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Jesscia: Welcome to Lectionary Kickstart.
We're sparking your thoughts for Sunday
as you plan your sermon or teaching lesson.
I'm your host and producer, Jessica
Bordeleau, here with Dr. David Schmidt and Dr. Peter Nafzger.
They're both professors of homiletics
here at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
You can hear all about us in our
introductory episode, but trust me, they are pretty good preachers.
All right, let's get started.
David, where are we in the church here?

David: We are in the fifth Sunday after the
Epiphany, a time when the church
celebrates the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of all nations.
And what are the texts for this week, Peter?

Peter: The texts are from Isaiah chapter 6, 1 Corinthians 14, Luke 5, and Psalm 138.

Jesscia: As always, I ask each of you to tell me
which text you would choose to preach about.
To determine who goes first, in the
gospel reading today, we read about the miraculous catch of fish.
Do you prefer freshwater fish or seafood?
There's such a difference.
Think of like lake trout or walleye versus like shrimp.
Right.

David: The way you said shrimp makes me think you don't like shrimp.

Jesscia: I like freshwater fish, yeah.

David: Okay, obviously, yeah, because I kind of
like shrimp, lobster and crab and all that.

Peter: Yeah, I'm kind of with Dave on this.
To me, it's not much better than shrimp
or lobster or something like that.

Jesscia: So since everyone is against me, I'll just pick David, you win.
You get to go first.

David: Okay, thanks.
I got a pity win.
So, okay, I was going to go with Luke 5,
the gospel reading, the calling of the disciples.

And you know, it's interesting because sometimes, you know, in my mind, I don't know, in my mind I think of the calling of the disciples and I think it's kind of like Jesus just walks up and calls these people out of nowhere. And yet we know from the previous Sunday that Jesus was at Peter's house. So these disciples, or at least Peter, has had some exposure to Jesus. But this is going to be the moment when he's actually called to follow Him. And so it's just kind of, I don't know, it makes it less, I don't know, less strange to me that, you know, Peter drops everything and follows Him because he already has had some connection with Jesus before this.

Peter: Well, it is interesting when you compare the calls to discipleship in the four gospels. You know, it starts with Matthew and Matthew's gospel, the tax collector. You've got in John, what is it, you know, he goes to the sons of Zebedee. Here you've got Simon, which is interesting because usually we think of Mark as Peter's gospel. And so it is interesting that Simon is such a central character here. And it's also, so spoiler alert, I'm going to suggest I preach on this sermon too, so maybe we can just talk about them together. Oh, OK. But the focus in this text is on Simon, but then they all follow him at the end. And so it's just an interesting time to think about the calling of the disciples because it is unique. They already were at least at Simon's house.

David: Yeah, yeah. So it makes me, you know, it makes me think about how the moment something happens, there are qualities of that moment that live on for you. So like, Jessica, somebody could say, well, when did you know that Adrian was the one? Right? And then, you know, you're going to say, well, you know, you had this relationship, but there was this day, there are moments when, you know, and you could take the moment, you know, when did somebody decide that they were going to teach children? When did somebody decide they wanted to go into social work?

When did somebody make this decision?
And there are, you know, it's something
that happens over a lifetime, but there's
a moment when we remember it.
And there are qualities of that moment
that shape the relationship that follows.
And so I, as I look at this text, I'm
just kind of interested in what are the qualities
of Jesus that would be memorable for Peter, who then follows Him?
You know, what are the things that have
happened that would stick with Peter as he follows this Jesus?
And so, Jessica, if you could read verse three.

Jesscia: Getting into one of the boats, which was
Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the
land, and he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

David: Okay.
So my theme is a God of surprises.
So the basic idea is that, you know, if
you're going to follow Jesus, just be ready, because
you're following a God of surprises.
You've got this guy who commandeers a
boat, and instead of traveling somewhere
with the boat, or fishing with the boat, he teaches from it.
And so there's this moment of surprise
that this Jesus is able to use things in
ways that you wouldn't imagine.
He's able to use situations in ways that you wouldn't think of.
And so as you're following this Jesus, be
aware that there might be times in your life
where you would not have thought that God
would be using this moment, but suddenly it
becomes an opportunity for God to work through.

Peter: Well, it's interesting that they were
done with their boats when Jesus got into them.
They had already gotten out of the boats,
they were fixing their nets, and Jesus was the one.
It's not like Simon said, hey, Jesus, you want to use my boat?
That might help.
Jesus takes the initiative to engage
Simon in that way.

David: Right.
You know, they don't record the teaching,
because that's not the main point.
That's not what Luke's trying to do here.

Yeah, Luke is really looking at, you know, what are the interactions that Simon is having with Jesus on the day when Jesus calls him. And the first is that Jesus does something surprising. He commandeers his boat and uses it to teach. And then after he gets done teaching, Jessica, if you could read verse four.

