



Sermon

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The other day, my son had to get blood work. I could tell he was a bit nervous; you know the eyes were as big as saucers. I told him there was nothing to fear; it's not the length of the needle, it's the thickness of it. (Yes, it's true, I did say that). Then everyone in the room told me how bad I was! I told him that mom and dad get this done every year and it is important for the doctors to know if there is anything going on healthwise. He went through it without any problems and was amazed how easy it was. There was fear at first, but then the words of authority along with the mission of why we were doing it dispelled the fear.

Today we have a very important passage from Luke. We oversimplify the Gospel of Luke if we believe it was only a historic record and biography of Jesus. Though many of his facts can be verified in historical documents, that was not his primary thrust in his writings. He shaped the Gospel and the *Book of Acts* to address the situations in the Church during the time he wrote the both the Gospel and Acts (80-90AD). So too, the way he wrote this passage on the call of the first apostles was very important on the larger scale.

There are two important points that people and the church needed to see in his time. What is the Mission of Jesus, and under whose Authority, or who gave Him the authority? The Authority is who should the early

church believe, who should they put their trust in. Like my son, who put his trust not only in his parents but also because we have been through many times of getting bloodwork done.

Remember that Jesus was first introduced as an apocalyptic prophet, where He and John the Baptist shared many important aspects, then John had to depart from the story to show it's about Jesus. Luke though, has established Jesus' authority. In Chapter 4 of Luke (14-30) we see Jesus' mission is to reveal God and to redeem the world.

What many leaders did in Luke's time was to gather followers who could further their mission by learning the context of what they are teaching. The followers also had to adopt their way of life to appropriate the mission and very importantly, how the followers can adapt the leader's teaching to a new set of circumstances. Here in this passage, Jesus has chosen the Twelve. It is important to note that the Twelve are called Apostles in Luke and disciples are a multitude of followers.

We see in this passage that Jesus gives the authority to the 12 apostles by calling them. Luke emphasizes this call to help with the conflicting and confusing messages that were going on in his time. The tensions of Luke's time were the traditional Judaism, the Roman Empire, and the conflict and issues within the early church itself. The call not only authenticates the 12 Apostles but also later the very Church itself. Throughout the Gospel and Acts, we will see how the Apostles set a pattern for responding to Jewish criticism, organized the Church and legitimized the mission of bringing the Good News to the Gentiles.

Along with giving the Authority to the 12, Jesus also designates a leader, Simon. He charges Simon to cast the nets into the deep waters. Like Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, Simon resists pointing out that it is pointless and too demanding. But then he listens and becomes amazed. We see throughout scripture that deep waters refers to confusion and the broken age in which they live, to the point of them saying it is pointless and way too demanding for such uncertainty. Why should I risk my life on what I am not sure about? But Jesus shows the overabundance and the amazement. To show not only is it so worth it but also gives Peter a sense of inadequacy and realization of his sinfulness and unworthiness. By our leader feeling unworthy, so do we, yet not only are we amazed, we are redeemed. Jesus then gives the Apostles their mission to become fishers

of men. We see that Jesus will work through the disciples by the Holy Spirit through the development of the story, and it is divine knowledge that He chose these seemingly ordinary 12. All kinds of fish was pulled in. The Jews and the Gentiles.

This passages shows us the model for us that the church received its authority from Christ giving authority to the 12 Apostles and our mission is the same as theirs to be fishers of men. This passage tells us it's okay. There were dark and confusing times when the gospel was written and Jesus revealed himself, so to the same is today as He brings forth a continual Epiphany. So let's fear not: the church has done this many times. It's not the size of the mountain but the breadth of your heart. Seriously, we, too, are called under authority; let's get fishin'! AMEN.

Fr. Jeff+