

Confidence to Live Well

Luke 5:1-11 (ESV)

¹ On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ 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. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ 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. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."^[a] ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Introduction

We live in a world filled with fear. How then can we live well with confidence, and where should that confidence be placed?

In these reflection questions, we will trace moments in the lives of Peter and Paul, and reflect on our own journeys as we follow Christ.

DISCUSS

1. The Launch that Sets You on a New Course (Luke 5:1-11)

At some point, each of us has placed our trust in Jesus.

In Luke 5, Peter obeys Jesus' word to let down their nets, and through the extraordinary catch, he encounters Jesus like never before. His response, a mixture of fear and awe, was, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (v8). In that moment, Peter recognized both Jesus' divinity and his own sinfulness.

For many of us, the light of the gospel has also turned on. We have had a moment (or perhaps a series of gradual moments) when we began to see who Jesus truly is and who we are before Him. And just like Peter, we too left everything and followed Jesus with wholehearted abandon (v11).

Share with one another a moment or season when your encounter with Jesus 'launched' you on a new course in your Christian life. What changed for you after that?

2. The Journey of Following Jesus

The journey of the Christian life is like most journeys, filled with ups and downs.

Peter and the disciples experienced moments of great joy. When they returned rejoicing that even demons were subject to them in Jesus' name, Jesus reminds them not to rejoice in their success but that their names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:17-22)
God's great salvation brings us real joy.

But this same journey also includes moments of deep struggle (Luke 22:54-62). Peter expected Jesus to establish a political or military kingdom to overthrow the Romans. Yet Jesus' way was the way of the cross, which set us free not just from an earthly oppressor but from the sin in our own hearts. In his lowest moment, Peter denied Jesus three times.

There are times when we too do not understand God's mysterious way. The Christian life, often after the "launch" of our faith, includes the mountaintops of joys and the valleys of struggle.

Share about a time (past or present) when you found it hard to understand what Jesus was doing in your life. How has/could that experience shaped your faith and trust in Him?

3. The Confidence that You Will Complete Your Course Well (John 21:15-17)

How then can we have confidence that our journey with Jesus will end well?

Firstly, we gain confidence by **beholding the unfailing grace of Christ**. We will fail and keep failing, but that is not the end. Just as Peter denied Jesus, the risen Jesus graciously restores Peter with three questions of love. Jesus meets Peter in his failure and restores him with grace and purpose.

The Apostle Paul also experienced God's grace. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul pleads for God three times to remove his "thorn in the flesh". But God answers: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness". Grace is not always a dramatic breakthrough, it can take the form of God's sustenance through life's struggles. The second way to gain confidence is by **basing our confidence of completion on Christ alone**.

Where in your journey do you need to be reminded today that Jesus is not finished with you yet? How does knowing He will complete His work in you give you courage to keep going?

Pray For:

1. Thankfulness for His Salvation

Pray that we would give thanks for how Jesus has first called us to follow Him. Ask that our hearts would be renewed with the same wonder and devotion that marked our first "launch" by His grace.

2. Perseverance in the journey

Pray for strength to walk faithfully through both the joys and struggles of life, trusting God's hand even when His ways are mysterious to us.

3. Confidence in His Completion

Pray that our confidence would rest fully in Jesus, who began the good work in us and will bring it to completion.