

THE CALLING OF THE TWELVE
APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY
The Guarantee of the Holy Spirit

September 25, 2016
1st Sunday of Luke
Revision F

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4

In the West, today's Gospel lesson is used either on the 5th Sunday after Pentecost or the 5th Sunday after Epiphany. In the Eastern lectionary, today's Gospel lesson from Matthew 4 is used also for the Second Sunday after Pentecost.

This Sunday's Gospel is about the calling of four of the Twelve and concludes with them leaving everything to follow the Lord. To understand some of the details, we need to understand what fishing was like on the Sea of Galilee and also what it meant for them to leave everything.

Background: The Life of Jesus and the Twelve

This was not the first contact Jesus ever made with Peter, Andrew, James and John. James and John were Jesus' 2nd cousins and had known Him since they were children. Many of the Twelve were with Jesus at the wedding feast at Cana, which occurred just before Passover earlier in the year, which was 27 AD (John 2). They were there when John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the One he came to announce (John 3). At that time, Jesus was baptizing more disciples than John, where Jesus' disciples actually did the baptizing (John 4:2). Prior to that, some of the Twelve had been disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:36-37). They had recently traveled with Jesus back and forth from Galilee and were there with the Samaritan woman by the well in Sychar (John 4). The reading from Luke 5 is set late in the year 27, the first year of Jesus' public ministry, which began just before Passover at Cana. The Twelve were not necessarily full-time disciples yet. They were still working at their trade, perhaps to earn enough that they could travel with Jesus part-time. After they made their decisions to follow Jesus full-time, some of the Holy Women pitched in to help support them (Luke 8:2-3).

Background: Fishing in the Sea of Galilee

Fishing on the Sea of Galilee changed very little between the 1st Century and the middle of the 20th Century. By the 1950's, synthetic fiber nets replaced cotton and linen, motors replaced oars and sails and electronic fish-finders came into use. Not surprisingly, fish hauls increased and indigenous species began to be depleted; new species were introduced.

Types of Fish Present

In the 1st Century, four species of fish were common. The first was a catfish, which was of no economic importance because it was "unclean". From Leviticus 11:9-12, seafood must have fins and scales to be kosher; catfish have no scales.

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The second species was the sardine and represented about half the yearly tonnage taken from the lake. In the story of the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:9-10) and of the 4,000 (Matthew 15:34-38) the fish that were multiplied were sardines. The city of Magdala on the Western shore of the Sea of Galilee was the center of the sardine pickling industry in the region.

A third species of fish was the barbel, a member of the carp family. The largest of the barbels, the Long-headed Barbel, is a nice looking fish resembling a trout that feeds on small fish and mollusks. The barbel can reach 30 inches in length and can weigh 15 pounds.

The fourth species of fish is called the musht today (meaning “comb” in Arabic) and has a long dorsal fin resembling a comb. The musht feed on plankton and congregate in shoals, especially as cold weather approaches. Since the musht is the only large fish found in shoals, this has to be the species involved in several New Testament accounts. The musht can reach 18 inches in length and can weigh 5 pounds.

The musht is a flat white fish and is often prepared by frying (compare John 21:9). The skeleton consists of an easily detached backbone and relatively few small bones, thus making it easy to eat. Since it is one of the tastiest fish in the lake, it has been called St. Peter’s fish from an account in Matthew 17:24-27. Peter paid the Temple tax for Jesus by catching a fish (with a baited hook) and taking a coin from the fish’s mouth.

There are two different opinions on why a fish might have a shekel coin in its mouth. Gower stated¹ that the fish involved was the tilapa, also called the musht today. Tilapa carry their eggs and later the young fish in their mouths. Even when they go in search of food for themselves, the young still return to the protection of the mother’s mouth. When the mother fish wishes to keep them out, she will pick up an object (a bright one, preferably) and keep it in her mouth to prevent their return. In this case, Gower suggested that the fish had picked up a shekel coin.

However, Peter caught the fish with a baited hook; musht eat plankton and wouldn’t respond to bait. Mendel Nun therefore suggested² that Peter must have caught a barbel, which is a trout-like fish that would respond to a baited hook. Local traditions, he said, later applied the name “St. Peter’s fish” to the more popular eating fish. Nun doesn’t mention what a barbel would be doing with a coin in its mouth. This miracle was so great that it would be a small extra feature if it were a musht that responded to Peter’s hook.

Fishing Methods

Three types of nets were referred to in both New and Old Testaments. These types of nets have been used for thousands of years and require much different techniques.

The first type, a dragnet (Greek *sagaynay*), is the oldest type and is shown in Figure 1. Typical dragnets or seines were up to 1,000 feet long and 25 feet high. It was spread out by boat 100 yards or more from shore and then hauled to shore by a team of 16 men. Sinkers kept the bottom of the net down and floats kept the top on the surface. When the net reached the shore,

¹ Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, Moody Press, p. 131, Chicago, 1998.

