

1506 Orchard Terrace  
Linden, NJ 07036-3807  
908.486.3073  
908-386.3079 Fax  
www.lindenpres.org

Pastor:  
Rev. Dr. William C. Weaver  
Manse: 908.925.4939

**Ordination and Installation Sunday**  
**January 31, 2010**

Sermon Texts: Isaiah 6: 1-8  
Psalm 138  
Luke 5: 1-11  
I Corinthians 15: 1-11

Sermon Title: "When Jesus Climbs Into Your Boat"

Sermon Topic: Jesus, as Lord of all your life

Sermon Purpose: To teach Jesus' place in our lives, not just on Sunday, but all through the week.

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*Sermon Prayer: Lord, help us to know your presence, your peace, and your purpose in our lives, as we study and share your Word and your Ways. Amen.*

How many of you have ever experienced a full moon? (Raise your hands.) What effect does the full moon have on people? [Let them answer: It makes people hyper, nervous, unable to sleep, have weird dreams, etc.] Scientists have proven the moon has an effect on water (high tides, and the like). Since the human body is composed of 70% water, the full moon has some effect on us. People who work in healthcare can attest to the fact that the hospital emergency room is much busier during a full moon than at other times. More babies are born during a full moon than the rest of the month.

Alright, picture this: Peter has had a rough night on the water. He and his crew have been fishing all night, but have little to show for it. He's discouraged and more than just a little "crotchety." (It's as if he's experienced the irritability caused by the full moon.) Then, this pleasant fellow, this "city boy carpenter" who probably has no idea about fishing, walks up to him and says, "Excuse me, Peter, can I use your boat for a while?" Can you imagine where Peter wants to tell this "city boy" to go?

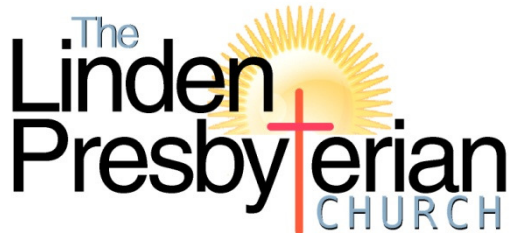
It was such a simple question. But this man was not asking to take the boat out, **alone**. You see, this was no little rowboat with a couple fishing poles. This was a fishing vessel, with nets that had to be tended, hooks that could easily tear off a man's arm, and – although small – it was **not** a one-man operation. This question meant that **Peter and his crew** would have to climb back into the boat and take this fellow out on the water. Who knows? Maybe they'd catch a few more fish for the market, before it was over.

Peter's response may have been, "Yeah, sure. Fishing hasn't been too good, anyway."

You see, there is an ancient custom of Jewish hospitality that says if a person makes a reasonable request of you, you are obliged to comply. So, Peter agrees when Jesus asked him to take the boat out just a little way and then Jesus sits down and begins to teach. Being in the boat with him, Peter cannot escape Jesus' teaching. But there's more to it than that.

When Peter agreed, his fishing life was changed forever. Up until now, Peter's partners had been people like James and John and his brother, Andrew.





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But, with his agreement to let Jesus into his boat, Peter would have a **new** fishing partner; not only for **fish**, but for the hardest catch of all, other **people**. Until now, Peter had to rely on his knowledge and experience (as well as a certain amount of luck, like **most** fishermen), if he was going to have any success at his trade. Fishing would be different from now on. He was going to be joining forces with the One who **created** the fish. And all this would happen just because he agreed to “let Jesus use his boat.”

**Most of us don't plan to have Jesus change every area of our lives.** In the beginning, Peter wasn't ready to give this Jewish teacher control of everything from his heart to his occupation. The Rabbi could be in the Temple, and possibly seen walking among the people in the streets – meeting them, advising them, preparing for worship, and maybe even sweeping the Temple floors. But, the Rabbi was not supposed to visit in the home or at the workplace. That was the mentality held by Peter and others like him. Faith should be kept in the Temple. It was something to be expressed on the **Sabbath** and when there was a **problem**, but it shouldn't interfere with everyday living.

**We** approach commitment very cautiously, too. And, that's as it **should** be. Jesus, Himself, said, “No man starts to build a tower without first counting the cost.” Of course, our Lord **does** want to bless every area of our lives from family to finances – but he won't force it. It begins with a “boat” experience. We are struggling in a particular area and suddenly, almost without warning, there is our Lord in the middle of it; offering his companionship, then asking us to try things **his** way, and – if we're obedient – then he demonstrates his awesome love and power to transform **that** area into part of our life for him, also.

