

# How Deep Is Your Thrive?

Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 7:24-29

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This sermon was preached at North Presbyterian Church  
in Williamsville following a week of  
Vacation Bible School.

Pools in hotels which do not have life guards all have a sign 'No Diving'. I keep looking but I have never seen what I often experience in the church a sign that says no thriving.

All week long at Vacation Bible School we were encountering our faith around the issues of water. But the issue I want us to think about is how deep will we thrive in our own faith?

I found it quite curious that our children, as I retold the story you just heard, could not believe that the disciples left this net-breaking catch of fish behind. I think they tell our story. Faith as it moves more deeply into our souls leaves behind things that are not important.

Look with me again at the text. A crowd is pressing to hear Christ's words. So Jesus gets into a fishing boat with a couple of fishermen and pushes out so more can see and hear him. These two fishermen had been fishing all night with neither rest or fish as an outcome. Nevertheless they are now listening – perhaps not by choice to Christ's words. When the teaching is over Christ asks them to push out into the deep and let out their nets. Hear those words: 'push' 'out' 'into' 'deep' 'out'. All those words go beyond us. They reach past our capabilities and call us to an openness and vulnerability that we may not like or want to participate in.

Peter even moans in response, which is how we find out what they have been doing and how long – up all night and caught nothing. When he obeys the challenge he gets so many fish that the folk in the other boat need to help. Finally full of fish they walk away following Christ to be 'fishers of people'. Where does that metaphor lead us? Does that mean we want to catch as many as possible to kill? To eat? To sell? While we blithely teach children to sing,

I will make you fishers of men, fishers of men, fishers of men,

I will make you fishers of men if you follow me.

Are we really sure what we mean by that? Do we simply want more people? Hopefully you will agree that Jesus is changing their focus. Instead of getting a livelihood from fishing, these men and women will share the love of Christ with each other and others. They will trust God to provide for them. They will choose to realize that the truth of the good news of Jesus Christ fills our lives and bodies in a way that mere employment in any job without faith cannot compare to. Could it not even mean that instead of fishing for fish, food and money, now their fishing will be to benefit the community.

In the course of our week we discovered that God's people care for others, help others, trust in God, believe in God and listen. As you reflect on your own life can you see where these things are true for you? How deeply will you thrive?

Charge: Our second lesson, also from the Bible school curriculum, calls us to listen to Christ's words. Earlier I suggested that the deeper we go in our faith the more we move through these theme words from care, help, trust, believe to listen. Could it not also be true that we need desperately today to dive deeper through our listening to hear what God is saying to us. To not simply believe the words of Christ but to trust the God who is in those words. There is no question that our world still needs more help and more care that can only come from God working in and through us. So may God's grace, Christ's love and the community of the Spirit strengthen you as you thrive this week and forevermore in your faith.