

# Coffee to Go | Fifth Sunday after Epiphany | Year C

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Epiphany, Jesus Christ, Gospel of Luke, abundant grace, discipleship, spiritual journey, God..

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So, we're still in the season following Epiphany, which is where God is revealed or made manifest in Jesus Christ. This season lasts from the day after Epiphany, January 7 to Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins. And during this season, we focus on the light and love of God revealed. So where are we with Jesus in this week's text? And we have left the synagogue where we spent the past couple of Sundays, and now we are at the edge of a lake, and we are watching the fishermen as they fish. Blake?

### **Blake Smith** 01:21

Alright. Well, we are in the Gospel of Luke again, the fifth chapter, and it is the 1st through the 11th verse.

Once, while Jesus was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the Word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake. The fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long, but have caught nothing. Yet, if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For he and all who were with him, were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who are partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Well, if there are any fishermen in our fisherpersons in our, uh, listening audience, you may think, 'wow, that would be so great.' I mean, especially if you're a net fisherman. I don't necessarily engage in fishing with a net. I like the drama, I guess, of casting and reeling in and stuff like this. So, it's like, okay,

this was, this is awesome. You got all these fish, but you didn't get to kind of enjoy the hunt and the catch. But anyway, why does this matter? This idea of these nets being filled to bursting, to sinking these two boats is a huge sign that God's abundant grace is revealed and present in this passage. It's giving us the sense about the nature of God, which is this abundant grace. And yes, it's a passage about the call of the first disciples, and it's different, but it's different in that it's not just Jesus walking up to a bunch of men and saying, 'Hey, come, come follow me. Be my disciples,' and they drop their nets and follow. There's real importance in this part of the story, because they seem to be without. They seem to be dejected. They seem to be worn out from a long night, and all of the sudden, with their gifts and skills, and just the the leadership and guidance of Jesus, they fill their boats and their nets. So, they're really at a place of significant abundance. This, God's grace is there in abundance. The fish are there in abundance. And is in that context that they are called to follow Jesus. Abundance is a sign of God throughout Scripture. Whether it be abundance of grace or mercy or compassion or Jesus. But we also talk about abundance of material possessions, and that is not what is important here, even though you have these physical fish, which would be what obviously the fishermen live to do. But we really want to focus here on the abundance of God's grace. The rich are told to give away wealth to the poor in the passages of Scripture. And here, the fishermen, with Jesus' assistance, had these fish, this massive catch. Yet when Jesus calls them to follow. They leave that abundance behind. We kind of miss that. I think sometimes, at least I have, in this passage, that you know we go back to the verses that we know, that they just left everything and followed Jesus, but they too are leaving their abundance to follow Jesus. But we also get a sense that they are leaving with an abundance of skills. Jesus is saying to them, you have what it takes to fish for people, just like you have what it takes to fish for fish, and follow me, and we will do this together and fulfill God's purposes.

**Karin Peter 06:25**

So, I love that, in this particular version of this story, that they just simply walk away from two boats full of fish. And in my mind, they don't go to waste because they're on a shore with a town. So, I'm sure the fish were put to good use. But Jesus doesn't say to them, you know, if you really study hard and follow me and work hard, then you'll be able to fish for people. Nope, it's like, From now on, you're fishing for people, okay? And that's, that, their skills were sufficient. Who they were was sufficient to do the work at hand. I think we forget that too when we think about our own walk with Jesus, that maybe we don't have a lot of skills or what's needed for the next couple of steps, but we forget that Jesus is alongside and we've got what we need to keep taking those steps forward.

**Blake Smith 07:23**

Well, that's a great insight for all of us, because, like you said, we feel insignificant or that we don't have the capacity or the capability. And Jesus is saying you've got what you need. Let's go do this. So some questions that we might ask ourselves are, How have I experienced God's abundance? Whether that be mercy, grace, compassion, giftedness, whatever it is, how have you experienced God's abundance in your life? Little bit harder question, What material possessions keep me from a deep relationship with the divine? What do I need to leave behind? What is the abundance, perhaps, that I hold onto that creates a barrier that I leave behind? And finally, what skills do I have that might be helpful as I navigate my spiritual journey and encounter others on the way? So, what is the abundance that you need to leave behind, but what is the abundance that you carry with you as well?

**Karin Peter** 08:43

That's a good place to leave us as we figure out how to experience it. This week, I think one thing that we can do as we have those meditations on abundance, Blake, is to simply note what you have in abundance and give it away. Experience that giving away from your abundance. It could be what you have in abundance. [It] could be material possessions, spiritual giftedness, emotional experiences, interpersonal, relational skills. You might have financial abundance. Whatever it is, give, give some of it away, or all of it away, and in its place, except God's abundant generosity and grace. So, this week is a week of giving stuff away. We've just come through the Christmas season where we've accumulated stuff, and now we're going to sort through that abundance and do some sharing.

**Blake Smith** 09:40

Alright! And our blessing today comes from John O'Donoghue, and it is called, "For Presence." That's P R E S E N C E not P R E S E N T S.

Awaken to the mystery of being here and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.  
Have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.  
Receive encouragement when new frontiers beckon.  
Respond to the call of your gift and the courage to follow its path.  
Let the flame of anger free you of all falsity.  
May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame.  
May anxiety never linger about you.  
May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.  
Take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.  
Be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.  
May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.

Well, that wraps it up here at Coffee to Go with another episode, we invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.