



# Sermon Growth Guide

**September 19, 2021**

**Belong – Break Into Belonging**

**Luke 5:1-11**

**Key Verse:** Luke 5:8 “When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!’”

**Big Idea:** Jesus comes into your life so that you will never be lost or alone again.

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## Foundations

Pastor Tim describes how Jesus barges into Peter’s life. Peter is exhausted and frustrated by his work. No fish, no money, no food on the table. And to make matters worse, Peter and his friends are tending those nets that had failed them – the reminders of their failure. Jesus is in the background teaching, but the fishermen don’t seem to be paying attention.

Peter’s apparent, early disinterest doesn’t deter Jesus. Jesus asks Peter to support His ministry by using Peter’s boat as a sound system. It’s easy to think that Peter wanted to be left alone so he could get some sleep and try again for a profitable catch. But Jesus intrudes and creates a relationship. Since the Bible doesn’t have emojis, we don’t know if Peter’s obedience to Jesus’ command to go fishing again was genuine or sarcastic. It doesn’t matter – they are together and Peter is no longer alone with his thoughts.

The boatload of fish makes Peter realize that he is with someone who is not an ordinary man. As Pastor Tim said, Peter is now open to God when he refers to Jesus as Lord and confesses his own sinful human nature. Peter has moved from cynicism to honesty, from discouraging work to purposeful mission. He now knows he belongs to God and will soon belong to other disciples. How would you describe your own journey to belonging in the family of God?

## Understanding God’s Word

This event is often called “The Miraculous Catch of Fish.” In our wonder at this successful fishing expedition, we often forget that this miracle also put Peter and his partners in jeopardy. Verse 7 says, “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.” Those partners were James and John. All of these men left everything to follow Jesus. What does this episode say to you about how what happens in your life affects others as Jesus moves you into belonging to Him and His people?

## Applying God’s Word

Jesus asked Peter to do something that he had already done—to no effect. Peter had evidence that there were no fish to be had. Even so, he obeyed Jesus. Describe a time when, in the face of contradictory evidence, you did what God was asking you to do. What happened? In what ways did that impact your sense of belonging? Also, in the aftermath, Jesus tells Peter not to be afraid. What do you think Peter would fear?

## Witnessing God’s Word

The martyred missionary Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Peter and his friends did that. How do you think that plays out in your life?

Okay, it's the guys' turn. We just spent four weeks on the Samaritan Woman at the Well. Today we look at Peter. Simon Peter. Could it be that Jesus uses the same pattern to reach him and call him into a new kind of belonging and purpose? Yes. Now, with guys, sometimes you have to do stuff together to form a friendship. Guys don't always want to sit and talk; they want to get out there and try something. A shared experience. An adventure. The three most dangerous words in the male lexicon: "Hold my drink." "Watch this." When you hear that, just start googling "urgent care nearest to me." Adventure. Jim D said to me a few years ago, "The best talks with my son are always on the top of something big." A mountain. A rock wall. A multi-pitch, ice/rock mix, technical climb...Jim's kind of unique. But I can say the same. My son Liam is into rock climbing. For his birthday we went with my son Jack to climb Montezuma's Tower in Garden of the Gods. Nice climb, but it's right in the tourist area with everybody watching and the hardest part of the climb is the very first move. There I was clinging to the side of the rock huffing and puffing, straining every muscle, two feet

off the ground. People walked by, "Climbing with your boys?" "Yup." Shared experience.

