

Sermon, February 6, 2022
Psalm 138; Luke 5:1-11
“A Fresh Vision: A New Way”
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I saw a commercial last week, and I can't tell you which car company, but it was touting its driverless car system. The car just drives itself. Have you seen this? Let's take a moment and marvel at the idea we live in such a time where something like a self-driving car is actually a thing. My goodness, I remember when cruise control seemed pretty incredible, and then cars that would parallel park on their own. And hopefully not hit other cars. Now we have cars that drive themselves.

Have you seen the commercial? The person drives, hits a button, sits back and lets the car go on its own. They change lanes and change back. Really, if you think about it, it's a miracle of technology and engineering. It makes one wonder where we may go next.

And I am usually a big fan of technology. I like improvements and seeing what the next thing coming out will be. Usually. But I am going to admit to you, I'm not sold on the idea. In fact, I turned to my wife and I said *I don't know if I would ever be comfortable enough to do that*. I realize I might eat my words years to come from now, but for now, I said I can't see myself doing that. Maybe it's a control issue, maybe it's just

common sense wanting to be safe. But the idea that we can sit back, tell a car to go on automatic pilot seems, well dangerous.

Of course, the counter argument is that's what we do very often anyway, isn't it? How often do we sometimes just zone out. How often do we when driving put ourselves on automatic pilot and really have no idea what's going on around us? The car's computer is alert, the car is programmed and is acutely aware where very often our minds drift.

Have you ever had that happen? Have you ever had your mind, while you are driving, go on automatic pilot? Miles can pass, and you aren't really aware of what's going on, and suddenly you sort of come to yourself and you aren't sure where you are exactly?? How did I get so far down the road? Ever have your mind go on automatic pilot and almost miss your exit just because you weren't aware?

When do we go on automatic pilot? It's never when we are going somewhere new. When we are in unfamiliar territory, we find our senses are actually very sharp, we are completely aware of our surroundings, we are looking to see exactly where we are and where we are going. We may have our GPS system on, announcing the next turn. We are aware.

No, it seems that what puts our minds in automatic pilot is routine. Routine, going the same way at the same time every day. That's when we find ourselves not being aware, because we know. We know how to get here, we know there will be few if any surprises here, there is little need for us to stay alert. And so, try as we might, we sometimes find our minds wandering rather than being aware of where we are.

Of course, it's not just driving. Living on automatic pilot for many people today is a way of life. We put almost no thought into the day how we will affect our world, how we will make a difference. We just find ourselves living the routine, giving no thought to life or our purpose. It's just about getting through the day and getting ready so you can do the exact same thing the next day. Now, I will be the first one to admit I like routine, it's comfortable. But it can also drain us and take the joy out of life. As you look at your life, I'm curious to know are you living your life on automatic pilot?

We are beginning a new series this morning called A Fresh Vision. I mentioned this last week, but this is going to be a year of vision and fresh vision for our church. Our staff is meeting monthly to look at what is God's vision for our future. What does He want to happen here? How are we to fill the Great commission? We appointed a lay group to do the exact same thing, and in essence to ask the same questions. Then we will get together and discern where we feel God is leading us.

But having vision isn't about an institution nor should it be about the institution. All of us in the church ought to be seeking a fresh vision for their own lives. And that's what we will be looking at together over the next several weeks. What does it mean to have a fresh vision from God?

What would having a fresh vision from God look like? A lot like what we see happening in our Gospel message this morning. You know the story. Peter and the Disciples are fishing, that's what they do, they have done it almost since birth. They know what they are doing. When they get back to shore, we see that their catch is, well, pretty bad. It's meager. Certainly not enough to pay their bills and take care of their families. But they see Jesus on shore who says what ought to be one of the, forgive me, but strangest things to say, have you tried fishing on the other side of the boat? I mean, these are fisherman, they know what they are doing, they ought to have laughed at Jesus. Instead, they do what He asks, and they come back with so many fish, their nets are beginning to rip apart.

From this story, I believe we can lay the groundwork for what it means to wake up, to have a fresh vision, and to begin to live your life with purpose and excitement. Do you want a fresh vision, do you want to live your life with purpose? Would you want your life to be so fruitful that the nets begin to tear under the weight of blessing? Then, let's go back and discern what this Biblical account is telling us.

First, it is telling us that if you do the same thing, things you have always done, you will never get new results. Let me say that again. If you do things the way you have always done them, you can't expect new results. If you want God to give your life purpose and excitement, to give your life new meaning, then you must expect God to call you out of your routine. Many of us are quite simply not being fruitful because we are content to fish on the wrong side of the boat. And we have, as Christian songwriter Keith Green said, we have fallen asleep in the light.

Secondly, the Gospel account tells us that as long as we continue to rely on ourselves, on our experience, we will never have new results. How many times have you not followed God because you thought you knew better how to run your life? How often have you depended on your own resources, your own experiences, your knowledge, yet failed repeatedly? If you want new visions, we must be open to the call and power of the Holy Spirit.

There may be times when God calls you to do something that doesn't make sense. If you want a fresh vision, God may call you to take a leap of faith. At some point, he may call you to fish from the other side of the boat. And people will say you are wasting your time, that you are being foolish. They will tell you to go back to your routine, go back on automatic pilot, and don't upset the boat. The world will not appreciate someone getting up rocking the boat and fishing off of the other side. If you want to fish off the other side, dare to be to be different, you will rock the boat. You can't go to the other side of the boat if you don't rock it. When God calls us to the other side and do what doesn't make sense, sometimes you have to do it, you can't have a fresh vision any other way.

The difference between having a fruitful life and one that is unfruitful is not a matter of experience or intelligence or resources. It's a matter of faith. The only thing that changes for the disciples when they go back out a second time is their willingness to do what God said. The only thing holding you back from a life of meaning and fruitfulness is your willingness to follow God to the other side of the boat. Today, will you catch that new vision, will you wake up and move to the other side of the boat? Amen.