² Mendel Nun, “Cast Your Net Upon the Waters”, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec. 1993, pp. 46-56.

the fish were sorted and the catfish were thrown away. This is the type of net referred to in Matthew 13:47-50. This net couldn't be used if the shoreline was rocky or had kelp growing near the shore.

A second type of net is a cast net or bag net (Greek *amphilblestron*) and is shown in Figure 2. This type is circular, about 25 feet in diameter and has lead weights all around the outer edge. After the net is thrown and sinks to the bottom, it is either retrieved by a system of cords or by a diver. When Peter and Andrew were called (Matthew 4:18), they were using this net, perhaps catching sardines. When Peter and Andrew left their nets (Matthew 4:20), they left the third type of net: their trammel nets.

A third type of net is called a trammel net (Greek *diktuon*). This type of net has three layers as shown in Figure 3 and was used only at night. It was not useful during the day because the fish could see the weaving and avoid it. Modern synthetic fiber, which is invisible under water, has made trammel nets useful today in the daytime. The trammel net was spread in a crescent shape roughly parallel to the shoreline. The boat that laid the net then quietly maneuvered toward shore between the net and the shore. All of a sudden the fishermen in the boat started making racket by beating the water with oars or stamping on the bottom of the boat. The frightened fish headed for deep water — right into the net and became entangled.

The trammel net was lowered and hauled up perhaps a dozen times during the night. Early in the morning the net was washed, repaired and hung up to dry, thus preparing for the next night's work.

A variation of the trammel net usage is called the veranda method³ and is used during the daytime.

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11, Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20

Implications of the Miracle of the Fish

The type of net referred to in Luke 5 is the trammel net. Peter, Andrew, James and John had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. Jesus arrived early in the morning while they were finishing up using bag nets (Matthew 4:18) and He taught from Peter's boat for a while. After Jesus stopped teaching, He said to Peter, "Launch out to deep water and let down the (trammel) nets" which had already been washed and hung up to dry. Peter protested that this was pointless: the nets weren't useful in deep water, or in the daytime and this would require re-washing the nets; but he did so anyway. Having done so, Peter encountered such a catch that (1) the net started to break, (2) the boat almost sank due to the weight of the catch, and (3) Peter had to call James and John over to help, and filled both boats. The Gospel lesson account was especially remarkable because the fish can see the nets during the daytime and can easily escape entanglement.

Comparing a similar catch they encountered under similar circumstances following the Resurrection, they caught 153 large fish (John 21:1-12). These fish from John 21:11 were

³ For more information, see [Biblical Archaeology Review](#), Nov./Dec. 1993, pp. 46-56.

probably the musht since they were caught near shore (100 yards out); the haul was then around 600 pounds of fish, figuring an average of four pounds each.

Since the catch in our Gospel lesson was taken in deep water (Luke 5:4), it was probably a school of large barbel. In John 21, the 153 fish are referred to as “a multitude of fish” (Luke 5:6) and “full of large fish” (Luke 5:11). The quantity of the catch is referred to as “a great number of fish” (Luke 5:6). The net did not break in John 21 (although the catch was large) but the net did start breaking in Luke 5. If there were also around 150 fish in the Luke 5 catch, this would represent about a ton of fish, figuring 10-15 pounds per barbel. To get a better idea of the quantity of fish, these boats were the same ones that the Twelve rowed across the Sea of Galilee during a storm in Mark 4:36-38. In order to work at night to lay nets that are hundreds of feet long, the boat was a larger-than-average rowboat. There was probably room for at least six adults plus space for Jesus to sleep. This means that the boat could probably carry over 1,000 pounds of fish plus two crewmembers. Since both boats were filled to the point of almost sinking (Luke 5:7) this represented quite a haul! Especially since a good night’s catch (working all night, letting down the nets 12-15 times) was only about 200 pounds.

Peter, Andrew, James, John and the rest of the crew were understandably astonished at the size of the catch especially coming in the daytime. Peter’s remark “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!” is reminiscent of that of Isaiah after having seen the Lord in His temple (Isaiah 6:1-7). Many times, the closer we get to the Lord, the more we realize our own sinfulness. From the Lord’s reply, “Do not be afraid”, there was more than just simple surprise but some fear and trembling also at the magnitude of the Lord’s miracle. One might note Peter’s progression over the course of the Gospel lesson from calling Jesus “Master” (Luke 5:5) to calling Him “Lord” (Luke 5:8).

Some of the Twelve had been called earlier, but as disciples, not as Apostles. From the Gospel account, they wouldn’t just go out into deep water and let down their nets for a stranger, especially being tired after fishing all night and just having finished cleaning their nets. We get some insight into the earlier calling of these same four Apostles by Jesus (John 1:43-51), where they were still part-time fishermen at that time. After the calling of today’s Gospel lesson, they left everything (Luke 5:11) and were soon sent out by themselves to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons (Luke 9:1-10). The earlier calling (John 1:43-51) is used in the Eastern lectionary for the First Sunday in Lent and focuses on the calling of Nathanael. The calling of the rest of the Twelve Apostles took place shortly after today’s Gospel lesson where the Lord put His team all together (Luke 6:12-16).

