

“But I’m Not Good Enough”

Thomas Robinson, *Worthy!* 3, September 1, 2013

Luke 5:1-11

¹ On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him [Jesus] to hear **the word of God**, he was standing by the **lake of Gennesaret** (Sea of Galilee), ² and he saw **two boats** by the lake, but **the fishermen** had gone out of them and were **washing their nets**.

³ **Getting into one of the boats**, which was **Simon’s**, he asked him to **put out a little** from the land. And he sat down and **taught the people from the boat**.

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

⁵ And Simon answered, “**Master**, we **toiled all night** and took nothing! But **at your word** I will let down the nets.”

⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a **large number of fish**, and their **nets were breaking**. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and **filled both the boats**, so that they **began to sink**.

⁸ But when **Simon Peter** saw it, he **fell down at Jesus’ knees**, saying, “**Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.**” ⁹ For he and all who were with him were **astonished** at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were **James** and **John**, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, “**Do not be afraid**; from now on you will be catching people.”

¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Exodus 3:11-12, 14 God Sends Moses to Lead Israel out of Egypt

¹⁰ “Come, **I will send you** to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” ¹¹ But Moses said to God, “**Who am I that I should go** to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹² He said, “But I will be with you, ...” ¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If ... they ask me, ‘**What is his name?**’ what shall I say to them?”

Mark 12:28-31 Jesus’ Teaching about God’s Greatest Commands

²⁸ And one of the scribes ... asked him, “**Which commandment is the most important of all?**”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

³⁰ And **you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind** and with all your **strength**.’

³¹ **The second** is this: ‘**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” [Deut. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18]

Matthew 16:24-25 Jesus Teaches about Following Him

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “**If anyone would come after me**, let him deny himself and **take up his cross** and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would **save his life will lose it**, but whoever **loses his life for my sake will find it**.”

The Touch of a Different World

Crowds came early to find Jesus. Fishermen washing nets by the lake after a night of work for nothing.

Jesus asks to use a boat. It's Simon's. Jesus teaches. People are anxious to hear "the word of God."

Then he says something ridiculous: "...into the deep...let down your nets." The catch! Everything changed.

Simon knew the world of "not enough." He didn't have enough luck, blessing from God, boats, lake, coworkers, savings, nets, time, skill, knowledge, support for family/mother-in-law; not enough fish. He had to protect himself. Why his boat? Why this day? Why, when the nets were just cleaned?

Simon experiences bumping into a different world: A "chance" moment can be a meeting with God.

Something in him tells him to listen to this strange command. Take a chance. Risk ridicule, waste.

Suddenly scarcity becomes abundance. Too much. Who is this? What does it mean? Can I trust it?

Simon says no! "Depart from me..." I'm not good enough. I'm too sinful, broken. People often think of Peter as self-confident, bold, brash. But we can recognize a cover for a deep sense of inadequacy. Jesus says, Yes, I know. Don't be afraid. Come. We'll have adventures together and change the world.

Embracing Vulnerability by Choice

"Vulnerability" means able to be wounded, hurt. Not a good thing. It sets off our fight or flight instinct.

Our fear and desire to protect/shield. Why embrace it? Some vulnerability is definitely not good. We mustn't embrace vulnerability imposed from the outside: abuse, manipulation, oppression, violence, intimidation, deception, codependency, etc. These are wrong, hurtful; need to be resisted, changed.

But there is also a vulnerability that always goes with the most important things in life. Just as God valued love and relationship more than immutable perfection and thus made himself vulnerable, so also we deeply need love and relationship. Both are impossible without vulnerability to others. So also creativity, accomplishing anything for good, going a new direction, being really authentic. Vulnerability is risking possible failure for something worthwhile. Daring to put myself out there.

Who am I? I'm not enough. I don't belong. I can't be loved. I'm afraid.

One of our negative vulnerabilities is to manipulation. Messages from parents, peers, society that we internalize and impose on ourselves in many ways. Comparison /competition, shame/ fear/ loss of identity, withdrawal /disengagement. Advertising: "I'm not ___ enough." Shame: "I am a bad ___." We fear/fight/flee those feelings of shame and inadequacy. We build shields to counter them.

Perfectionism: being the perfect parent, Christian; having a just right family. Taking the role of predator or prey/victim. Staying busy with various things that block feeling or engagement.

Cultivating cynicism, flippancy, too cool to care – "whatever." And many variations.

Vulnerability feels dangerous but is necessary. Rejecting good vulnerability brings the bad, destructive.

The Great Commandments

Jesus calls us to discipleship, a vulnerability in imitation of God [Eph 5:1-2]. God is love in the secure love of the Trinity, his own nature as three who are one. Out of that secure and overflowing love, God chooses vulnerability by creating a world and creatures who can share that love or reject it. He could control them, but for real love and trust, he releases, weeps for them, dies for them, loves.

He calls us to realize that we also live in a love as secure and unbreakable as the Trinity – God's love for us – the Gospel. We respond with trust and thanksgiving, wholehearted love for God. On the basis of that secure love we can learn to love our neighbor, boldly, daringly, vulnerably, risking ourselves to serve, give, minister, share, listen, grieve, help through difficulty, give authentic friendship, share God's love. To break down oppressive and shaming structures, enhance the life of children, etc.

The Gospel stands against every manipulative message of shame and inadequacy. Jesus says, "I know, but I love you! Follow me and we'll have great adventures together. We will change my world."