

Swedenborgian Sunday School Notes for the Revised Common Lectionary

Luke 5:1–11 • Jesus Calls the First Disciples

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Luke 5:1–11 Jesus calls the first disciples
Isaiah 6:1–8. The Lord calls Isaiah

Overview

Today’s reading continues the story of how Jesus’ public ministry began; Jesus calls his first disciples: Peter, James, and John. Our focus with the children is on how the Lord calls each of us, right in our ordinary lives—and on how we respond. Are we willing to leave behind our self-centered and materialistic ways, and follow the Lord’s path? If so, we will receive a far bigger “catch of fish”: a deeper, spiritual understanding that will “feed” us and make us stronger, more loving people.

Key Points

- The Lord calls *every one of us* to be disciples.
- To follow the Lord, we must leave behind all our old, self-centered ways of thinking and acting.
- If we listen to the call and follow the Lord, we will get a “big catch” of spiritual understanding that will feed and nourish our hearts, minds, and lives.

Example for Teaching Children

Last week we learned how Jesus began his public ministry (the time when he preached the good news of his spiritual kingdom, taught people how to live good lives, and healed people from their sicknesses). In our story this week, Jesus calls three people to be his first “disciples” (people who will be close to him and learn the things he teaches).

Do you think the people Jesus called were very special people, different from you and me? We may think the people who were close to Jesus were holy, religious types. But they were mostly plain, ordinary working people. The first three he called were fishermen! Their names were Peter, James, and John, and they became the Lord’s closest disciples and friends.

The Lord doesn’t call only certain people who pray a lot and are especially good. No! The Lord calls *each one of us*, no matter what kind of person we are. It doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor, black or white, good or not so good at school work, or even whether we are religious or not. The Lord calls every one of us to be a disciple.

Actually, there *was* one very special thing about the people who became Jesus’ disciples: they were

willing to *listen* to what Jesus taught them, and leave everything behind to follow him and learn what it means to live a truly religious and spiritual life.

We don’t have to *literally* leave everything behind—our homes, families, and so on. According to the Bible, the disciples themselves didn’t completely stop fishing. But we *do* have to leave behind everything about ourselves that would keep us from following the Lord. What are some things that might keep us from following the Lord? (*Suggest a few, such as always wanting our own way, being greedy, and so on; let the children suggest others.*) These are the things we have to leave behind to follow Jesus.

If we do, the Lord will give us a “big catch”! We will learn what it means to be truly good and loving people. This will make us much happier than toys or money or popularity—or anything else.

Basic Correspondences

- the sea = knowledge in our memory
- fish = our love for knowledge
- fishing = using knowledge in our lives
- ships = our general belief or philosophy
- nets = our own specific belief system
- fishers of people = seekers of *spiritual* truth

Thoughts from Swedenborg

In the Bible, “fish” refers to facts that we learn from sensory experience. There are three kinds of facts: intellectual, rational, and sensory. These are all planted in our memory. . . . When we have been reborn spiritually, the Lord calls these facts out from our memory through our inner self.

The facts that come from sensory experience enter our consciousness and perception during our life on earth, since they are the basis of our thinking. The other, deeper facts do not come into our consciousness until we have laid our body aside and entered the next life. *Arcana Coelestia #991*

These three apostles [Peter, James, and John] were fishermen. The Lord said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people” because “fishing” means teaching materialistic people. At that time, there were materialistic people—both religious and nonreligious ones—who became spiritual as they accepted the Lord and the true ideas he taught.

Apocalypse Explained #820a.3