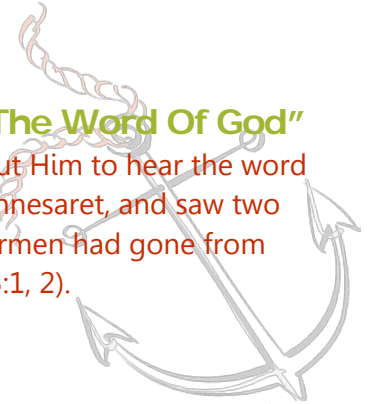




"Pressed About Him To Hear The Word Of God"

"So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets" (Lk. 5:1, 2).



THE sublimity etched by Luke's pen of the Master Teacher thronged in the excitement of the multitudes who were then eager to hear the word of God makes our heart yearn to partake of such a simple and tranquil scene. We can easily hear the sounds of the water on the shore and see the boats harbored on land from the previous fishing trip. As they prepare for their next launch, we can see weary and battered fishermen busying themselves with the washing of their nets from their unprofitable trip. We can visualize an enthused multitude surrounding Jesus wanting more of God's message even as baby birds desire to be fed from their mother. As Luke continues, we can picture the Lord's request to use Simon's boat as a pulpit whereby He can create some distance between Himself and the people to more effectively teach them:

"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" (Lk. 5:3).

What a picture! Perhaps we might yearn for a simpler path where time is seemingly slowed and life is less cluttered by society's various demands. We may justify our lack of study time by desiring a life that we imagine was theirs and believing that we are helpless to recreate such a serene scene today. If only we could retreat to a land where our time was freer and less burdened by advancement and less demands by our job, then we would surely run to a place to hear God's word too! That social media, cell phones, email, etc. bring into our domain an enlarged sphere of information, people, friendships, influence, responsibilities, and sometimes troubles is not denied. We are called to be good stewards of our time nonetheless:

"So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

While our minds can easily become *distracted* and our time *diminished* by the world's toys and gadgets, we have no less responsibility to find and focus upon that one *good thing*—heaven's message (Lk. 10:41, 42). We ought to stray away from being dismissive of challenges that previous generations struggled with; we have not walked in their shoes. While advancement has some draw backs, it has also made our lives easier in many ways. Jesus traveled around 60 miles from Nazareth to be baptized by John (Mk. 1:9). Would we be willing to travel such a distance to obey the will of the Father—not on paved roads in air-conditioned vehicles but rather facing the elements on foot? That generation and every generation since has had its challenges, and learning God's word is rarely convenient and never effortless. Worldliness has always been a trap for the soul (1 Jn. 2:15, 16; Rom. 8:6; etc.). So let us ask, "Would I have been on that shore to hear the word of God? What do my actions suggest?"

