

(Luke 5:1–11, NIV84)

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 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. 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." 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. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

It happens all that time that people will give advice or take actions that will defy logic and common sense. Often, when we investigate the reasoning behind these things, we discover motives that are self-serving, or even downright diabolical. People want to enrich themselves or advance their own agendas.

When Jesus taught His disciples or commanded them to do various things, it was always to fulfill His Father's will and purpose in sending Him into the world to be our Savior. While it didn't always make sense to His disciples and His purpose was not immediately clear, ultimately whatever Jesus commanded and said was for the blessing and benefit of His followers.

On the night of His Last Supper, just before Jesus washed Peter's feet, He told him: "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand" (John 13:7). We might well apply those words of Jesus to every situation in our lives where circumstances appear grim and our futures uncertain.

Especially at times when our consciences plague us, we might wonder: why would a holy God want anything to do with me, it defies logic and common sense? With Peter, we might want to say to Jesus: "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinner." It's at those times that Jesus particularly wants to assure our trembling hearts and put our souls at peace with His words of comfort: "Don't be afraid."

Fearless with you in Christ,
Pastor Golm

May 8

"Nevertheless"

And Simon, answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night ...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. Luke 5:5

One of the most significant words that characterize the Christian faith and life is (perhaps surprisingly) the word "nevertheless". We find a classic example of this in the Holy Scripture reading suggested above. As a professional fisherman, Simon Peter knew that the best time to catch fish in the Lake of Gennesaret was at night—and preferably in shallow waters. Yet in broad daylight Christ tells him to "launch out into the deep" and to let down his nets.

That was contrary to every instinct of the veteran fisherman. Yet we hear him say: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing, nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." What followed needs no retelling.

From a purely human point of view, Peter knew the effort was sure to fail (he could have quoted a wealth of statistics against it), but at Christ's word he ventured forth. How often you and I must do the same, not only in our Christian faith but also in our Christian life!

Who, for instance, can understand the deep mysteries of Holy Scripture? For example, the Holy Trinity? The virgin birth? The substitutionary atonement? We can repeat the words, but do we understand what lies behind them? No, not this side of heaven. Nevertheless, moved by the Holy Spirit, we believe.

And in our daily life, how often are we faced by situations beyond our power to fathom? We ask ourselves: "Why must I bear this heavy cross? Why has my life suddenly become so meaningless, so pointless?" We may not know the answer, but nevertheless the Savior knows; and because he does, we'll trust his tender love.

There is a sense in which the Christian faith and life are one great "nevertheless". Our knowledge of God's ways with us is limited, but we know his love for us in Jesus Christ is boundless—and so we accept his will in humble faith and eager hope—nevertheless.