

FEBRUARY, 2022 -THE FIRST KISS
Our Gospel comes from Luke 5:1-11

So today I want to talk about conscious contact. Conscious contact is when the knowing becomes intimate and that intimacy is life changing. Maybe you've fallen in love. If so, do you remember the first time you saw that person? Maybe you were introduced by a friend or you spotted them across a crowded room, and there was just something about that person. Whatever it was, I don't know, but it got your attention. And in time you had that awkward conversation. Of course, all the time you're thinking, you know, is the feeling mutual, then there was that first date, the first touch, the first kiss, and then boom, that kiss changed everything. That's what conscious contact is. It's life-changing, it's that first touch, it's that first kiss. Now, of course not every first date, not every first kiss is going to translate into a life changing moment. We can easily walk right past an experience like that. Conscious contact can be very brief, and then we turn away. Today, we're going to be talking about one of my all-time favorite people, outside of Jesus of course, in the Bible. He is impulsive. He is emotional. His mouth moves faster than his brain. And I see him every morning when I look in the mirror. Of course, I'm talking about Simon Peter. And today, Simon Peter will be introduced to conscious contact as he receives his first kiss. Now over the last several weeks, we have been in the Gospel of Luke. Of course, we're in **cycle C**, so we're in Luke all year. And Jesus walks into human history on the banks of the Jordan as He is baptized by John the Baptist. Then the temptations in the desert soon follow. And then He begins His ministry. Not in Jerusalem, not in the temple, but in a shabby synagogue in a blue-collar town called Capernaum, which was not necessarily the place that people would travel to worship in gilded halls. No, this was a place where people lived and of course that's why Jesus goes, because this is what He does. Soon He returns to His own hometown, where He's rejected by His own people.

We've been talking all about that over the last couple of weeks, as He suggests that He Himself is the promised Messiah foretold by both the prophet Isaiah and prophet Malachi. And they're like, "What? Excuse me? Did He just say what I think He just said?" And you know, through the years I've often wondered, I wondered what would have happened if it didn't go down that way? What would happen if He had been well-received? I mean, think about it. He could have set up headquarters right there in Nazareth, sat on the throne and just let people come to Him and not travel around like He did. I mean, no doubt word would have gotten out. Consider John the Baptist, huge crowds were going out to the river. Huge crowds would stream into Nazareth, but that's not what He does. Jesus does not stay, waiting for people. Rather, he **goes out** to see them where they live. And our gospel today is yet another example of the fact that that's what Jesus does. Jesus is going to meet you where you're at. While the crowds were pressing in on Jesus, and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the Lake of **Gennesaret**. Now Lake Gennesaret, also known as the **Sea of Galilee**, was my friends favorite place when she went to Israel. There was something about that place, just gave her a whole lot of peace. He saw two boats along the lakeside and the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. So, let's set the scene: Jesus is having church on the beach and He's teaching the crowds and He looks over and He recognizes one of those boats as a boat belonging to Simon. Of course, He would have already known who he was because Simon was the older brother of Andrew, which as we know, was the first disciple of Jesus. Andrew had been following around John the Baptist, and when he heard John the Baptist say, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world," well, that was enough for him. So, he started following Jesus. And if you recall, the first thing he does is run and tell his big brother Peter, well, at this point, it's Simon, and he says, "We have found the Messiah." So, Simon knows all about Jesus.