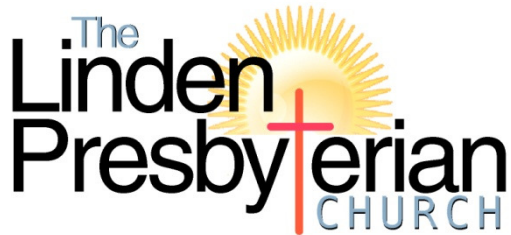
We're willing to follow Jesus as a **teacher**, to believe in him as our **Savior** because we want to go to heaven, but how many times have we sought him to be the **master** of **every** part of our daily lives?

**To give Jesus our 'boat' is to be willing to give him the very area we had always controlled.**

Most of us have one or two areas that are the source of our own personal sense of security. Peter was like this. He was good at being a fisherman. Sure, he had his bad days, but he was strong. He was determined. He had grown up by the sea and he knew the **ways** of the sea. His boat was **not a toy**, but a **tool**, like a hammer is to a carpenter, or a brush to a painter. He knew **fishing**. Sure! This Jesus might have some interesting things to say, and he does seem to give everybody hope for better things to come, but this **boat** is the **“real”** world.

Did you ever come out of Sunday morning worship where you've heard all about **peace** and **love, faith** and **joy**; your spirits are lifted, and you're inspired? Then, someone cuts you off at the corner, and waves at you (but not using the entire hand), and maybe that person even compliments your driving (using rather strange language). How quickly our joy and peace fade because that was **then**, and **this** is **now**. That was the spiritual world; this is **real life!**





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Peter felt like that. But, he must have been attracted to following this teacher because when Jesus finished preaching and asked Peter to try fishing in a different spot, Peter responded with obedience and called him “Master.” That key word, “Obedience,” makes the difference between Jesus being our **teacher**, and being our **Lord**.

As a successful newsman, he seemed to have everything the world could offer. One bright Sunday morning in 1971, while he and his wife were vacationing, they slipped into a little, white, clapboard church in Cove Creek, Arizona.

The pastor announced his subject – baptism. The newsman yawned but became attentive as the minister talked of giving one’s entire life to serve Christ. The newsman mused, “Long years ago, I had asked to be **saved**, but had I offered to **serve**? I realized how much of me I had been holding back.” That morning, the issue became clear and Paul Harvey, one of America’s best-loved broadcasters, surrendered his life to Christ.

A year later, Paul Harvey said, “Though I had learned John 3: 16 early in life, I had never learned the meaning of John 14: 15, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

**When Peter said, “Yes, you can have my boat and I will do what you say,” he was blessed in a way he could understand – fish, and lots of them.**

Can you see the significance of Jesus blessing Peter the way he did? He didn’t start out by requiring Peter to be obedient in fishing for men. Peter would have rebelled at that. “How can I worry about other men when I have fish to catch?” But, with all the sensitivity of a great sculptor, our Lord knew that behind this rough exterior of a man was a heart that would win many for the Kingdom of God. But first, Jesus wanted Peter to know that he cared about what **Peter** was facing, every day, so he helped him to catch fish. Peter was a believer. How could he be otherwise?

Today, we ordain and install new officers to the leadership of this congregation. Like that full moon, today brings changes: new ideas, new light onto topics of discussion, an opportunity for some to take a rest for a while and for others to come back into service on our boards. This is a time when we at LPC are responding to Jesus’ call to take our boat out into the waters a little ways for a little while. Some of us are tired and cranky. Some are entering new territory of service and are anxious. Some have other concerns on our hearts, but are responding to the call. Whatever it is, Jesus is bringing his light into our lives and stepping into our boat. We cannot escape his teaching or his call, just as we cannot escape the claim he lays upon our lives or the benefit we receive from following him.

We have a Lord who likes to go fishing. **Why not let him use your boat?**

Let us pray:

Help us understand that when Jesus calls us to follow, not all of us must leave everything in order to become disciples. But, we **are** all called to allow our lives to be changed in order to provide faithful witness to the Christ who redeems, who heals, and who leads us to steadfast relationships with the Creator and Provider of all. In the name of Jesus, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