Tertullian pointed out⁴ that the Prophet Jeremiah had predicted the calling of the fishermen as Apostles. When the fishermen left their nets, they understood that this was what Jeremiah had predicted.

“Out of so many kinds of occupations, why did Christ have such respect for that of fishermen, as to select from it for Apostles Simon, his brother and the sons of Zebedee? For this account was not written down just to bring out Peter’s trembling at the very large catch of fish, where the Lord’s response was, ‘Do not be

⁴ Tertullian, The Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 4, 9.

afraid! From now on you will catch men' (Luke 5:10). By saying this, He suggested to them the meaning of the prophecy, that it was He who by Jeremiah had foretold, 'Behold, I will send many fishermen; and they shall fish them' (Jeremiah 16:16), that is, men. When they left their boats and followed Him, they understood that it was He who had begun to accomplish what He had declared by Jeremiah".

The Humility of the Apostles

The beginning of the work of the Twelve Apostles was characterized by a deep humility and awe at what the Master could do. This kind of humility was also characteristic throughout the Early Church where people did good works without seeking credit for it. John Chrysostom described⁵ Peter's humble words, "Depart from me" (Luke 5:8), as the foundation of a blessed walk with God. As we apply this attitude to all aspects of our life and work, we will find ourselves praised by God and man.

"Let us beware of saying anything about ourselves, for this renders us both odious with men and abominable to God. For this reason, the greater the good works we do, the less let us say of ourselves; this being the way to reap the greatest praise both with men and with God. Demand not a reward that you may receive a reward. Confess yourself to be saved by grace, that He may profess Himself a debtor to you; and not for your good works only, but also for such rightness of mind".

"For when we do good works, we have Him debtor not for our good works only; but when we do not think we have done any good work (), then this disposition itself is equivalent to good works. For should this be absent, good works will not appear great! In the same way, when we have servants (Luke 17:10), we should most approve them when, after having performed all their service with good will, they do not think they have done anything great. It was in this way that the centurion said, 'I am not fit that you should enter under my roof'; because of this, he became worthy, and was 'marveled at' above all Jews (Matthew 8:8-10). In the same manner, Paul said, 'I am the least of the apostles' (1 Corinthians 15:9); because of this he came to be regarded first of all. So likewise John the Baptist: 'I am not fit to loose the latchet of His shoe' (Mark 1:7). Because of this he was the 'friend of the Bridegroom' (John 3:29), and the hand which he affirmed to be unworthy to touch His shoes, this did Christ draw onto His own head⁶. So Peter said, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man' (Luke 5:8); because of this he became a foundation of the Church".

"For nothing is so acceptable to God as to number one's self with the last. This is a first principle of all practical wisdom. For he that is humbled, and bruised in heart, will not be vainglorious, wrathful, envious of his neighbor, and will not harbor any other passion. For if a man, by mourning for things pertaining to this life, drives out all the diseases of his soul, much more will he, who mourns for sins, enjoy the blessing of self-restraint".

⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, III, 8.

⁶ Alluding to the laying on of hands at Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3:14-15.

John Chrysostom also stated⁷ that our life is like living in a foreign country, where the Lord's Presence is our real home. If someone were to repay us a debt, it would be better for us to receive it at home, not away from home. Yet even in this life we will receive a hundred-fold. The Apostles gave up everything, and the result was that the world opened their homes to them.

“If anyone were to owe you gold, while you were staying in a foreign country, and you had neither servants, nor any means to convey it across to the place of your abode, if he were to promise to pay you the loan, you would ask him to have it paid down not in the foreign land, but at home. In the same fashion, do you think it would be right to receive those spiritual and unutterable things in this world? This would be madness! For if you received them here, you would have them corruptible certainly; but if you wait for that time, He will repay you them incorruptible. If you receive here, you get lead; but if you get them there, it would be refined gold. Still He does not deprive you of the goods of this life. For along with that promise He has placed another also, to the following effect. Everyone that loves the things of the world to come, shall receive ‘a hundred-fold in this life present, and shall inherit eternal life’ (Matthew 19:29). If then we do not receive the hundred-fold, it is ourselves that are to blame for not lending to Him, Who can give so much; for all who have given have received much, even though they gave but little. For what great thing did Peter give? A broken net (Luke 5:6, 11), and a rod and a hook only! Yet still God opened to him the houses of the world, and spread before him land and sea, and all men invited him to their home. Or rather they sold what was their own, and brought it to the Apostles’ feet, not so much as putting it into their hands, so great was the honor they paid him”.