He's heard the Good News, but today Simon's got issues. Simon is stuck in his head, he's got problems.
It's been a hard day's night for Simon.
He'd been out on that lake all night long and with his crew and caught nothing.
Of course, in the ancient world, that's when fishing would happen, at night.
This of course was prior to refrigeration, so fish had to be caught at night so that they could be brought in fresh in the morning to the market.
But not this morning.
So, Jesus finds Simon on the shoreline, doing what he does every morning.
Cleaning out the mud and the weeds from the nets, lifting them up on these large wooden racks to dry, which by the way is not easy work because those nets are heavy, especially when they're wet.
Adding to the misery of this morning is the fact that he's got no fish, which means he's got no money, which means the bills can't get paid, which means he can't feed his family, which means he's losing in life, he's a failure.
Have you ever been there my friend?
Have you ever come home without any fish?
Do you find yourself struggling in life these days?
If that's you, I want you to really pay attention to our lesson today, because like I said, this is all about conscious contact.
When the knowing becomes real.
When Jesus moves from a concept to touching your heart with the first kiss.
Now notice Peter is in the middle of a very difficult circumstance.
And I have found that conscious contact often coincides with times such as these, because it seems that God has this habit of choosing the most difficult circumstances of our lives to work His greatest miracles.
So, if you find yourself right now going through a difficult time, hold on.
Chances are pretty good that God is preparing a blessing for you.
Now just before the break, we find Peter.
He's on a beach and he's got a head full of problems.
He's exhausted, he's frustrated.
He sees church going on just down the beach, but he wants no part of it.
Why?
Because he's stuck in his own head.

I got no fish.
How am I going to pay my bills?
What am I going to tell my creditors?
What am I going to tell my wife?
I got no fish.
Again, have you ever been there, my friend?
The circumstances in Simon's life were so overwhelming that the voice of God is literally just a few hundred feet down the beach and he can't hear it at all.
Why?
Because he is stuck in his own head and he is distracted by his problem, which of course is exactly how Satan works.
Remember the four Ds: distraction, deception, despair, destruction.
Period.
In that order.
That's how he rolls.
Distraction, deception, despair, and ultimately destruction.
And he begins with distraction because distraction is his biggest hammer.
Because here's the deal.
If Satan can keep you distracted for some 80, 90 years, he wins the war, because you never showed up for a battle, which is precisely where we find Peter today, stuck in his own head.
Does he walk down the beach? No.
So, what happens?
Jesus comes to him.
Why?
Because like I said, He's gonna meet you where you're at.
Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, He asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
So, I got a question.
Jesus is getting into his boat.
So, Simon is kind of a captive audience right now.
He can't really go anywhere.
I tell you what, I wish I could do that sometimes.
People come to me with their problems.
Maybe it's the kids.
Maybe it's a marriage.
Maybe it's a job, could be a lot of things.
Life is hard my friend.
And so, I'll suggest, you know, maybe you should come to church.

I'll say something like, you know, I got a message, and you really need to hear it.
It could be your solution.
It could be your conscious contact.
It could be life-changing.
But do they come?
Of course not.
Why?
Because they're down the beach, drying out their nets with a head full of anxiety, over things they can't control.
Now here's my question.
Jesus does not wait for Simon.
He comes to him and He gets into his boat.

Why? "Master, we have worked hard all night and have
Why would He do that?
Why would Jesus have to use Simon's boat?
I mean, He's Jesus.
He could have walked out on the water if He wanted.
I mean, we see Him do that later, but He doesn't.
Why?
Because the Creator chooses to partner with His creation to spread the Good News.
You see how that works?
He says, "Hey, Simon, I want to use your boat."
Which begs the question, my friend, can he use your boat today?
After He finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your net for a catch."
And I love it, I mean, I wasn't there.
I'm just imagining in my head what Simon is thinking about now.
I'm thinking he's probably thinking, you know Jesus, you're a good preacher, you're a good talker, alright?
But you don't know nothing about fish, because everybody knows you don't fish right here.
Everybody knows that the fish are way out there in the middle of the lake, a lake, by the way, which I've been out on all night and I've got nothing.
And now my nets, which are drying way over there, hanging up on those racks, almost halfway dried already.
You want me to go over there and drag all those nets all the way back here to my boat and drop them back in the water.
That's what you want? I'm tired, man.
I got a headache.