Jesscia: And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

David: Okay, so now he's going to ask Peter to do what he's already done and has realized is not effective. And he's going to tell him to go out and fish. So I think the second surprise is that, you know, that Jesus, the great teacher, is going to give Peter the fisherman advice on fishing and direction to go fish. And it's kind of a challenge for Peter. That you know, Peter's like, Master, we've toiled all night. We didn't get anything. But you know, at your word, I'm going to do it. And I think in following Jesus, there's a lot of times in my life where I'm ready to give up. You know, I'm ready to give in. I'm ready to say, okay, I've tried it long enough. I'm done. I've witnessed to this person every time I played racquetball with them for five years, And God's like, why don't you talk to him about me? That type of a thing. So there's this, the surprising nature of God in our vocations calling us to do things that we might have given up on for good reason. I mean, you know, it's not like, it's not like Peter hadn't fished the night before and caught nothing he hadn't. But he's going to listen to the word of God. He's going to keep pressing on.

Peter: Well, and he explicitly says, at your word, I will let down the nets. This is the word that he had just heard in the previous chapter we talked about last week with the word that cast out the demon, the word that rebuked the fever. And now he's saying, okay, your word, I'll do it.

David: Yeah.

So at your word, I'm going to do it.
I'll let down the nets.
And so then, Jessica, if you could read verse six.

Jesscia: And when they had done this, they
enclosed a large number of fish and their nets were breaking.

David: Okay.
And so here we have another surprise, a surprising miracle.
This miraculous catch of fish.
And it causes Peter to signal to the
other guys to come and help.
Their boat starts sinking.
And so you were just, you know, you're,
you're amazed at the abundance and the
graciousness of God at work in your life.

Jesscia: That's a lot of fish.
That is enough to sink your boat.

David: Enough to sink your boat.
Yeah.
Man.
And so what do you do?
Do you tell Jesus to get out of the boat
now because we got to keep the fish or do
you keep Jesus and stay in the fish?

Jesscia: He can walk on water.

David: There you go.
Right.
But then the last one I think is the, is the greatest surprise.
And that's, Jessica, if you could read
verse eight and then the very end of
verse nine where Jesus speaks to Simon.
So I basically want to capture that
conversation between Simon and Jesus.

Jesscia: But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,
"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."
And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

David: Okay.
That one I love.
It's the greatest surprise of all.
And the greatest surprise of all is that
Jesus has come to gather sinners to follow Him.
And it's just, it's just beautiful.

I mean, Peter is amazed at this miraculous amount of fish.
He recognizes once again the, the nature
of who Jesus is as the Lord.
And he falls down and he asked Jesus to go away.
You know, he doesn't ask Jesus to fix him.
He doesn't ask Jesus to make, you know, make excuses for me.
You know, can I come anyway?
Instead, he's like, no, just depart from me.
He knows that the sinful cannot be in presence of the holy.
And Jesus' response is don't be afraid and then come follow me.
And so we've got the greatest surprise of
all is that our Savior is one who has come.
He's actually come to gather sinners to follow Him.
He's not coming to choose the best and the brightest.
He's not coming and looking at your credentials.
He's come to gather sinners and that's what he does.
And so for me, that would be kind of my
greatest memory as I follow Jesus is that the day I,
the day I was called to follow him, I
asked him to leave away, to depart from me.
I asked him to get away from me because I'm sinful.
And he said, no, come on.
He came to gather somebody who's sinful to follow him.

Peter: Yeah, I'm thinking about what's implicit here.
You know, Peter is afraid of Jesus.
I don't know if we're, we experienced that same thing today.
You know, we've kind of made Jesus such a
warm, fuzzy kind of pal that Simon has a,
I mean, he's just seen him do these
incredible things and now another incredible thing.
And he is, he has a sense of who he's standing in front of.
And that's something that maybe we don't always realize.
We kind of have domesticated God in some sense as well.
He'll always be there.
He'll be there for me.

David: Yeah, and that's, I mean, that's where
that Old Testament reading becomes really good for the Isaiah 6, right?
Where Isaiah is in the presence of this
God who's, you know, so grand that it's
just the hem of his temple is,
the hem of his robe is filling the entire temple.
I mean, you know, you just, this God is
so beyond your understanding.

Peter: Yeah, I mean, what do you think, Jessica?
How do you communicate to people today

the appropriate fear or the appropriate awe that people should have before a holy God? Because this is, I don't know, is it just me? It doesn't seem like that's a natural conception of God today.

Jesscia: When you see who God is, then you're going to be terrified, right? It's an awful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. The more you tell them about the nature of God and the nature of Jesus, I think we'll more and more have that same response. You know, tell us about who God is and how he's revealed himself in the Old Testament and the New Testament. And I think pretty soon you'll be like, oh, shoot, get away from me. I am sinful. And then remind us about Jesus.

David: I think people are more scared of their fellow Christians than they are of God. You know, like you said, they know so well that God forgives sins, that they're comfortable sharing their sins to God. But they would not be comfortable sharing that sin to their neighbor in the pew next to them. They would not want other people in the church to know about the problems, the difficulties that they've had in their life. And so we're more frightened of one another because of shame than we are of God because of judgment. Yeah.

Peter: Yeah, that's kind of the they talk about the move from a guilt innocence culture to a shame honor culture. And we're on that path that shaming, social shame is worse than any sort of guilt we might have before God. That doesn't seem to be a problem for Peter.

