

The Fisherman

John 1:35-42; Luke 5:1-11

WHAT WE FOUND

At their very first meeting, before Simon said a recorded word, Jesus renamed him: "You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter), John 1:42. In Scripture a God-given name change marks a new role in God's covenant plan: Abram became Abraham, "father of a multitude" (Genesis 17:5); Jacob became Israel. *Kepha*, rock, was essentially unknown as a personal name. Jesus coined it, which means the Gospels will have to define it.

In Luke 5, of two boats on the shore, Jesus taught the crowd from Simon's (5:3). Then came the catch, and Simon's confession: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The answer echoes the pattern of Isaiah's call, confession of sin met not with dismissal but with commission: "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men" (5:10). In Scripture, confessed sin is not a disqualifier; it is regularly step one. And "catching men" recalls Jeremiah 16:14-16, where God sends "many fishers" for his people in a passage set beside his promise to bring the scattered ones home.

Peter is named nearly two hundred times in the New Testament, first in every list of the Twelve: "first, Simon, who is called Peter" (Matthew 10:2). Four evangelists agree on the spotlight, failures included. What that spotlight is *for* is the question this whole study exists to answer.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. John Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homily 19*

Preaching on John 1:42, Chrysostom marvels that the Lord declares Simon's future name at their first meeting. By telling him what he shall be called, Christ shows both his divine foreknowledge and his intent: he is already shaping the fisherman into what the name promises, beginning the work before Simon has taken a single step.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, Book IV*

Ambrose lingers over the detail that Jesus teaches the crowd from Simon's boat. It was fitting, he says, that the Lord should teach from Peter's vessel: in that boat Ambrose sees a figure of the Church, from which Christ instructs the world, and the deep water into which Simon is told to launch is the depth of the mission still ahead.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons *Against Heresies, Book III*

Irenaeus records that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed down in writing what Peter had preached. If Mark preserves Peter's preaching, then the vivid, often unflattering portrait of Peter in that Gospel traces back to Peter's own proclamation, a striking thought: the Rock apparently did not hide his failures from the Church, which is its own kind of credential.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1.

Look up the meaning of your baptismal or confirmation name this week, and pray each morning: "Lord, you knew my name before I did; make me what you named me."

2.

Read Luke 5:1-11 once more on your own, slowly, placing yourself in the boat. Write down the one line that lands hardest.

3.

Begin a habit this study will keep: pray one Our Father each day for the pope and his intentions. You do not have to feel anything about the papacy yet; just pray for the man.

MEMORY VERSE

"So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas (which means Peter)." (John 1:42, RSV2CE)

MY GUESS · seal it and do not peek

Two sealed guesses. **First:** Simon starts this story as a fisherman, and Jesus hires him to "catch men." But before the Gospels end, Jesus will hand him a completely different job, with a completely different animal. Guess the job.

Second: hidden in the Old Testament is a detailed job posting for the office Jesus is going to give Simon, keys included. Guess which prophet's book it is hiding in.

Write both guesses, fold this panel closed, and do not open either one until your leader says. No reading ahead; that is the whole game.

The fisherman's new job: _____

The prophet with the job posting: _____

Fold here, seal with tape or a paperclip, and bring this sheet back every week.

BEFORE NEXT SESSION

Read **Matthew 16:13-20** twice. Note where the scene happens, and every gift Jesus gives Simon in it. Keep both guesses below sealed.

Catechism Connection: CCC 551; 858-860