

A GALILEE INTERRUPTION



Be Not Afraid

We think of ourselves as Christians. Yet many of us never really expect God to have any personal dealings with us, this side of death.

We believe in prayer, yet the idea of God making himself known personally to me --- actually breaking in on my life with some kind of miracle, forget it!

So we keep on praying. Asking for stuff. Crying out to God for help when we're in a tight spot. Life rumbles on at its dull pace. Then, in the middle of an ordinary day, there's an interruption. This interruption fouls up your plans for the whole day. It could be an upsetting phone call. Or an unexpected (and unwelcome) visitor. A flat tire.

Suddenly, in the middle of the confusion, something strange happens. It's like a miracle! You're looking at a sign from heaven. You're looking at the hand of God, reaching out to you, speaking to you. Now you are on a journey of faith that you never thought you'd be taking. You have a Friend walking at your side who is none other than the risen Lord Jesus. And now the term "born again" doesn't sound so silly.

It's a new life, directed, not by you, but by the living God.

What I'd like to do in the following paragraphs is try to help us get ready for an encounter with God which is likely to take place in each of our lives in the near future.

Call it a **"Galilee Interruption"** ---

God breaking in on our lives at just the wrong time --- with a miracle!



Even if we've been believers for years, even if we've had revelations from God in the past, we know that there's more to the life of faith than we now have. We also know that nobody can make the light come on, nobody can open the windows of heaven and flood us with the Spirit --- *but God.*

What many of us do not understand is that God is more eager to flood us with the life of heaven than we are to receive this gift. That's how it was with Peter --- until he had his "Galilee Interruption."

Peter was a fisherman. He had a good business going. He was making a decent living. He had a wife whom he loved, a house to live in, plenty of food to eat. Yet there was an emptiness in his soul. Peter did not just brood about this emptiness, as many of us do. He took steps. One day Peter and his brother, Andrew, beached their boat and took the long journey on foot down to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. There they met a man who was able to look right into their souls.

This was their first encounter with Jesus of Nazareth. It established a loose connection with Jesus, a connection like many of us have had with Jesus: loose enough that our life continues in the same rut in which it has always been. We go about our business, perhaps "touching base" with Jesus occasionally. But we do not know him very well. He has no real impact on the way we live, think, speak, handle our money, relate to people.

That's how it was with Peter --- until that morning many days later, back in Galilee. Peter and Andrew had been up all night fishing. They caught nothing. They were washing their nets, getting ready to go home and get some sleep, when along comes a crowd of people behind Jesus. He's looking for a place to teach them.

"Hey Peter! Lend me your boat!"

What can he say, but, "Sure, Lord." Peter and Andrew hold the boat steady while Jesus teaches, eagerly waiting for Jesus to finish, so they can get home to bed. Finally it's over. "Okay, Peter. Now launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." "Master, we worked all night. Didn't catch a thing. We're tired. But, okay, at your word I'll let down the nets." Talk about inconvenience!

Suddenly Peter can't believe what he sees. The nets are so full they're tearing! Peter falls at Jesus' knees in the boat and says, "Get away from me, Lord! I'm a sinful man!"

"Practical Andrew" hollers to James and John to come out with their boat and help with the catch. Jesus says to Peter, "Don't be afraid. From now on you'll be catching men." And from that moment Peter's life is never the same.



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The Great Harvest

(See Matthew 4, Mark 1 and Luke 5)

***And when they brought their boats to land,
they left everything and followed him.***

Luke 5:11

Now it's no longer a loose connection with Jesus, it's the controlling fact of Peter's life.

This did not happen at a revival meeting.

It did not happen in the synagogue.

It did not take place at a prayer meeting.

Peter did not make it happen.

It happened on an ordinary day in an ordinary place.

And it all began, when Jesus said to Peter at the most inconvenient time,

"Lend me your boat."



Lend Me Your Boat

That's exactly what the Lord Jesus keeps doing, to this day, in the lives of those who hunger for God.

Your "Galilee Interruption" and mine will probably not happen in church. Although we need to be there, gathered with other believers, to strengthen each other and be renewed as we worship and give thanks. But the breakthrough we need is more likely to happen, as it did for Peter --- at a moment of inconvenience.

It's like Jesus comes along at just the wrong time.

He catches you when you're tired, when you're discouraged, and says, "*Lend me your boat.*"

It could be a phone call. Or perhaps a neighbor needs a ride to the garage to pick up his car. Maybe it's somebody's birthday party that you do not want to go to.... But before it's over you hear something, you see something, you meet someone...and suddenly God is there! Jesus is more real than he has ever been!