The significance of the Twelve Apostles is brought out by the question the Twelve asked Jesus: “What shall they have after having left all to follow him?” (Matthew 19:27) Jesus replied that they “will sit on twelve thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

When Jesus first called the four Apostles (John 1:42), He prophesied that Peter would be called Cephas, meaning a rock or stone. Cephas is a name that comes from the Chaldean word “*kafē*” meaning rock; “*petra*” is the Greek counterpart meaning a large rock.

A little over a year after the four were called, following the death of John the Baptist, Jesus made His famous statement about the Church and how the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). This was in response to Peter's confession (Matthew 16:17), which is the “rock” that Jesus had spoken of earlier. Jesus went on to say that He would give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Twelve. Whatever they bind on earth shall be, having been bound in heaven. And whatever they loose on earth shall be, having been loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). The Twelve, who have established the foundation of the Church (Revelation 21:14) with Christ as the Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20), have already begun to judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel and have been doing so now for almost two millennia. The Church today is responsible before God to maintain the connection with the Twelve and the Cornerstone in order

⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, VII, v. 31.

that this just judgment may continue for our benefit⁸. In doing this, the Church helps us to focus on loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and strength, and our neighbor as our self. And by doing that, we will obtain a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ as we pray in the various services.

⁸ This theme occurs again in mid-July when the Orthodox lectionary remembers the Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils.

Figure 1
Use of a Dragnet or Seine

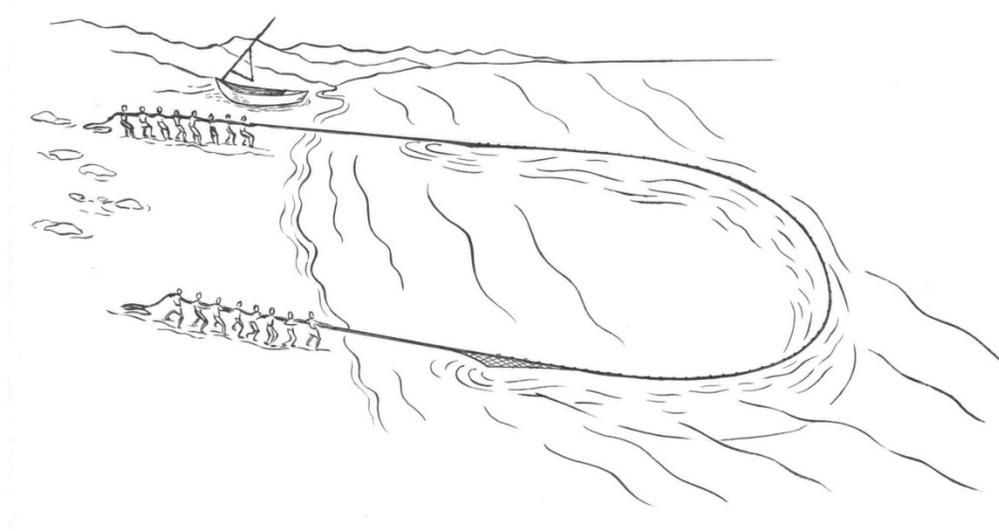
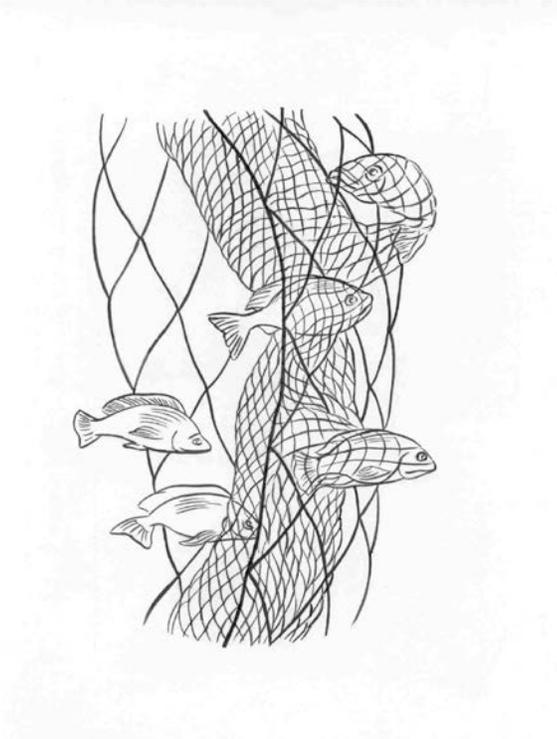


Figure 2
Use of a Cast Net



Figure 3
The Webbing of a Trammel Net



APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

The Guarantee of the Holy Spirit

September 25, 2016
14th Sunday after Pentecost
Revision D

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4

Today's Epistle reading is used in the West for the 5th Sunday in Lent. There are two themes contained in today's Epistle Reading: (1) the Gift of the Holy Spirit in us as a guarantee of more that is to come, and (2) the Apostolic authority of the Apostle Paul in dealing with the problems in Corinth, and why he had to do it the way he did.

