

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

January 24, 2021

“At Your Word I Will”

*“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret. (2) and saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. (3) Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. (4) When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ (5) But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless **at Your word I will** let down the net.’ (6) And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. (7) So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. (8) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ (9) For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; (10) and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ (11) So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and **followed Him**,” (Luke 5:1-11).*

Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20 are parallel accounts of this same event which occurred during the time of Jesus’ ministry on the earth. It occurred at a time when the fame of Jesus was on the rise, so much so, that *“the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God...”* (v. 1).

The location where this incident occurred was *“the sea of Gennesaret,”* (v. 1), also known as *“the Sea of Galilee”* (Matt. 4:18), and *“the Sea of Tiberias,”* John 6:1). It was in a general area where Jesus performed many miracles and did much teaching. In many respects, this was an unusual lake. It was nearly 700 feet below sea level, a freshwater lake, the lowest freshwater lake on earth and the second lowest lake in the world. The lake was fed by the Jordan River, and also by streams from the hills of Galilee. It was a beautiful lake, around 13 miles long and 8 miles wide at its widest

point. It was also a lake where Peter and Andrew, James and John did much fishing, especially as they followed their trade prior to their call to be “*fishers of men.*”

As noted in our text “*the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God*” (v. 1). In order to be able to better address the crowd, Jesus needed a little space between Himself and the crowd, so He got into Simon’s boat, “*asked him to put out a little from the land,*” then “*He sat down and taught the people from the boat,*” v. 3. As He concluded His message, Jesus told Simon to “*launch out into the deep and let **down your nets** for a catch*” (v. 4). But Simon Peter replied, saying “*Master, we have toiled at night and caught nothing...*” v. 5). Peter was a fisherman by trade whereas Jesus was “*the carpenter’s son*” (Matt. 13:55), so why would Jesus be telling Peter where and when to fish? At least, that might have been the reasoning of Peter. But it wasn’t! Though they had “*fished all night*” (the more likely time to catch fish), and had caught nothing, Peter said “*nevertheless **at Your word I will let down the net***” (v. 5). So they did. They caught so many fish that the net began to break, so they “*signaled to their partners*” (James and John) to bring their boat; they filled both boats, and were “*astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken*” (v. 9). Jesus then said to Simon, “*Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men*” (v. 10). Then they, Simon (and Andrew his brother, Matt. 4:18), and James and John brought their boats to land and “*forsook all and followed Him*” (v. 11).

Yes, they “*forsook all and followed*” Jesus, and they did so at a great sacrifice. Not only did they give up their trade, they left those closest to them, they preached the word of the Lord, they truly became “*fishers of men,*” three of them became martyrs for the cause of Christ, and John later was exiled on the island of Patmos where he, by inspiration, penned the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9). But it all began when Peter said to Jesus, “***at Your word I will...***” (v. 5).

Peter was wise to show respect for the “*word*” of the Lord! God’s word is exceedingly powerful! He said “*Let there be light, and there **was** light*” (Gen. 1:3). He spoke the universe into existence! “*By the **word** of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth*” (Psa. 33:6). The psalmist admonished, saying, “*Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For he spoke, and **it was done**; He commanded, and it **stood fast***” (Ps. 33:8-9). Yes, there is “*power*” in the word of the Lord (cf. Rom. 1:16); we must respect it and give heed thereto.

At the word of the Lord, Noah “*prepared an ark for the saving of his household*” (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:14). **At the word of the Lord**, Abraham “*offered up His only begotten son*” (Heb. 11:17; Gen. 22:1-10). **At the word of the Lord**, Moses “*forsook Egypt*” (Heb. 11:27), and led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt, and toward the promised land (Ex. 12-14). **At the word of the Lord**, the apostles went forth carrying the message of salvation to multitudes, while enduring beatings, hostilities, imprisonments, and even death. **At the word of the Lord**, multitudes in the first century left their lives of sinful indulgence, obeyed the gospel, endured afflictions, and sought to be “*faithful unto death*” (cf. Rev. 2:10).

When all is said and done, “*at your word*” lies the real line of distinction between the followers of Jesus and the servants of Satan. It was Jesus Who said to those Jews who believed in Him, “***if you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed***” (John 8:31). As it was then, so it is now! Let us now note some current application of:

“At Your Word I Will..”

1. **“At Your Word, I will”** repent of my sins and turn to the Lord, Luke 13:3,5).
2. **“At Your word I will”** confess my faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:36-37).
3. **“At Your word I will”** be *“baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
4. **“At your word I will”** worship God *“in spirit and in truth,”* John 4:23,24), and steadfastly refuse to forsake the worship assemblies of the saints, as (tragically) *“the manner of some is”* (Heb. 10:25).
5. **“At your word I will”** assemble each *“first day of the week”* (Acts 20:7) to break bread (partake of the Lord’s supper) with those who have assembled for that purpose (I Cor. 11:23-33).
6. **“At Your word I will”** in the worship assembly sing **“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,”** and make *“melody”* in my *“heart”* (not on a man-made harp!) *“to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19),
7. **“At your word I will”** strive to *“live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age”* (Tit. 2:11), striving diligently not to *“fulfill the lust of the flesh”* (Gal. 5:16),.
8. **“At your word I will”** honor my marriage vows, refusing to permit anything short of death itself to come between me and my spouse (Rom. 7:2-3).

Conclusion: Many other applications can be made of the *“at your word I will”* statement of commitment. Peter, having fished fruitlessly all night (a better time for fishing) did not personally see the wisdom of letting down his net at that particular time. But he had faith in Jesus as the son of God; he had confidence in the word of the Lord, so he let down his net and had great success. And then he went from catching fish to catching men! He chose not to argue with Jesus, or pit his wisdom against that of Jesus. At Jesus’ **“word”** he let down his net and experienced amazing results. Friend, we are going to be judged by the *“word”* of the Lord in that last day (John 12:48), so it pays to believe and obey His *“word”* now. We close by asking this question: **“will you let down your net?”**

**** — B. Witherington