message. This was just a way of amplifying the voice so more people could hear from Jesus at the same time. Jesus' heart is to reach as many as He can, to do the greatest good to the greatest number. So what tech should we shy away from as a church? None. Whatever helps us share the message. But look, while Jesus is teaching the people, the crowd, He's also teaching Peter. Do you ever feel like God is talking directly to you in the middle of the crowd? He's talking to the crowd, but He's talking to you.

Then Jesus performs the miracle: "When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.' 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'" (Luke 5:4–5). Okay, Jesus, the Rabbi, the preacher tells the fisherman how to fish. 'Sensuous' out here... Peter's reply is "Master." That's just a show of respect, that's all. Sir. Listen. Not going to happen. Worked all night, got no fish, just cleaned the nets... But then he gives in to Jesus' command. I don't know how long Jesus stared Peter down, but it was long enough. Peter broke, "Because You say so," says Peter, I'll do it. Because You say so. You don't know what is on the other side of your obedience to the call of Christ. Sometimes you have to step out to find out. But this whole thing just sets it all up for what Jesus knows is coming next and nobody else does. The whole interchange just sets this moment up to where Jesus, and only Jesus, is in charge of what happens next. It's not Peter's authority that dropped the nets. In fact, he has washed his hands and made it very clear, this is on your dime, not mine. This is Your move, not mine. This is Your idea, not mine. So the next thing that happens is on You, not me, because Peter is pretty sure it's going to be failure.

Watch what happens next: "When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled 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." (Luke 5:6-7) Miraculous. Magical. It's an only-Jesus moment, and only Jesus gets the credit. But here's the real point, point number two: **Jesus exceeds all expectations.** What are you hoping to get out of Jesus? What are you hoping to get out of life? I want you to get in Peter's mind for a second. Listen, for a lot of us, for a lot of men in particular, the pressure to perform and succeed and make a mark is intense—and from a very young age. Peter grew up fishing. All his life he wanted to be the best at it. It's what he spent all his energy driving after—get more fish than the next guy. If I get more fish, I get more success. If I get more fish, I get more name recognition. If I get more fish, I gain more profits, more boats, more employees. Let's be honest, if I get more fish I'll get a better wife, a happier family. Peter hangs it all on one peg: Get more fish. In an instant, without a word, this Jesus comes along and absolutely blows Peter the fisherman out of the water. "More fish? Is that all there is for you Peter? Is that what you want more than anything? More fish? Here's more fish. Here's more fish than you could ever handle."

Two things, but then I really need to get to the next point. First, Jesus is better than you. He is. Jesus is a better fisherman than Peter. Jesus is a better lawyer than you. Jesus is a better teacher than you. Jesus is a better father than you; and a better mother than you. Jesus is a better businessman than you. He's a better investor, a better financial advisor, a better salesman, a better preacher. If you don't have Jesus out in front of you in your vocation where you are trying to do it more like He would do it, you are missing the boat. Jesus is better at it than you are. But second, do you see what happened to Peter here? Everything he ever longed to see, everything he had set his heart on the most, rushed over him in an instant. More fish? How about a load you can't even carry with all your boats and partners' boats and nets? He got his dream. He got his heart's desire. More fish. And do you know what? I just think it was a little empty. I think something clicked inside Peter that said something like, "I think I might have been aiming at too low a target." Everything he had been striving after since he was a boy, since he was conscious of his own effort and his own role as a man, it all felt suddenly a little shallow.

Get there now. This is a chaotic scene. There are fish flopping all around, nets creaking and snapping, men calling for help from other boats that come crashing in, lines getting tossed here and there, fishermen feeling the pressure and exhilaration knowing these fish aren't landed until they're landed, family members and clients on the shore shouting and clapping to celebrate

the windfall, water sloshing in over the rails of boats swamped with a huge haul, and in the middle of all of that two sets of eyes meet. Peter and Jesus. Third point: **When you finally see Jesus you hit your knees.** "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'" (Luke 5:8). It's not easy to go to your knees in a boat full of slimy fish and sloshing water and shouting and chaos. But that's where you find Peter. If your first response to your awareness of Jesus is to try to push Him away, you're in good company. Jesus is the existence of something truly holy in the world—something truly beautiful—someone truly loving and truly good. When you find yourself in that kind of light you can't help but immediately see your own faults. "Go away from me," but look what Peter calls Him now: "Go away from me, Lord." Lord. I see the Lord. I know the Lord. I am undone in His presence.

