

## **EPIPHANY: IN FAITH WE PROCLAIM GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE**

**Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**February 4, 2007**

**Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]**

**Psalm 138**

**1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

**Luke 5:1-11**

### **If you tell me to, I will**

The Luke passage tells of Jesus' intervention into the lives of a group of fishermen: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Jesus, who had been teaching a crowd of people by the shore, gets into Simon's boat and asks to be rowed out a little way in the water to continue his message from the boat. Good naturedly, Simon complies. At the end of the message, Jesus gives yet another command, "Row the boat out into the deep water and let your nets down to catch some fish" (Luke 5:4b, *CEV*).

What must Simon have thought? To lend someone the use of your boat is one thing; to have them tell you—a fisherman—*how* to fish is quite another. But this was no ordinary "someone." Simon had just heard Jesus' sermon on the boat. What manner of man was this? There was something about the authority with which he spoke. Acknowledging Jesus' lordship, Simon found himself saying, "Master...If you tell me to, I will..." (Luke 5:5b, *CEV*)

When God speaks, he expects obedience. God challenges us to move from the safe, shallow water of our lives into the troubled, deeper waters where our faith, our love, and our commitment to him can be tested. Indeed, it is after toiling all night that our biggest blessings come—blessings so bountiful that our "nets" cannot contain them!

Jesus' intervention into the lives of these ordinary men was not just to produce a bonanza of fish, but rather to sound a call to discipleship; his was a call for them to follow him and, by so doing, to serve others. The miracle of the huge catch took them by surprise (Luke 5:9,10) just as much as Jesus' invitation to them to become his disciples. There were, however, no excuses. No trying to tie up loose ends (Luke 9:57-62) before beginning the most extraordinary adventure of their lives. At a moment's notice these fishermen "left everything and went with Jesus" (Luke 5:11b, *CEV*).

How easy it is to get caught up in the busyness of our lives that we can't drop everything to follow Jesus. How easy it is to forget Jesus' words, "Don't be afraid! From now on

you will bring in people instead of fish”(Luke 5:10b, *CEV*). What are those things that make us fearful? Why are we so afraid to serve? Like the prophet Isaiah affirmed in his vision, and Simon Peter after the miracle of fish, we are all sinful before a holy God (Isaiah 6:5; Luke 5:8) Yet, despite our inadequacies, God still wants to use us and says, “I chose you and sent you out to produce fruit, the kind of fruit that will last” (John 15:16, *CEV*).

Will we, without hesitancy or reservation, answer the call to introduce people to the kingdom of God by replying, “I’ll go. Send me!”? (Isaiah 6:8b) Will we gladly, like Simon Peter, agree to work in God’s service by saying, “Master...If you tell me to, I will.”? Truly, the fields are ready to be harvested, but the laborers are few.

The Reflection for this week was prepared by Dorette Saunders, who serves on the staff of the American Bible Society as Senior Editor in the Education Unit of the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship.

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**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Burkina Faso**

– With thanks to God for the dedication of the Bobo Madare and Gulmancema Bibles, and with prayers for the new literacy program and for the Dagara and San translation projects and the revision of the Moore Bible; Cote d-Ivoire – With thanks to God for the upcoming completion of the Cebaara and Tagbana translation projects and with prayers that speakers of these languages will discover God’s Word, and with thanks for the start of work on the revised Baoule Bible and for good progress with the Attie translation project; **Ghana** – With thanks to God for the launch of the new Ga Bible and the first Esahie New Testament, and with prayers that these Scriptures will transform lives, and with prayers for funds to supply one million Bibles to schoolchildren to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in the country.

**Activity Corner:** “Jesus Says”

Supplies needed: Blank paper, pen or pencil. Gather your friends or family together. This game is a version of the popular “Simon Says.” The leader writes down on the paper a list of commands that he/she wants the individuals in the group to do. If the command is preceded by the words “Jesus says,” the individual does it. If not, they are out. Some examples: Jesus says, “Hug the person next to you.” Jesus says, “Raise your hand.” The object of the game is to try to be the last person to be out.