And when you bring your boat to land, you leave everything and follow him.

No matter how many conversions, renewals, awakenings you and I have had in the past, there is at least one more waiting for each of us up the road. This eye-opening, pivotal moment is totally in the hands of God. It will happen when he chooses. Where he chooses. We have no control over when, where or how it will occur.

But we need to make sure that we don't miss it when it comes. Because people do miss their moment of revelation. They missed it in Noah's day. They missed it in Jeremiah's day. They missed it by the thousands in Jesus' day.

In order to be ready for that moment of revelation, that "Galilee Interruption," here are three things we need to pray for:

1. A holy discontent with second-hand faith.
2. An open ear.
3. A sound eye.

First, let's ask the Father to stir up in us a holy discontent with second-hand faith.

Second-hand faith: If I tell you that God spoke to me last night and told me to tell you that you are to move to Chicago, and you take my word for it and begin packing --- that's second-hand faith. You didn't hear God tell you to move to Chicago. You took my word for it.

But how can you be sure that I was sane when I got the message? How do you know I was speaking the truth? How do you know that I wasn't trying to get rid of you? Real faith can never be second-hand. Real faith is based on a direct, living word from God to you.

It's true, God may speak to us through a prophet or a priest or a perfect stranger, or a passage of scripture. God chooses the means. But when it's God speaking to us, we know! Too many people are stumbling through this world, basing their lives on second-hand faith. They're taking somebody's word for it --- the preacher, the evangelist, something they read in a "Christian" book, something they saw on "Christian" TV. Don't be satisfied with anything less than a direct word from the Master to you.

Second, let's ask the Father to open our ear.

....So that we recognize the Shepherd's voice when he speaks.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

That kind of hearing is not something we're born with. It's a gift. Isaiah explains to us exactly how this gift works:

***"Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear,
to hear as those who are taught."***

Isaiah 50:4

Isaiah is describing how God opens his ear every day --- because he makes himself available every day.

"Give me an ear, Lord God, to hear your voice! So that when you tell me to launch out into the deep and let down my nets, I'll know it's you, and not some crackpot."

Finally, let's ask the Father to give us a sound eye.

...An eye that knows the difference between spiritual darkness and light, and chooses the light.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Matthew 6:22-23

"Lord God, give me an eye that can read the signs. So that when my net comes up loaded, I'll know what it means. Give me an eye that can recognize your hand at work....an eye that discerns a broken heart hiding behind a smile. Deliver me, Lord, from a distracted eye, a wandering eye, an unsound eye, an eye that leans toward the darkness!"

Do not make the mistake of thinking that the stuff we read in the Bible all belongs to a different age. "That was okay for those people. They lived way back then! But I'm living in the modern age; it's a different world!"

No it isn't. God is still the same. Jesus has not changed. Back in the days of his flesh Jesus never made a production out of anything he did. He still doesn't. Jesus is always down-to-earth, matter-of-fact. He comes around, often, at the most inconvenient moment.

So here's what we need to pay attention to: One day soon, each of us is likely to be visited by a "Galilee Interruption" like Peter's. At a most inconvenient moment, Jesus will show up and say,

"Lend me your boat."



God grant that we may be ready.

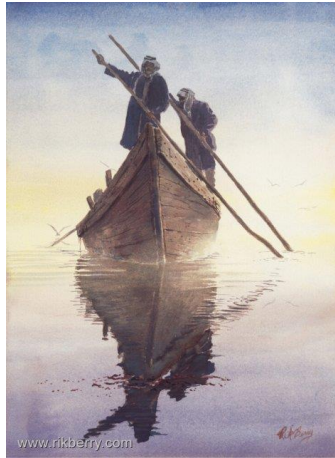
Discontented enough with second-hand faith to be open to the real thing.

Ears open wide enough to hear the Shepherd's voice.

Eyes that can see in an ordinary event, the hand of God at work.

And when they brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Whatever it takes, Lord, get us there!



Fishermen

Prayer- Dear Lord grant that we are ready for the Galilee Interruption in our lives. Open the window of heaven for us, light up our souls so we can see your revelations, fill us with your Spirit, so we reach for and accept the new life you want to pour into us. Give us faith that expects no less than a personal living call from you, ears that can hear it, and eyes that recognize when your hand is at work. Make us willing, brave, and expectant when it is time to let down our nets. Worthy Lord, we lend you our boats, take them they are yours....no matter the inconvenience, the timing.... they are yours. And yes Lord, whatever it takes, get us there, get us to the point where we can leave everything and follow you.

Original: REB...2009

All art: Rik Berry. Rikberry.com



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

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