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Background for the Church in Corinth

Paul founded the Church in Corinth about 51 AD toward the end of his Second Missionary Journey and stayed there a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Silas was traveling with Paul at the time along with Luke, Timothy and Andronicus, where all but Paul were of the original Seventy. Luke was left behind⁹ to oversee the Macedonian Churches. Silas was left behind¹⁰ in Corinth and was later Bishop of Corinth.

Before Paul arrived in Corinth for an extended stay again in late 55 AD, he wrote four letters to Corinth (two of which are lost) and paid the Church one brief visit. (Details of this will be covered on the next page.) In the interval from 52 to 55 AD, the Apostles Apollos and Peter visited Corinth. Apollos was one of the original Seventy, but must have been back home in Alexandria at the time of Pentecost. He knew only the baptism of John in 53 AD when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Aquila and Priscilla, the overseers Paul left in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), straightened Apollos out and also wrote to the Churches in Achaia (Athens and Corinth) to

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⁹ Note the switch in tenses from "we" to "they" and back to "we" in Acts 16:16, 17:1, 20:6.

¹⁰ Note that we never hear from Silas again traveling with Paul after he arrived in Corinth, Acts 18:5.

receive Apollos when he arrived (Acts 18:27). Apollos proceeded to help out by vigorously refuting the Jews publicly; showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). In his earlier letter, (1 Corinthians 3:8), Paul said that he and Apollos are one; that is, of one mind in the work of establishing the Churches.

The same can be said for the relationship between Paul and Peter. Peter visited Corinth in the early 50's AD on his way to Rome. He obviously made a big impression in Corinth since there were factions that had developed by 55 AD (1 Corinthians 1:12) centered on Paul, Apollos, Peter and Christ! On Peter's way to Corinth, Paul met him in Macedonia and together they ordained four bishops:

Olympas	Philippi
Jason	Thessalonica
Silas	Corinth
Herodion	Patras (SW Greece)

Paul worked with at least 60 of the members of the 70 at some point. Many of them like Luke, Timothy, and Titus traveled with him a lot. In addition, Paul had some contact with Peter, John, Andrew and Philip.

Apostolic Discipline

To understand the Epistle lesson, one needs to understand the sequence of Paul's four letters to Corinth, since the Epistle lesson refers to the latter part of this sequence. In addition to the four letters¹¹ Paul wrote to Corinth, he made one brief visit that isn't mentioned in Acts. This information can be gleaned by carefully reading the two letters we have. The sequence went like this:

1. From Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul wrote a letter to Corinth regarding morality and church discipline. Paul refers to this letter in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. This letter has been lost over the centuries.
2. While still in Ephesus, Paul wrote a 2nd letter (which we know as 1 Corinthians) to address negative reports such as a man having his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5:1), schisms (1 Corinthians 1:12), heresy (1 Corinthians 15:12), etc.
3. Learning of further immorality in Corinth, Paul traveled there (from Ephesus). Timothy had been sent ahead and may have carried the 2nd letter. This visit is referred to as the "sorrowful visit" in our Epistle reading (2 Corinthians 2:1). Later, Paul stated that his up coming visit would be his 3rd visit (2 Corinthians 13:1). From Acts, his up coming visit would be only the 2nd visit to Corinth, thus demanding another brief visit.
4. Returning to Ephesus, probably with Timothy, Paul wrote a 3rd letter. This is the "sorrowful letter" referred to in our Epistle reading (2 Corinthians 2:4ff; also 2 Corinthians 7:8). This 3rd letter was delivered by Titus and received by the Corinthians with fear and trembling (2 Corinthians 7:13-15). This letter has also been lost.
5. Before Titus returned, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia en route to Corinth. In Macedonia, Paul met Titus who was returning from Corinth. Paul was greatly encouraged by Titus to

¹¹ Only two of Paul's letters to Corinth are extant today; the other two have been lost. We know of the existence of the other two letters from Paul's reference to them in the two letters that we have.

hear that Corinth had obeyed Paul's instructions. From Macedonia, Paul then wrote a 4th letter (which we know as 2 Corinthians) defending his apostleship and aiming for reconciliation of all the factions. The man who had his father's wife had by then repented and Paul urged them to forgive him and receive him back (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

We get a glimpse of how Paul first came to Corinth: "Not in persuasive words but in demonstration of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). These demonstrations of power are described as, "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out from them" (Acts 19:11-12)

Paul's demonstrations of power were so prevalent that a cottage industry developed among some itinerant Jewish exorcists. They began exorcising evil spirits by "the Jesus whom Paul preaches". This worked for a while; eventually they ran into one demon that answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" The demon-possessed man then "leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded". When word of this got out, "fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 19:13-17).

The above two accounts occurred in Ephesus on Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey; we can assume something similar occurred in Corinth a few years earlier when he started the Church there.

Thus, when Paul wrote concerning the man who had his father's wife, and Paul instructed them to deliver the man over to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5) for the destruction of his flesh (in order that his spirit might be saved on Judgment Day), this was not taken lightly. This was apostolic discipline and was taken seriously. Our Epistle lesson, then, is a snapshot taken toward the end of this time of apostolic discipline.

