

**Sermon Topic: Jesus, Calling by Mr Christopher Chng**

**Sermon Text: Luke 5:1-11**

'Calling': Word for Youth Sunday 2018

Everyone wants to be in the middle of their destiny/calling. But how many actually feel emboldened or have a firm grasp of the calling that God has for us?

At end of the day, "calling" could just be a word wrapped up with many meanings for a simple core need – to know how we feature in the greater vision of God's Kingdom/scheme of things; to know how we can add value and do our part.

This word is particularly relevant for youth and young adults who are at crossroads of their lives, e.g. choosing course of studies at university and career path, as they seek the elusive calling which God has put on them. But, the word is still relevant for all of us in our various seasons of life. The word for every generation is that Jesus has called us FIRST to himself.

Jesus Christ, the Foundation

The accounts of 4 gospel writers and 1 missionary (Paul) about 1 Man – Jesus Christ – began the explosive growth of the early Christian community.

Christians make seemingly outrageous claims, e.g. we hear God, we know the words of God and we have a direct line of communication to God. May sound crazy to other people that we can have intimacy with the all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present God through Jesus Christ.

How many of us know God or think we know God? How many of us know the words of Jesus, His values, and what He warned against? How many of us know the gravity of what He said of Himself, and the problems Jesus caused for the religious institutions of the day?

In His day, the Jewish religious leaders' concept of forgiveness of sins was through the sacrifice of lambs but Jesus came to say "Your sins are forgiven." The religious leaders' concept of meeting God was in the temple, but Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father".

On Jesus rests the foundation of our churches. If Jesus isn't the foundation of our faith, we Christians have weak grounds on which to base our religious practices. We would have nothing to re-orientate to, to re-align with and to review about our lives. We would have nothing on which to base our call.

Gospel of Luke

Luke was a careful, meticulous writer and a man of science. In Luke 1:3, he wrote that he himself had carefully investigated everything from the beginning and decided to write an orderly account for his reader, Theophilus.

Luke's gospel includes many instances when Jesus taught and performed miracles. It also highlights the responses of people to the teachings of our Lord and King while He walked on earth.

Luke 5: 1 – 11 highlights for us the kind of response we need to have when we encounter Jesus. It zooms into Simon Peter and lays out a progression of three responses. If we want to take hold of the call which God has upon our lives, we must re-examine our hearts and submit ourselves to these heart-checks of responses.

### **1. OBEDIENCE: “At Your Word”**

The crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear Him, so Jesus got into Peter’s boat to teach the people from a comfortable distance. After He finished teaching, Jesus said to Simon, "Put ... down your nets for a catch." (Luke 5:4)

Peter was a seasoned fisherman and knew the catch at night was usually bigger than in the day. He and friends had worked through the night without much success, and were already washing their nets to “close shop”.

The response of Peter was: "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." (Luke 5:5).

Despite not fully understanding, Peter obeyed Jesus and let down the nets they had already washed.

As he obeyed, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They called the other boat to come and help ... and filled two boats with the catch. (Luke 5:6-7)

When faced with circumstances that defy logic and you lack full understanding, will you still obey Jesus?

### **2. REPENTANCE: “I am a sinful man.”**

Peter’s second response when he saw the big catch: ... fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8)

A natural response would be to rejoice at the amount of money to be made or not having to work for a while.

Peter’s response, however, was one of repentance – “I am a sinful man.” What did he see in Jesus and recognise in himself that made him respond in that way?

Do we have a fear of the Lord in our hearts over our condition? Do we have a sense of how selfish, angry, bitter, lacking in compassion, or self-righteous we can be? Do we recognize how hopelessly weak we are without Jesus?

It is only when we are immensely broken and grieved over our sinful condition that we begin to understand how beautiful Jesus’ sacrifice is, how good He is. We see there is none other like Him and come to worship Him, the foundation of our faith.

Will you recognise your need and sin before Jesus and fall down at His knees in repentance?

### 3. **FOLLOWING: “Left everything and followed Him”**

The third response was the radical following of the disciples. This final response is the one that addresses the “calling” issue of our lives.

After they brought the boats to shore, they left everything to follow Jesus (Luke 5: 11). Generally thought that they left their livelihoods behind to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives, not knowing the next step, what they would eat or where they would stay. More than that, they also left behind 2 boats full of fishes on the shore. These men left not only their jobs as fishermen but also the immediate gratification of the money which the huge catch would bring.

How many of us have things that we are holding on to that are hindering us from following Jesus?

Jesus never calls us to a job/vocation for it to become our identity. We often say: “My calling is to be a pastor/missionary/doctor/teacher”. Instead, would like to suggest that we say: “My calling is to follow Jesus and He leads me to a vocation of full-time ministry/a teacher/doctor.”

Your calling is to follow Jesus and where He leads to a particular vocation, to obey and go.

In Luke’s narrative, Jesus gives these fishermen a new vocation – of catching men. But it’s not their ultimate calling, which is to follow Him.

Get our heart’s responses to Jesus right and the vocation to which Jesus leads will be a natural progression.

Sum up Luke’s narrative in 2 words – Follow Him. Submit life, questioning, heart to Jesus. Ask yourself: Are you obedient to what Jesus is telling you? Are you repentant? Do you have the right view of yourself and of God? And finally, follow Him.

#### **Reflection/ Discussion Questions:**

1. Where do you find/see yourself in the narrative?
2. How do you respond in your heart? Don’t be one of the crowd pressing in on Jesus to hear Him, but not willing to follow Him?’
3. Where are you in the discipleship process with Jesus? Are you one of the crowd? Are you pre-miracle Simon Peter? Or are you post-miracle Simon Peter?
4. Are you obeying God’s prompting in your life, to read His Word, to pray, to minister/serve each other, to love others? Are you repentant daily over your condition?
5. Is there something you need to leave behind on the shores to follow Him?

Jesus invites us all on the same discipleship journey. Greater call of our lives is to follow Him.