David: No, not at all. I mean, Peter's more than willing to speak out loud that he's a sinner.

Peter: Right.

David: Whereas and we're willing to do that in the general confession, but not in particulars. Right.

Peter: Yeah.
Yeah, we'll read what's written in the hymnal.

David: Right.

Peter: But to actually acknowledge who we are.

David: Yeah.
And so I think maybe, you know, maybe that's kind of a way of thinking about the terrors of the conscience is that, you know, yeah, you're comfortable confessing your sin before God.
But would you be comfortable doing that out loud with other members around you?
And then all of a sudden we'd see the fear because we trust that God's going to love us because we know of his love in Christ.
But we're not sure that our neighbor, our fellow Christian would love us still.
You know.

Jesscia: Because they won't.
No, we're afraid of something that's real.

David: Right.
Yeah.

Peter: Yeah.
I mean, what's interesting in this text is that Jesus' words of forgiveness are kind of implicit here.
Right.
You know, he doesn't say, I forgive you.
He says, don't be afraid.
And I've got something for you to do.

David: You know, this is a God of surprises.
And Jesus surprised Simon by commandeering his boat and teaching the people.
He's going to surprise Simon later by commandeering the cross, an instrument of torture, and making it the victory over sin.
And he's at that point, he is going to receive Simon back, a man who actually denied him.
I mean, so you've got, you know, you've got if you're going to tell kind of, you know, if you use that picture of the first moment.
So the first moment Jessica knew Adrian

was the one and how that colors her larger relationship.

The first moment that Peter knew that

Jesus wanted him to follow Him.

This is the story.

How does that color everything else we hear in the gospel?

And that that then will shape what we

understand is happening after the resurrection.

I would guess that would be how I would look at it.

Peter: Yeah, it's interesting.

I mentioned I was going to preach on this

text too, and I was going to, a lot of

what you've said, David, I think I was kind of had in my mind.

I was going to start, however, with verse 11.

You want to read verse 11, Jessica?

Jesscia: And when they had brought their boats to
land, they left everything and followed Him.

Peter: To me, what struck me when I first read
this text was it's so much about Jesus and Simon.
This one on one interaction, and as a
result of it in verse 11, they follow Him.
And it made me read along this text as if
I were one of the other fishermen.
And we kind of just walked through it with Simon's perspective.

David: Right. Oh, I like that idea.
And another perspective or even they're
not necessarily competing, but to note at
the very beginning of verse two, the
fishermen had gone out and they were washing their nets.
So they were there with Simon.
But then Jesus gets Simon's boat and then Jesus talks to Simon.
The whole time these other disciples are there.

David: Right.

Peter: They're paying attention.
They get in the boats and they are also struggling.
And then they watch Simon have this
conversation with Jesus that you pointed
out at the end, depart from me.
And then Jesus says, I didn't even look
up to see if that's a plural you or
singular you at the end of verse 10.
I'm guessing it's plural.
But they're kind of along for the ride.
And so when you mentioned Jessica and

Adrian's situation, you were inviting her to think about her own experience and her own moment in her life.

The disciples are kind of along for the ride here and they're experiencing this moment between Jesus and Simon.

And in a way, you're here as they're in the same boat.

You know, we aren't there, which is one of the reasons it's hard to fear God, I think, because we're not there to see the huge haul of fish and we're not there to see him cast the demon out.

And yet we're along as witnesses as we hear this story.

And we, too, leave everything in a sense and follow Him.

And so I think there's these kind of the silent, quiet other disciples in the story.

David: Well, I like that because isn't that the case how it is for us as we think about scripture, right? That there are certain stories of scripture that are very important in our lives and they're not the same stories for everybody. Right. That there are different stories. And we weren't present in the stories, but having heard them, there are accounts that we tell ourselves and we remember for ourselves and they become important in our life. And so taking that stance of, you know, we're sharing, we're sharing in this discovery of somebody else's story that can be very uplifting and empowering and encouraging for us.

Peter: Yeah, I mean, you almost could make the move in a sermon then what God has done for Simon here, he does for you and me today in terms of the the forgiveness, in terms of the call, in terms of the provision. These things, the the using our discarded boat can get too allegorical there. But but I think you can kind of extend that from Simon to all of us in a pretty natural way.

David: You know, and I think that kind of goes against some of our cultural leanings that we're so individualistic. We want it to be about us. And this is you know, this is not a story about me. This is a story about Simon. So when do I get my story?

It's like, well, actually, the story about Simon is your story.

It's for you.

Yeah, it's not about you, but it's for you.

And if you live with it, there may be things from that story that you walk away with and remember.

Peter: And that captures a little bit the way I think life in a congregation functions. You know, when you're in a congregation and somebody has a faith that is strengthened through some experience or some some challenge or some difficulty, you share that with one another because others can benefit. And so having that that way of that, that's our experience to not just with respect to what we see she's doing with Simon, but what we see him doing with other people in our own lives.

Jesscia: Thanks, guys.
That's all for today.
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