

# The Call

**February 7, 2010**

**St. Paul's - Richmond United Church**

**Fifth Sunday After Epiphany**

Luke 5:1-11

Read the passage: [The Message](#) or [The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#)

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this post.

The Rev. Dr. George Hermanson

There you are. Quietly minding your own business. Doing your job. Cleaning out your nets. Tired and frustrated for things had not gone as well as they could have. As you felt the sweat run down your face, you looked around and saw the crowd. You knew that you could not join unless you first purified yourself, for your very vocation had made you ritually unclean. Yearning for more, and then - this man walks up and demands a boat ride.

You had not asked for this. You were relatively happy doing what you did, as your father did before you. You had your brother with you. Friends to share the work. Then this guy says, "Lower your nets." A thought floated through your mind, "Doesn't his guy understand what effort we have put in for nothing?" Then to everyone's astonishment the fish overflowed. What was going on?

Before you could catch your breath this man tells to drop what you doing and follow him. Sounds crazy, yet you do. You and your friends drop their nets and follow this way into the unknown, to participate in something that is still to become clear.

This is the bare bones of the story. And Luke looks back from the resurrection experience and puts into Peter's mouth an affirmation that this man Jesus was an "Ah-ha!" experience. The fishermen's lives were turned upside down. Yet that simple beginning had now spread into the gentile world. Luke is writing to that early church about their call. So he appeals to the tradition of Peter and the resurrection experience on lake Galilee - where the disciples where re-energized - felt their call in a new way. Now they knew they had a new calling. Not just to follow the way, but to preach it. It all now made sense. They had be preparing to become that catch phrase - to become fishers of people.

I like this story for it reminds us that calling is a process. There are several different past experiences that make sense when we look back from where are we now. There was not an direct or lineal path to the now. But the now reveals how the past ah-has make sense for this moment. It is in the present moment that we call out of our past those things that help live our faith tomorrow.

I can imagine there were times for Peter and the group that wondered why they had left their nets. I can hear them say, "Why did we leave those old ways?" And at the time of the crucifixion the regret got even stronger. They almost lost their nerve. In rehearsing their call: - Gathering together in upper rooms - Gathering at the Galilee lakeside - They looked around and said, "We are still here. The way makes sense. We felt the winds of God in our journeys with Jesus. He was correct the kingdom of God is here. We are not alone for we live in God's world."

So it was with more resolve that they went to preach the presence of the kingdom of God. And they moved the geographic boundaries to the whole world. We sitting here today are the inheritors of this call. And now it is our call.

Remember hints of the call that have brought you to this place. For this remembering will help each of you and the congregation live out a new calling which come with the calling of a new minister.

Peter Druker the dean of business management said the basic question is, "What is your business - what are you about?" Calling is taking us back to the roots of being the church. What is our context? Who are we? What is our mission? Our calling to be the voice of God in this place and in this time.

We are called to show up, be present, tell the truth and let it go. Context determines the meaning of the call. The call is always directed to issues of time and space. And each moment is full of epiphanies - full of ah-ha.

Now sometimes the call is a dislocating experience. All of us have taken for granted ideas and sometimes the issues of faith call us to leave comfortable ideas and move us into territories we never thought we would enter. In every community there are people who get upset when sacred cows are challenged. The old theological ideas just don't communicate any more. Yet. Yet. There is comfort. Ah-ha experiences are not always comfortable. So the call can be demanding.

When the call returns in new ways there is a new energy for life. This church is at that transition. The important thing is to know that the Christian is called to live their faith out in the reality of the world. Christian call is not to a particular vocation, but to a way of being, a way of life. It is to bring to every task a sense of the holy. It is to be sensitive to the presence of God in the ordinary events of life. Whether one farms or works in an office, polices or sings, teaches or serves the needy, all are callings. It is the ministry of laity. It is how Sunday morning meets Monday morning. The call is to be in the world living the values of the Way.

George Hermanson

[www.georgehermanson.com](http://www.georgehermanson.com)