I don't got no fish.
I don't want to do this.
I'm thinking that's what he's thinking, but that's not what comes out.
Praise God, no, you know what comes out?
caught nothing, but at Your command, I will lower the nets."
That's what comes out.
Now notice that it calls Him Master.
The Greek word for Master is **kýrios**, which is kind of like boss man.
So, he calls Him boss man and then he suspends his disbelief.
He opens just a little crack of possibility.
And he has no idea what's about ready to happen, but he's about ready to get his first kiss.
And it will be life-changing.
And in keeping with how God seems to do things, it will come in the midst of a really big struggle.
So once again, if you find yourself struggling in life right now, hang on, big things are right around the corner.
Good measure, shaken down and running over and poured in your lap, so many fish that the nets are tearing.
Wow, can you imagine, I mean, one moment you're exhausted.
You're depressed. I got no fish.
You're sitting in your boat with a head full of problems, problems which by the way, you can't solve, problems which by the way are beyond your control.
And Jesus speaks the word, boom.
And your biggest problem is breaking nets.
Hear me when I say my friend, you can go to church every Sunday.
You can know all about Jesus, you can even believe in Jesus, but until there's conscious contact, there are no breaking nets.
Until there's **conscious contact**, there is no life-changing experience.
And how do you have conscious contact?

You let Him into your boat.
Yeah, you know, so many of us, like Simon, we don't want to let Him into our boat.
Because you know, it all seems a bit intrusive.
You know, Jesus, I might, I might miss my freedom. I don't want to be being infringed in any way.
I might miss the things that make me happy. Besides I'm tired, I got issues, I got no fish.

They signal to the partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats, so that the boats, both of them, are now in danger of sinking.

I want you to think of those fish as the Word, because you know, once God fills your boat with His Word, it will flow, overflow into other boats.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell to his knees and said to Jesus, "Depart from me, Lord, for I'm a sinful man."

Now watch this, this is really cool, because this is the very first time we see that name Peter.

This is a big moment because Luke is recognizing that Simon is having a life changing moment.

This is a **character** change.

He is going from Simon, this hardcore bloody knuckled fisherman, to Simon Peter, who is saying "depart from me, Lord for I'm a sinful man," which is how you would react to being in the face of Divinity.

Now notice he doesn't call him Master.

He's calling him Lord, it ain't boss anymore, it's Lord, which means he to whom a person belongs.

Because you see in this moment, Peter is turning his will and his life over to the care of Jesus.

In this moment, Peter is experiencing his first kiss.

In this moment, Peter is experiencing conscious contact. What about you, my friend?

Have you been playing out of bounds most of your life? Do you have secrets?

Are you stuck in your boat with a head full of problems you can't solve?

Why not suspend your disbelief for just a moment?

Why not open up a crack of possibility for Him to move?

Remember now, Simon didn't walk down to the beach.

No no, he didn't go to Jesus, Jesus came to him, came to him in the middle of his life, in the middle of his pain as He will for you.

And He worked a miracle so personal that only he, Peter, who's a fisherman, could fully understand its magnitude.

Because think about it, if it was just me and you, we're not fishermen, we're just walking by, and we happen to see this happen, we might be tempted to think, "Well, look at those guys, they got really lucky, just saw a huge school of fish just happened to swim right by."

But no, that that is not what happened, my friend, but only a fishermen would really understand that.

By grace and grace alone, Jesus filled his every need.

And when Simon Peter was confronted with Divinity, what did he do?

It caused his knees to buckle because he knows he does not deserve this, and of course he doesn't.

And you know what, neither do we.

You know, down south, a lot of people like to ask, "have you found Jesus?"

Seems like a lot of people are looking for Him.

But the truth of the matter is, you don't need to go look for Jesus, because He's already found you.

You don't have to climb a mountain in Tibet to have a spiritual experience.

You don't have to go on some month-long silent retreat to find Jesus.

He's with you right now, today, standing right next to you or right behind you, just waiting for you to turn around and answer the question, am I going to let You in my boat?

Rev. Katie Dailey, pastor
at Main and S. Forest
Richmond, MI