

Call to Obedience #496
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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On Going Deeper

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Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch (Luke 5:4).

There is no question in my mind that God wants you to always go deeper. But before you can go deeper, you must first think deeper. In other words, as the Psalmist said: *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...* (Prov. 23:7).

When Jesus called Peter to cast his nets into the deep, He also called him to think more deeply about the meaning and purpose of his life. Before this fishing event, Peter was like many of us: shallow, not knowing what he was here for. Aren't you glad for Jesus! He is there to pull you out of the shallows. This night, like many nights before, Peter was busy toiling and wearing himself out to bring in a catch. But suddenly, everything changed. He met Jesus; he heard Jesus; and he obeyed Jesus. Look at this sequence: met, heard and obeyed. Jesus, in the midst of all of Peter's exhaustion and disappointment, commanded him to cast his nets out again but this time in deeper waters than before. Because Peter met, heard and obeyed the Lord, he caught more fish in a few minutes than during several days of trying on his own.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, you learn from this that going through the day with Jesus is far more effective than doing that without Him. I strongly suggest that you get locked in with this Nazarene each morning to hear and obey before you do anything else and your nets will be full by the end of the day. In the twinkling of an eye, Peter went from letting God be second-in-command of his life to being first-in-command of his life. He got off the treadmill he had created for himself, ever moving but going nowhere—too busy to take time out to commune with God. And because he got off of his treadmill, the whole world has been blessed by this simple fisherman ever since.

Looking at the apostolic writings, you will notice that Christianity is a call into the deep. Conversion is always followed by a call to forsake all, to free yourself, to move forward and deeper with your Lord. And this requires that you should never love anything more than Jesus Himself. You should never love your spouse more than you love your Lord. You should never love your children, your possessions or your station in life more than you love your Lord.

You must hold everything in an open hand. So, the call of the Lord Jesus to Peter was to go out into the deep. But yet, this was not only a call to Peter—it is a universal call to all, and if obeyed, it will yield marvelous fruits, causing you to fall on your face to worship or to leap for joy as a newborn lamb.

There are many examples of people who followed the Lord deeply and fully at great personal cost: King David, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, Dr. George Washington Carver, David Livingstone, the Wesley brothers and William Wilberforce who promoted the abolition of the slave trade. In the secular world, there are also examples of people who followed their goals with that kind of depth and dedication: Thomas Edison and his invention of the light bulb, Mahatma Gandhi and Indian independence, Dr. Jonas Salk who developed the polio vaccine just to mention a few.

If you think of life being like a bicycle ride, you think of these people as never having fallen off their bikes. When you stop moving on a bicycle, you lose your balance and fall off. These were people who kept moving. They were visionaries who kept pedaling, never stopping, no matter what the weather or conditions of the road. They always felt that there had to be more and more to be discovered and conquered. Without such men, civilization would have come to stagnation a long time ago. If you are sweating and going nowhere on the treadmill of your life, get off of it and get on the real bike of life and start to pursue the highest heights and the deepest depths with Jesus. As you surrender your life to Him, you will learn to hear His voice and you will be delivered from the monotony of going nowhere!

It is no accident that God chose Elijah, Moses, Peter, James and John to see Jesus Christ in His pre-transfiguration glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. They were there because they had a passion to explore the very depths of the riches of the Almighty. In other words, they kept moving. Paul was also one of those visionaries in the spiritual realm and he challenges you to always: *increase and abound in love to one another and to all...* (1 Thess. 3:12), to always increase in edifying others, and to always increase in godliness (Col. 2:19). Increase, increase, increase. Paul was one of those men who were attuned to that still, small Voice that fills the universe, and he knew the power of solitude. He could have echoed the words of Daniel: *He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him* (Dan. 2:22). Paul knew that if speaking is silver, then listening is gold.

Stop trying to change your life through self-effort, but get alone with God and let Him change you. He will and it may not be long that He might just

whisper into your ear what He whispered into King Cyrus' ear: *I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel* (Isa. 45:3). There is no monopoly claim on this, my friend—the voice of God is for everyone. And how deep you go in this life will also contribute to the kind of life you live in eternity. Many will go to heaven with little to show. Most of their works will have been nothing but wood, hay and stubble, which will be burned up. I challenge you today to cast your net out into the deep so that when you see your Lord on Judgment Day, your nets will be full.

But, although you agree with all of this, you say that you just cannot find a block of time to meet with God. Peter's first response when Jesus asked him to cast his nets out into the deep was also negative. It was: "I have already done it, and it did not work." But because Jesus said to do it and to go deeper this time, he believed and he obeyed. So first, cast away the unbelief that you cannot do it. Jesus will help you! Start in little steps. If necessary, start out with 10 minutes or 15 minutes per day and then go on from there. If you do not have a bulldozer, then start by using a shovel. But set your mind on cleaning out and cleaning up your spiritual barn. Most great discoveries and inventions have been the end result of patient and long-suffering shovelers. You need that kind of mindset to keep moving forward. God will move with you as fast as you let Him.

For some of you, this means getting serious about setting yourself free from traditions: from pots and pans. Here are the words of Jesus to the Pharisees on traditions: *For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do* (Mark 7:8). I am sure Jesus included in traditions people's obsession to go to every family wedding, birthday party, funeral and graduation. It is in your tradition that you will be there, and so you go there so as not to offend anybody, but in the process, you may be disobeying the commandments of God! You can easily become a slave to traditions which takes time away from the way God wants you to live. There is no evidence that Jesus ever went to any wedding of His siblings—but He went to the wedding of someone else and manifested His glory there (John 2:1-11). He said to a man who refused to follow Him instantly because of his father's imminent death: *...let the dead bury their own dead* (Matt. 8:22). So, what speaks louder in your life: traditions or the will of God? And then there are the pots and pans which refers to the slavery of you doing all kinds of other things to keep the favor of man or to

satisfy your flesh. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see what is clutter in your life and sometimes all at once or little by little, you will find that, yes, there is time after all for you to meet with and to listen to your Maker.

Once you learn the art of “deep-sea fishing,” my dear friend, you will not have to wait until Sunday to worship in the controlled atmosphere of a church service. Rather, your Christianity will cease to be a one-day per week religion—it will be a life given to God. You will no longer go to church with the attitude: “I need to be fed.” You will go to church ready to feed others. You will move away from the question: “What will the church do for me?” to the question: “What can I do for the church?” You will move away from complaining about the church to giving her your all to redeem her even as Jesus did. You will move away from criticizing and judging the pastor to feeding him with love from your heart, giving him large or small gifts and being ready to provide service in areas of need. You might be able to find one or two like-minded people in your church and together, you can start a prayer meeting. This kind of increasing, of loving and edifying was the dream of the apostles. Make this dream of the apostles become a reality in your life and you will be a lot healthier, happier and stronger.

The bottom line is this, stop going to places your Savior has not told you to go; stop buying things you should not buy and stop doing things you should not do. You will then find that you have plenty of extra time to explore the riches of His glory. Jesus only went where the Father sent Him—are you that free? Again, stop being a slave to man and become a slave to God and you will go from being a smoking candle to becoming a light of the world. Cast your net out into the deep. Start doing it

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