

Text: Luke 5:1-3. Fourth Sunday of Easter. **May 11, 2014.**

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

What a great day today! It Mother's Day. We get to meet Pastor Bauer. We get to dedicate this wonderful new window. What an impression this window makes. Here's why it makes an impression. This window is connected with the Word of God. Notice this window is the highest window in the sanctuary, showing that God's Word has the highest place in our church. If you look at the main roof line of the building, the backbone of the building if you will, guess what sits at the top of the backbone, the veritable brain? This window for the Word of God. We thought about what to put in this window, a symbol for God, an open Bible. But as we looked at the sanctuary, we noticed there are active scenes of Jesus in the baptismal window, the triptych. It made sense to have another active scene of Jesus connected with God's Word. We chose this scene of Jesus preaching and teaching God's Word. Then we have three scenes, one as Jesus began his public ministry, this one here as Jesus embarks on a new phase of his public ministry and the triptych, after Jesus' resurrection, when his work is complete. Wow! What an impression. But that's what God's Word does. God's Word makes quite an impression.

Look at the impression God's Word made on the crowds. They were crowding around Jesus. Literally they were pressing him. The crowds were so great, they were pressing Jesus off the shore and into the water. Jesus didn't want to walk on water at this time, so he got into a boat and began to teach the people from there. From a boat on the water the people could see him better and actually hear him better. The Lake of Gennesaret or the Sea of Galilee, as it's more commonly called, is really at the bottom of a bowl and all sides form a natural amphitheater to project the voice. It's cool to hear.

But why did these crowds come? Why are they pressing on Jesus? They were crowding around him to listen to the Word of God. They came to listen to the Word of God. They didn't come to the lake to fish, as many people do on Sunday mornings today (and apparently many of the fishermen then were washing their nets instead of listening to Jesus.) They came to hear the Word of God. They didn't come to see a miracle. Jesus had already done several. They came to hear the Word of God. They didn't come for physical needs. They came to hear the Word of God.

It's interesting that even when Jesus speaks, it is called the Word of God. It's not called the Word of Jesus. It's called the Word of God. When the people listened to Jesus, they could tell he spoke with authority, because what he spoke was the Word of God! He wasn't spouting forth his own ideas. It wasn't a bunch of human traditions. It was the Word of God! They came to hear the Word of God. The Word of God made quite an impression on these crowds.

What kind of impression has the Word of God made on you? Are you pressing to get here every Sunday, just can't miss, because this is the Word of God? Is hearing God's Word the most pressing thing in your life, every day? At your home, are daily devotions never missed, or only if we aren't too busy? When you make out your daily to do list, what's most pressing? Is hearing God's Word always at the top of the list? Does God's Word always have the highest place? I can't answer those questions as I would like to. You can't answer those questions with a certain, "Yes!" at all times. We have fallen short of perfection. We have at times failed to hear God's Word. At times, God's Word does not impress us.

But for those who were impressed, Jesus preached the Word of God. For those, like us, who are at times not impressed, Jesus preached the Word of God. Here's what that Word of God tells us. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. God's voice boomed from heaven at Jesus' baptism, "This is my Son. With him I am well pleased." God can only be pleased with perfection. At Jesus' baptism, his perfect life took the place of our imperfect lives. This window proclaims, "Jesus is perfect. His perfection is yours." Jesus taught the people, "After three days, I will rise again." They weren't impressed. They didn't get it, but when Jesus rose, they finally started to get it. Death is defeated. Sin is forgiven. I will rise just like Jesus rose. It's the resurrected Jesus who reached out to one person who had the wrong impression. Jesus reached out with one word, "Mary." Then her eyes were opened. Then she

saw Jesus. That central panel proclaims, "Jesus is risen!" What an impression! What a message! A Savior from heaven, born as a baby. A perfect Savior, taking our place. A Risen Savior, reaching out to make an eternal impression. Wow! That's an impression. That's the impression Jesus makes. That's the impression the Word of God makes, quite an impression.

That's what Jesus did. He taught the people from the boat. Literally he was teaching them over and over, he was continually teaching them. Teaching was something Jesus did continually. Preaching was something Jesus never tired of. Whether it was one person at a tomb, twelve clueless guys on a road, a massive crowd by a lake. From a mountain or a valley or a boat, Jesus was continually preaching. Jesus was continually teaching. Anytime. Anyplace. Anywhere. Jesus didn't need a church to preach. He didn't need a classroom to teach. He just spoke the Word of God and let the Word of God make an impression.

Same with you. You don't have to come here to hear God's Word. Take a Bible. We're giving them away for free. Read it at home. On your lunch hour. Download the Bible app if a Bible is too heavy. Anytime. Anyplace. Anywhere. Have someone read the Bible out loud when you are on a car trip. Someone who doesn't get car sick while reading. We recite the Catechism when we are driving. Read the Bible while waiting for your kids at dance. Turn off clash of clans and let the Word of God make an impression on you. I pray when you look at this window you will remember, "Jesus taught God's Word anytime, anyplace, anywhere. I can hear God's Word anytime, anyplace, anywhere."

I teased you earlier by saying this window is Jesus embarking on a new phase in his ministry, but I didn't tell you what that new phase was. I was hoping you would keep listening to find out. Hopefully you have. Here's the new phase. Before this time, when Jesus got in the boat, he was kind of going solo in teaching God's Word. Jesus was the lone preacher. He didn't really have a Tonto or any other helper. But now, Jesus calls others to help him in teaching. He calls other preachers to fish for men. Jesus used ordinary people to preach. None of them were professionals. They were fishermen and a tax collector, regular guys. That's how God chooses to spread his Word, through regular guys, ordinary people. They aren't so scary. When God sent angels at his birth, the shepherds were so afraid it hurt. They were sore. When God sent angels to announce his resurrection, they had to tell some wonderful women, "Don't be afraid." God doesn't usually send angels. God sends ordinary people to preach and teach.

I pray when you look at that window, you will see all the ordinary people God used to make an impression on you. Maybe it's your pastor growing up. Did he preach and teach God's Word and let it make an impression on you? Maybe today especially, you will remember your mother, who didn't need a boat or a pulpit to impress God's Word on your heart. She just lived her Christian life and won you over without words. Maybe you'll remember Pastor Tomhave and his teaching. Maybe you won't remember Pastor Strutz. That's ok. I want you to remember God's Word, not me. I want God's Word to make the impression, not the person. Look at this window and remember the people God used to let his Word make an impression on you.

You don't have to be a preacher to do that. Maybe you don't have the call to stand up in this pulpit and preach God's Word to our congregation on Sunday morning, but where is your boat, where is your crowd, where can you make an impression, or better yet, let God's Word make an impression? Can you let your family see you reading God's Word? Grab a Meditations book and start having family devotions today. I know I'm impressed when someone says, "it's like the Meditation for last week." That's God's Word making an impression. Do you have a coworker who is impressed with your friendly face and can you make an impression by telling them why your face is so friendly? "I have the best friend, Jesus. He's made the biggest impression on me." Aren't you impressed that God lets us help him spread the Word? Aren't you impressed that we get to do the work of angels and be God's messengers, only not so scary? Wow! God's Word does make quite an impression. Amen.