**Encountering Jesus**

**Luke 5:1-11**

*Welcome to this gathering of Encountering Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. This group engagement is designed to provide a process of getting to know both one another…and Christ together. As noted through these weeks, the Scriptures are a “living Word” or testimony…centered around the living Christ…so when we encounter Jesus through the Scriptures, we encounter not only what “was” …but what “is.”*

**Getting to know one another…**

*If you were famous, what would you be famous for?*

**Centering…**

*Take a quiet moment to center your soul on God. Take a minute for all those participating to close their eyes… take a deep breath…and prayerfully listen as one member reads the following Scripture… slowly …three times…after which they may lead in an opening prayer for the group time.*

Exodus 9:16 (NIV) – *“But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”*

**Exploring…**

*Read Luke 4:38-39 and 5:1-11 (Could have read aloud, by one or two individuals)*

Luke 4:38-39 (NIV)

*Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.*

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV)

*One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret the* *people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.****2****He saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets.****3****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.*

***4****When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”*

***5****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.”*

***6****When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.****7****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.*

***8****When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”****9****For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,****10****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 fish for people.”* ***11****So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

*1. Verse 1 describes how “the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.”*

*What can you imagine might have drawn the people to him in this way?*

*2. What can we understand to be the state of Simon Peter when Jesus asked him to go back out fishing again?*

*3. Drawing from Simon Peter’s response in verse 5 and the general context, what do think Simon Peter felt when Jesus told him to go fishing again?*

*4. Why do you think Jesus initiated this particular experience involving Simon Peter and his friends?*

*\* 5. Why might this have a greater effect on Simon Peter than the healing of his mother-in-law did?*

*\* 6. Why does Simon Peter tell Jesus to get away from him and calls himself a sinful man? Have you ever had a similar reaction to Jesus? Why?*

*7.What do you think changed in Simon Peter that led to his leaving everything and following Jesus?*

*8.* *It can be noted that Simon Peter and some of these fishermen were being called to follow as semi-formal followers in the tradition of training under a rabbi…in which one left much of their common life for at least a season. While Jesus did not call everyone to leave daily family and work to join his group of twelve disciples, he did continue to call all to “follow him”… to be willing to make all other things secondary… to lose our lives in terms of defining our own identities, purpose, and priorities.*

*How have you experienced the call of Jesus to follow? What does it mean for you? Is there anything holding you back from freely following Jesus?*

9. Jesus calls Simon Peter into a new divine vocation…of becoming a “fisher of men.” What effect do you think this had on Simon Peter?

\* 10. It has been common to connect this call to “fish for men” to “evangelism” …and consider it to be one “part” of “Christian commitment”… often ascribed to those with special gifting. How might this text (Luke 5:1-11), and his words in Luke 19:10, reflect that such a mission is more an inherent and integrated part of following Jesus?

11. How could this mission of fishing for people… seeking and saving lost lives… more naturally permeate your life?

\* This question is best considered OPTIONAL. It may be best to skip if the group is large or short on time, perhaps having had extensive discussion on a previous question.