Jesus meets Peter, Simon Peter, with a shared experience. Luke calls him Simon in this story because he has not yet been renamed, but this is Peter. Simon Peter. We are going to watch for this same pattern. **(1) Alone**, or at least just stuck in his own world, Peter is suddenly known. He is more known than he wanted to be known. He moves into that **(2) Risk Being Known** stage. In that stage, he meets Jesus. He is **(3) Open to God**. Then, at the very end, we see that he is about to move toward others in a whole new way. **(4) Open to Others**. The loneliness epidemic plus the isolation of a global pandemic and, people, we are too alone. Alone is no good. I want to be sure to say, I know that many of you would want nothing more than to get down here to church or get with friends. You are isolating to keep COVID and Delta at bay. In no way am I trying to pull you into adverse health exposure. I encourage everyone, talk to your doctor, do what is wise in your situation, take every medical aid and measure to keep from getting this thing and keep from sharing it. But when we are past this,

it will be time to get back into community. Belong. We need it.

"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God." (Luke 5:1) It doesn't say they were listening to Jesus teach, but they were listening to the Word of God. When Jesus speaks, it is the Word of God. It is getting crowded, so here's what Jesus does: "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." (Luke 5:2-3) Now, hang on. If you have ever been around boats, you don't just get in somebody's boat, do you? You never do that! That would be like pulling up on a biker gang at a gas station and just hopping on one of the Harley's. "Nice bike!" (Nearest urgent care). Simon, Peter, sees this teacher get in his boat, so, he goes over. "Excuse me!" "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." (Luke 5:3) "Excuse me. Can I help you?" "Yeah, sure! Mind taking me out on the lake?"





Who is Jesus to Peter at this stage? Peter has been out all night. He and his team just pulled an all-nighter. Twelve hours? Fourteen? They had nothing to show for it. They came to shore to dry, mend and put away their nets, and found this huge crowd listening to a Rabbi. The only thing worse than not catching anything is not catching anything in front of everybody. Then this guy climbs in his boat. Then this guy asks him to take him out on the water to keep teaching. Peter was either very patient, or just too dog tired to deal with it. Out they go. Now, what Peter does is amplify the voice of Jesus. The voice of Jesus is the Word of God. Peter amplifies the Word of God. You know, everything we do here at church is to amplify the Word of God and lift up Jesus. It isn't First Pres we want to amplify, or Tim, or Big Blue, or Chris. It's Jesus. Jesus is the one we lift up, display and amplify.

But who is Jesus to Peter at this stage? Nobody. A problem. A stranger. Peter isn't **Alone** like the Samaritan Woman, not exactly in the same way. But I think we can get into Peter's head a bit. What is he? He's tired. He's disappointed. He's frustrated. He's been up all night working and had nothing to show for it.

Sometimes we get pretty alone, even in the crowd, when things are not working out the way we wanted. And to him, Jesus is just a stranger, an inconvenience in an already irritating morning. He has no choice but to listen. And the voice of Jesus is the Word of God, and the Word of God does it's thing. It changes hearts.

Look at verse four: "When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'" (Luke 5:4) Peter's been sitting there waiting for Jesus to stop talking! Then when he does, he says, "Hey, let's go out fishing." Let's go. "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.'" (Luke 5:5) "Ah, okay, Cap'n. We fished all night. Nothing out there." How long was the silence? How long was the pregnant pause? So, here's the thing. Shared experience. Going fishing. Going out. Doing the thing. Get up and get off your rear end and go. Show up. How many times, guys, I'm talking to guys (but women too, I know), how many times are we feeling lonely and we just won't go? Go. On a deeper level, if Peter says yes, he is letting Jesus in. He is open to

shared experience with this guy, this stranger, this teacher. Do you see that? When Peter gives in and takes Jesus out fishing, this is a moment—**Risk Being Known**.