About 40 years later, Clement, the 3rd Bishop of Rome, wrote a letter to the Corinthians, where similar problems had resurfaced. The Corinthians had evidently corrected their problems after Paul wrote to them, but the next generation in Corinth had forgotten where they had been. Clement wrote¹²:

"Every kind of honor and happiness was bestowed upon you, and then was fulfilled that which is written, 'My beloved did eat and drink, and was enlarged and became fat, and kicked' (Deuteronomy 32:15). From this flowed ambition and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and disorder, war and captivity. So the worthless rose up against the honored, those of no reputation against such as were renowned, the foolish against the wise, the young against those advanced in years. For this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as everyone has abandoned the fear of God, and has become blind in His faith. Everyone neither walks in the ordinances of His appointment, nor acts a part becoming a Christian, but walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy, by which death itself entered into the world".

¹² Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 3.

The Need for Discipline

The Epistle lesson begins (2 Corinthians 1:21,22) with the words: “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and gives us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment”. John Chrysostom comments¹³ as follows:

“From the past, He establishes the future. For it is He that establishes us in Christ (i.e. who does not allow us to be shaken from the faith which is in Christ); and He that anointed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts; how shall He not give us the future things?”

“For if He gave the principles and the foundations, and the root and the fount, (i.e. the true knowledge of Him, the partaking of the Spirit), how shall He not give the things that come of these: if for the sake of these, those are given, much more will He supply those. And if to such as were enemies He gave these, much more when now made friends will He ‘freely give’ to them those. Wherefore He said not simply ‘the Spirit’, but named ‘earnest’, (or down payment) that from this you might have a good hope of the whole as well. For if He did not purpose to give the whole, He would never have chosen to give ‘the earnest’ and to waste it without object or result.”

“And what is, anointed, and sealed? He gave the Spirit by Whom He did both these things, making at once prophets and priests and kings; for in old times these three sorts were anointed. But we have now not one of these dignities, but all three preeminently. For we are both to enjoy a kingdom and are made priests by offering our bodies for a sacrifice, (for, said He, ‘present your members a living sacrifice unto God’ - Romans 12:1) and together with this we are constituted prophets too: for what things ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard,’ (1 Corinthians 2:9) these have been revealed unto us”.

With all this given to us, it would be truly tragic if it were all wasted because we fell into sin and decadence. Consider Judas Iscariot: He was sent out with the rest of the Twelve to heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead (Matthew 10:1-23). But yet he was also incorrigible as a thief (John 12:6) and wasted his gifts and was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:16-26). Paul knew all about this firsthand, being a Pharisee, and was involved in the decision to use Judas’ 30 pieces of silver to buy the potter’s field after Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-10).

Paul knew he couldn’t let the situation continue downhill in Corinth. He knew that the “Judases” in Corinth would create another truly tragic situation if he didn’t act quickly and strongly. Therefore he tried to get them to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts. In the Epistle reading, note how Paul didn’t lord it over the Corinthians but tried to encourage them as much as possible to work things out themselves by hearing the Lord speak to them. Paul could have marched in there and really kicked some butt; but he didn’t. That would make Paul the head of the Church, not Christ. Note also Paul’s love for Corinth and his agony over having to correct them.

We note the words Paul used to describe the Church in Corinth: God has

- Established us (2 Corinthians 1:21)

¹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, III, 4.

- Anointed us (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- Sealed us (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- Given us the Spirit as a down payment (2 Corinthians 1:22)

One can think of this as a first installment on eternal life. The best is yet to come, but there is an urgent need of getting ourselves ready.

Paul's Love and Concern for Corinth

Paul wrote, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you” (2 Corinthians 2:4). He wanted so much for the Corinthians to know and understand what the Lord’s ways were for them, but he also knew that he couldn’t force it upon them. They had to take ownership of this or it wouldn’t work.

John Chrysostom stated¹⁴ that we, as Christians, cannot make men better by force, only by persuasion. If we attempt to do so by force, we only make men worse. This is what we see Paul doing in Corinth: persuading them to move toward godliness, and refraining from the use of force.

“But in the case of human infirmities, it is not easy in the first place for a man to discern them, for no man ‘knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him’ (1 Corinthians 2:11). How then can any one apply the remedy for the disease when he does not know the character, often being unable to understand it even when he should be sickened with it himself? And even when it becomes clear, it causes him yet more trouble; for it is not possible to doctor all men with the same authority with which the shepherd treats his sheep. For in this case it is necessary to bind and to restrain from food, and to use the knife; but the reception of the treatment depends on the will of the patient, not of him who applies the remedy. For this was perceived by Paul ‘Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy’ (2 Corinthians 1:24). For Christians above all men are not permitted to correct by force the failings of those who sin. Secular judges indeed, when they have captured malefactors under the law, show their authority to be great, and prevent them even against their will from following their own devices. But in our case the wrongdoer must be made better, not by force, but by persuasion. Authority of this kind for the restraint of sinners has not been given us by law, nor, if it had been given, should we have any desire for the exercise of our power, since God rewards those who abstain from evil by their own choice, not of necessity. Consequently much skill is required that our patients may be induced to submit willingly to the treatment prescribed by the physicians; and not only this, but that they may be grateful for the cure. For if anyone, when he is bound, becomes restless, he makes the problem worse; if he should pay no attention to the words which cut like steel, he inflicts another wound by means of this contempt, and the intention to heal only becomes the occasion of a worse wound. For it is not possible for anyone to cure a man by compulsion against his will”.

