

(Transcription)

October 2012

Word of Life
(First published in February 1983)

‘If you say so, I will let down the nets’ (Lk. 5:5).

Jesus had finished teaching and was sitting in Simon’s boat. Jesus told him and his friends to cast their nets into the sea. Simon pointed out that they had been working all night in vain, but then he added, ‘If you say so, I will let down the nets.’

As soon as the nets were let down, they became so full of fish that they began to break. Some friends came to help him and they filled their boats, too, almost to sinking point. Simon was amazed, and so were his friends, James and John. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and begged him to go away from such a sinner as he. But Jesus told him not to be afraid: from that moment he would be fishing for people. From then on, Simon, James and John became his followers.

This is the account of the miraculous catch of fish, which symbolizes the future mission of the Apostles. Peter’s handling of the situation is a model not only for the other apostles and those who come after them, but also for every Christian.

‘If you say so, I will let down the nets.’

After an unsuccessful night, Peter, who was an expert at fishing, could have just smiled and refused Jesus’ invitation to let down the nets during the day, which was the worst time to do it. Instead he went beyond his own reasoning and trusted Jesus.

This is a typical situation that every believer is called to go through today, too, precisely because of being a believer. Faith is put to the test in a thousand ways.

Following Christ means decision, commitment and perseverance, whereas everything in the world we live in seems to invite us to take things easy, to mediocrity, to just letting things be. The task seems too big, impossible to achieve, a failure before it’s started.

So we need the strength to keep going, to resist the world around us, social pressure, friends, the media.

It’s a hard trial to face day by day, or better still, hour by hour.

But if we face up to it and welcome it, it will serve to mature us as Christians, to bring us to experience that the extraordinary words of Jesus are true, that his promises are fulfilled, that life can be a divine adventure a thousand times more attractive than anything else we could imagine, where we can witness, for instance, that while life in the world is often tough, flat and fruitless, God fills those who follow him with every good thing: he gives the hundredfold in this life as well as eternal life. This is the miraculous catch of fish repeated.

‘If you say so, I will let down the nets.’

How can we put this Word of life into practice?

By making the same choice as Peter: ‘If you say so...’ By having faith in his Word; by not questioning what he asks. On the contrary: basing our behaviour, our way of acting, our life on his Word.

By doing this we will base our existence on something solid and secure, and to our amazement we'll see that, precisely where all human resources are lacking, he intervenes, and that where humanly it is impossible, life is born.

Chiara Lubich