"Because you say so," says Peter. Who is Jesus in this stage? Peter is starting to think this man is different. Because you say so, I will do as you say. I will let down the nets. As soon as he lets down the nets, everything changes. "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." (Luke 5:6-7) The only thing better than catching a haul of fish is catching a haul of fish in front of everybody! But in the middle of the celebration, in the middle of all the fun and excitement and rip-roaring good times of prosperity and unexpected blessings, in this shared experience, Peter starts to realize something. This man in my boat is God. He knows me through and through. He sees right through me. He sees who I am. He sees who I was. He sees who I am trying to become. Suddenly Peter is known through and through, and it is too much. He



knows there is authority in Jesus, but is there forgiveness? He hits his knees. The boat is full of fish! You don't hit your knees without pushing a few fish out of the way! That's where Peter is. And his instinct is to push Jesus away. "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'" (Luke 5:8) This is the moment, this is the transforming moment, the Spirit is pushing into Peter's heart. "Go away from me," he says. But this is the moment he is **Open to God**. "Go away from me, Lord," he says. Lord. Not Captain. Not Master. Not Sir. Lord. And he means it. It won't be much longer before Jesus asks all the disciples, who do the crowds say I am? Oh, a prophet. Oh, a holy man, a good teacher. "'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'God's Messiah.'" (Luke 9:20)

Something happens when you are known through and through and loved all the way down. Peter says, get away from me. If you knew me, you wouldn't love me. If you knew me, you wouldn't have gotten in my boat. Jesus never turns. Jesus doesn't shift his gaze. "I'm right here, and I'm not going anywhere. Go away?"

Leave you? I came for you! I stepped down from heaven for you. I got in this boat for you, and I will give my life for you. Go away from you? You are the one I have come to save. You are my beloved child; the beloved child of God." Peter is Open to God. Jesus is the Messiah, his Savior.

Once this gets through, Peter's whole life changes. His purpose shifts. His reason for being is altered. Peter is transformed tip to tail. Jesus has a new purpose for him now. Not to make him a totally different person, but to make him the person Peter was always struggling to be. The years straining to pull fish up from the dark waters with nets were just training for the years pulling souls out of eternal darkness with the love of Jesus. "Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him." (Luke 5:10-11) They did. Peter became the great Apostle, the great preacher and evangelist. Thousands and thousands came to faith in Christ through his preaching and ministry. He didn't hide by the shore, hide behind his business, or hide out on his boat, although at times he wanted to.

Peter was not made to be alone; Peter was made to be **Open to Others**.

Who do you want to be? Peter was, I'd say, probably a little jaded when Jesus showed up. Probably a little cynical, a little hardened by the world. Who do you want to be? A cynic of the world or a child of God? The cynic of the world deconstructs everything. Let me read you this from Brennan Manning: "Cynics debunk everything. There is nothing true, good, or beautiful under the sun...In sexual love the cynic perceives lust; in sacrifice and dedication, guilt; in charity, condescension; in political skills, manipulation; in the powers of the mind, rationalization; in peacefulness, ennui; in neighborliness, self-interest; in friendship, opportunism. The vitality of the old is pathetic; the exuberance of the young is immature; the steadiness of the middle-aged is boredom. And yet even for the most disillusioned cynic, an aching longing remains for something true, good, or beautiful." (Abba's Child, p. 133)

Peter chose that day in that boat. Do I want to remain a hardened cynic, a cynic of the world, or will I allow Jesus to name me a Child





of God? Beloved. Known and loved by Jesus. How about you? Jesus is climbing in your boat. Jesus is facing you down. Maybe you want to push him away. Get away from me, Lord. I'm a sinful man. Jesus didn't turn away from Peter. He won't turn away from you. Jesus came for you. Jesus died for you. Jesus rose from the dead for you. Jesus knows you and Jesus loves you. So, I ask you today, have you hit your knees before Jesus? Have you thrown yourself down in the hull of the boat and come clean with Jesus? Have you given him all, left all and followed him? I want to give you a chance to pray and do just that. Jesus came so that you would never be lost again. Jesus died so that you could live. Jesus went alone to the cross so that you could belong. A Child of God. Beloved. That's who you are. I want to give you a chance to pray along after me and open your life to Jesus right now: "Lord Jesus, I am hardened by cynicism, I am hidden in my sins, but you have found me, I want to be a Child of God, on my knees I cry to you, I believe in you, I trust in you, I belong to you. In Jesus' name, amen."

