



My Beloved Ones,

Just as we have begun a new season, we will also commemorate the First Sunday of Luke. Therefore, it seems appropriate that this Sunday's Gospel is also about beginnings; specifically, the beginning of Christ calling His Disciples to their ministry.

We are in the small village of Gennesaret, where the size of the multitude makes it necessary for Christ to speak to them from a fishing boat. Perhaps the fishermen at work are only half listening to Him, but it is to them that Christ wishes to speak most of all.

When He finishes, He turns to Simon, the owner of the boat, and suggests that Simon put down his nets. Simon is tired. Having worked all night and most of the day, he has caught nothing; but something makes him obey Christ's command...

The catch is miraculous, and though Simon is a man of little education, when the nets begin to break, and one of the boats starts to sink from the weight, Simon is so overcome with feeling, that his first words to Jesus are "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (Luke 5:8). Jesus does not leave Simon, or Simon's partners, James and John. Christ wished to prefigure that which He would later teach them: "*...do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind... your Father knows that you need them... seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well*" (Luke 12:29-31). Instead of leaving, He simply tells them, "*Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men.*" (Luke 5:11)

Christ's words to them are so enticing, that it is easy to forget James and John were leaving their father, Zebedee. Later in the Gospel, when we read of Christ healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law, we know what Christ demanded when He commanded His Disciples to leave their homes and follow Him. When we speak of what it means to be a follower of Christ, we are constantly faced with the notion that we must deny ourselves. However, it is one thing to abandon worldly pleasures, but how many of us would be willing to abandon our homes, families, and friends as the disciples did? Indeed, when we think of the ascetics of the world, there are only a few who will be able to answer such a call.

Christ will call to each of us in different ways, and as the Disciples understood, often when we are least expecting it. I pray that as we enter fall, we hold fast to our Lord's command not to be afraid. So long as we seek His Kingdom and walk alongside His commandments in truth and love, God will continue to provide us with the comfort and strength to make each day a fruitful new beginning.

+ALEXIOS

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