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood, II, 3.

Paul cared for Corinth so much that he kept checking in on them, and sent his best worker (Timothy) to look in on them. Timothy also cared for Corinth a great deal. The Corinthians went about their lives expecting that Paul wouldn't find out what they were doing; they didn't realize that a number of people kept informing him. John Chrysostom stated¹⁵

“Paul did not learn all things by revelation of the Spirit, and for this we can see some reason. If the disciples in Corinth had believed that it were so, they would have lost all sense of shame, but now from expectation of concealment, they were more easily corrected. When Timothy came he found their normal state of things, and reported it to Paul. Paul seems to have acted in like sort in his own person, when he delayed his coming to the Corinthians, that they might repent; therefore he wrote, ‘to spare you I delayed to come to Corinth’ (2 Corinthians 1:23). For his love was shown not simply in reporting his own state, but in his desire to learn of theirs; for this is the part of a soul, which has a care of others, which takes thought for them, and is always wrestling for them. At the same time too, he honored them by sending Timothy. ‘For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state’ (Philippians 2:20); that is, none of those whose care is like mine, none who ‘will care truly for you’. Had he no one of those who were with him? No one likeminded, that is, who has yearnings and takes thought for you as I do. No one would lightly choose, he means, to make so long a journey for this purpose. Timothy is the one with me who loves you? For I might have sent others, but there was none like him. This then is that like-mindedness, to love the disciples as the master loves them. ‘Who will truly care for you’, that is, as a father. ‘For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ’ (Philippians 2:21), their own comfort, their own safety”.

John Chrysostom also noted¹⁶ that godly sorrow produces repentance. Paul had considerable sorrow over the events in Corinth, and Chrysostom admired Paul more for his love for Corinth in the face of this than for his holding together under persecution.

“Saul was the first king, and you know how he perished, after experiencing numberless ills. After him, David, Solomon, Abijah, Hezekiah, and Josiah likewise! It is not possible, without affliction and toil, without dejection of mind, to pass through the present life. But let us be receptive, not for such things as these, for which kings grieve, but for those things that give us great gain. ‘For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, a repentance which brings no regret’ (2 Corinthians 7:10). On account of these things we should be grieved; thus was Paul grieved for sinners, thus did he weep. ‘For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you in many tears’ (2 Corinthians 2:4). For when he had no cause of grief on his own account, he did so on account of others. Or rather he accounted those things to be his own, at least as far as grief went. Others were offended, and he burned; others were weak, and he was weak. Such grief as this is good, and is superior to all worldly joy. He who so grieves I prefer to all men, or rather the Lord Himself pronounces them blessed, who so grieve, who are sympathizing. I admire Paul for the dangers by which he died daily, yet this still more captivates me. For it came of a soul devoted to God, and full of

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, vv 19-21.

¹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, XV, Moral.

affection, from the love which Christ Himself seeks, from a brotherly and a fatherly sympathy, or rather, of one greater than both these. Thus we should be affected, thus weep; such tears as these are full of great delight; such grief as this is the ground of joy”.

Jerome stated¹⁷ that good men have always sorrowed for the sins of others, and this is what Paul did with the Corinthians.

“Lot of old desired to rescue his wife as well as his two daughters, and refused to leave blazing Sodom and Gomorrah until he was himself half-on-fire; he tried to lead forth one who was bound by her past sins. But in her despair she lost her composure, and looking back, became a monument of an unbelieving soul. Yet, as if to make up for the loss of a single woman, Lot’s glowing faith set free the whole city of Zoar. In fact when he left the dark valleys in which Sodom lay and came to the mountains the sun rose upon him as he entered Zoar, or the little City; so-called because the little faith that Lot possessed. Though unable to save greater places, he was at least able to preserve smaller ones. For one who had gone so far astray as to live in Gomorrah could not, all at once, reach the high ground where Abraham, the friend of God, entertained God and His angels. For it was in Egypt that Joseph fed his brothers (Genesis 42:1-8), and when the bride speaks to the Bridegroom her cry is, ‘Tell me where you feed, where you make your flock to rest at noon’ (Song of Solomon 1:7). Good men have always sorrowed for the sins of others. Samuel lamented for Saul because he neglected to treat the ulcers of pride with the balm of penitence (1 Samuel 15:35). And Paul wept for the Corinthians who refused to wash out with their tears the stains of fornication” (2 Corinthians 2:4).

