**I Love to Tell the Story**

**Day 26: The Big Catch!**

Read: Luke 5: 1-11

This reading might be the same story as Day 20, but only Luke includes this WOW fishing story as Peter, James and John’s call to be a disciple.

Guided reflections:

1. When the crowds started pushing Jesus, he saw the boats there and turned them into an opportunity to get ‘ole Peter’s attention. This stranger just sits down in his boat and starts teaching – what was Peter to do, but listen! Have you ever had an encounter that changed your life?
2. Notice Jesus’ way to “hook” Peter into discipleship – wow him with fishing. Fishermen love to tell big catch stories! Put yourself in Peter’s boat for a moment. Fishing with the “Jesus factor” changes things! Have you ever had an experience with Jesus the “fisherman” catching you?
3. Jesus called Peter into an expanded life - not just fish for fish for fish for people! How is Christ calling you into an expanded life?

Guided prayer:

*“Awesome God, just like Peter, I think I have done all I can in my life… but what would my life be if I added the “Jesus factor” to my life – how do you want to show me your blessing and call on my life? Make my heart open, Amen.”* (Spend some time thinking about this prayer…)

**Day 27: The Sermon On the Mount – the introduction**

Read: Matt. 5: 1-2; Luke 6:12, 20

Today we begin to explore the wonderful passages of Matthew 5-7 in what is known as “The Sermon on the Mount”. Only Matthew lays this out as though it is one sermon. Many scholars believe that the writer of Matthew uses these three chapters to provide the essence of Jesus’ teaching. If we are doing this Bible Reading System to learn what Jesus taught, then these next 25 days contain the core of Jesus’ philosophy and practical insight for us as Disciples.

Guided reflection:

1. Today, get your heart ready for “aha!” moments over the next few weeks. Imagine you are on the side of a mountain, near the Sea of Galilee, a grassy hillside where the gentle breeze carries the words of Jesus like a microphone. Place yourself inside the story.
2. The Luke scripture tells us that Jesus, once again, went to the mountain to get away to pray… and was interrupted and began to teach. What are some ways you can prepare yourself to hear what Jesus is teaching?

Guided Prayer:

*“Dear Truth, as I anticipate being a student with Jesus on the hillside, clear my mind and heart of things that would hinder me from not only hearing but living out what I am to be taught. Open the eyes of my heart, Lord. Amen”*

**Day 28: The Beatitudes**

Read: Matt 5: 3-12 Luke 6:20-23

Make sure you use the Matthew reading today. This might be a good scripture to memorize. Teach these to your children and your children’s children! These “beatitudes” pit Jesus’ way of looking at things in opposition to our earthly way of thinking.

Guided reflection:

1. As you read each verse, make three lists – one with what Jesus calls “blessed” and the another should include why Jesus sees this as blessed, and the third list of how the world usually sees someone with the first list’s attitudes.
2. Robert Schuller called these the “BE Attitudes” because our attitude affects how we act. Look at your 1st list – on a scale of 1-10, one being not so good and 10 being great, give yourself a grade on how you are doing with your “Be Attitudes!”

Guided prayer:

*“O dear God, no wonder my I sometimes see my life as than I would hope – my attitudes toward others are far from Jesus’ dream for me – instead of showing mercy, I want revenge. Instead of seeing persecution as a blessing, I want to get even. Help me to understand that Jesus way of doing and being makes the world look upside down! Help me to be more like Jesus. Amen”*

**Day 29: Salt and Light**

Read: Matt 5: 13-16; Luke 14:33, 34,35

Jesus uses several metaphors and analogies in his teaching. Here Jesus uses the well-known illustrations of salt and light. Remember, these texts contain the core of what Jesus is trying to teach.

Guided reflections:

1. What was/is salt used for? What does Jesus mean we are “the salt of the earth?” How can you be salt?
2. Verse 14 has been quoted throughout history… we are the light of the world, let our light shine… remember in church how we bring in the light and then the acolytes take the light out again at the end of the service – THIS is the verse that illuminates our reasons for that tradition.
3. How is your light shining? Do people see your good works and thus see Christ in you?

Guided prayer:

*“Light of the world, ignite in me such a fire that all who meet me will see the light in my eyes and in my actions. May all that I do today give glory to you, O God! Amen”*

**Day 30: Jesus and the Law**

Read: Matt 5:17-20

Right here, Jesus puts the scribes and Pharisees on notice… the way they perceive and thus live out the law is not at all what Jesus wants from us.

Guided reflections:

1. If we would look at the end of Jesus earthly life, you will see that the conflict Jesus sets up with these few verses ends at the cross. Jesus is not a new teaching, but a fulfillment of the law. Jesus respects the Law of God.
2. Vs 18 gives me the hint that the accomplishment of the fulfillment of the law is a continuing activity of God… what do you think that means?
3. Can you remember the 10 commandments (Look at Exodus 20 as a reminder) – how do we try to “relax” these laws. If we do, what has been the consequence?

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving God, your laws are for our own good but it is our human nature to buck the law. Jesus brought life and meaning to the old Laws… Jesus promises abundant life that comes from submission to your word. Do in me what you need to do to bring me to life abundantly. Amen”*