Then the very same power that drove Peter to his knees lifted him up to salvation and service. Last point: **Jesus saves you so you can be you.** "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people'" (Luke 5:10). The intensity with which your heart was after more fish, that same intensity will now drive you to reach men and women with my light and life. The passion with which you captured fish will now be used to set people free. Don't be afraid. Jesus can deal with a humble sinner. That's what He can work with. Jesus says, I'll handle the sin. Don't be afraid of that. From now on—from now on you will be a new man. You will be you. David the shepherd boy grew to shepherd a nation. Paul the tent maker came to stitching together church plants. The Samaritan woman at the well searching for water became a source of living water for her village. This is exactly how Jesus works. You are saved to be you. Only now you are you *with* Jesus, not without Him.

"So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (Luke 5:11). How about you? They left everything. Jesus could ask them to leave everything because Jesus gave everything. Jesus could tell Peter not to fear his sinfulness because Jesus knew He was the answer to Peter's sinfulness, He was the cure to the sin-sick soul. Jesus is more than you expected. He hasn't come to gather the healthy but to heal the sick. It's not for the pious but for the sinners He has come. This place, this church, this is not a museum for saints; it's a hospital for sinners. A place to find the cure in Christ. I don't fear for the future of the gospel because every soul needs what only Jesus can provide. And so do you.

We all know our own failures. We all know where our hopes have been dashed by our own shortcomings. We know where we have hurt ourselves, hurt others, and insulted the God who made us. What is to be done? Peter was suddenly aware of a debt he could not pay. Get away from me, I am a sinful man. But look at Jesus

here. "Get away? Leave you? Walk away from you? Never! Don't you know? You are the object of my everlasting love. I have loved you from before there was time. I have known you from before you were even born. You are the target of all my affections, the reason for all my sacrifice. Leave you? Never! For you I cross the infinite divide. For your soul I traverse the sea of darkness. For your restoration I take the cross. For your forgiveness, I shed my blood. For your eternity I enter death. For your life I give my life away. Leave you? No. No. Never." The love of Jesus has won your life. He is in your boat. He is more than you ever imagined. When you see Him, hit your knees before Him. He saves you so you can be you.

We are going to pray today. This is a from-now-on moment. From now on. Jesus isn't a figure of ancient history, Jesus is God, and He is right here by the power of God's Holy Spirit speaking to some of you right now. You are hearing the word of God speak directly to your heart. And do you know why? Because today is your from-now-on day. Today is your day to meet Christ, to say yes to Christ, and to know the forgiveness of your sins for the very first time. Today is your day to become new. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What I'm saying is that today can be a day of new life for you. Peter, James, John, the rest, they left everything and followed Jesus. It's a leave everything moment. To say to Jesus, no longer my own, my life is in Your hands. Do you trust Jesus? I want to lead you in prayer, and if the Spirit of God is speaking to you today, this is a great day for new life in Christ. I just want you to pray along and make this the prayer of your heart. No one prays alone, so church, I ask all who are willing to follow me in prayer as we all say "from now on" to Jesus right now, let's pray:

*O Lord my God,  
Thank you for sending Jesus your Son,  
To be my Savior and Redeemer,  
I am lost in my sins,  
But you have found me by Your love,  
Now from my heart I say,  
I believe in You,  
I trust in You,  
My life is in Your hands.  
In Jesus' name, amen.*

## STUDY GUIDE

### LIGHT AND LIFE • "My Life In Your Hands"

Luke 5:1-11

#### **UP:** Connect With God Through Spending Time in His Word

Read the passage for the week: Luke 5:1-11.

1. What do you imagine is going through the minds of these fishermen?
2. Jesus isn't a fisherman, and it's pretty bold of Him to tell these guys how to do their job. What are you an "expert" in? Is there an area of your life in which it would be a bit insulting for a first century carpenter to tell you how to act?
3. Peter calls Jesus "Lord." This is the Greek word "Kyrie" which can mean lord/master as a sign of respect, but also "Lord" as in God. What do you think about Simon's response in verse 8?
4. Jesus calls the disciples after this huge haul. It would be like having a massive business acquisition fall into your lap and then Jesus saying, "See what I'm capable of? Now leave it all behind and follow me." What do you think about this?
5. Simon thought he understood his purpose in life. But then Jesus came along. True life and purpose are found when Simon gives everything over to Jesus. What remains in your life that you need to hand over to the Lord in order to receive the life He offers?

#### **OUT:** Connect With the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

Jesus takes a vocation which Simon has already mastered and tweaks it so that he can utilize it as part of God's mission. How could God tweak your vocation in order for you to most effectively join God in His mission?

#### **IN:** Connect with Each Other

Who in your life needs a word of encouragement this week? Take time to pray for them and commit to calling them to encourage them in the coming week.