The Holy Spirit as a Guarantee

Paul stated, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). What does it mean, we might ask, to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee? Tertullian addressed¹⁸ this by contrasting our flesh with our soul.

“The flesh, even now in this life, has the Holy Spirit by faith. The question remains to be asked how it is that the animate (or natural) body is sown? (1 Corinthians 15:43) The flesh has received the Spirit, but only its ‘guarantee’ (2 Corinthians 1:22), whereas the soul has received, not the guarantee, but the full possession. Therefore the soul has the name of *animate* (or natural) body, expressly because of the higher substance of the soul in which it is sown. The flesh is destined afterward to become, through the full possession of the spirit, the spiritual body, in which it is raised again. The body is more commonly called

¹⁷ Jerome, Letter to Rusticus, CXXII, 1.

¹⁸ Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, II, vi, 53.

after the substance with which it is fully furnished, than after that of which it has yet but a sprinkling?”

John Chrysostom gave¹⁹ a very flowery description of the Lord’s work in remaking man and giving him the Holy Spirit. It gives us a good perspective on His kindness, His purpose and His goal. He describes the guarantee of the Holy Spirit, both the part we have now and the part that we shall receive later.

“When Christ came, He found the harlot, i.e. human nature, full of sores, brutalized, and oppressed by devils; how did He act? He drew near to her. She saw Him and ran away. He called the Magi saying, ‘Why are you afraid? I am not a judge, but a physician. I came not to judge the world but to save the world’. The immediate first fruits of His coming were wise men (Matthew 2:1-2). The publican came and was turned into an evangelist (Matthew 9:9); the Canaanite woman came and partook of his loving kindness (Matthew 15:21-28). This is the mark of one who loves, not demanding an account of sins, but forgiving transgressions and offenses. He took the sinner and espouses her to Himself. He gave her a signet ring: the Holy Spirit. Paul said, ‘Now He who establishes us with you is God, who has also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee’ (1 Corinthians 1:21-22). Next He said, ‘Did I not plant you in a garden?’ She said, ‘yes, but the devil came and cast me out of the garden’. Now I am planting you in Myself, and I will uphold you. And so the Lord carried our nature: and the devil approached and was beaten. ‘I am the root, you are the branches’ (John 15:5); so He planted her in Himself. ‘But’, she said, ‘I am a sinner and unclean’. ‘Let this not trouble you; I am a physician. For observe: He took dust from the earth and made man (Genesis 2:7); but the devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remolded, and recast him in baptism, no longer to be of clay, but of a harder material. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire’ (Matthew 3:11). He was baptized with water that he might be remodeled, with fire that he might be hardened”.

“The kings of the earth and rulers, when they have treasures, prepare large houses, having strong walls, bars, doors, guards, and bolts in order that the treasure may be preserved. But Christ did the contrary; He placed the treasure not in a stone vessel but in an earthen one. The vessel is weak but the treasure is great; the vessel does not preserve the treasure, but the treasure preserves the vessel. The devil has come, the world has come, multitudes have come, and yet they have not stolen the treasure. The vessel has been scourged, yet the treasure was not betrayed; it has been drowned in the sea, yet the treasure was not shipwrecked; it has died, yet the treasure survives. You all know that the guarantee is a small part of the whole; let me tell you how. Someone goes to buy a house at a great price, and he says ‘give me a guarantee that I may have confidence’. Or one takes a wife for himself; he arranges about dowry and property, and he says ‘give me a guarantee’. Observe: in all covenants there is a guarantee. Since Christ made a covenant with us (for He was about to take us as a bride), he also assigned a dowry to us not of money, but of blood. But this dowry,

¹⁹ John Chrysostom, Two Homilies on Eutropius, II, 11-13, 16.

which He assigns, is the giving of good things ‘such as eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither has entered into the heart of man’ (1 Corinthians 2:9). He assigned these for the dowry: immortality, praise with the angels, release from death, freedom from sin, the inheritance of a kingdom, etc. Great was my dowry! He came to take the harlot (i.e. human nature), for so I call her, unclean as she was, that you might understand the love of the bridegroom. ‘Have you lost paradise? Take it back! Have you lost your beauty? Take it back; take all these things. But yet the dowry was not given to me here’.

“Why does He not give us the dowry here? ‘It will be given when you have come to My Father, when you have entered the royal palace. I came to you not that you should stay here but that I might take you and return. Don’t seek the dowry here; all depends on hope and faith’. Does He give us anything in this world? We receive a guarantee that we may trust Him concerning that, which is to come; that is, we receive pledges and betrothal gifts. Therefore Paul said, ‘I have espoused you’ (2 Corinthians 11:2). As gifts of betrothal, God has given us present blessings; they are a guarantee of the future, but the full dowry stays in the other world. The full dowry includes immortality; no sorrow; no poverty; no darkness, only light; liberty; complete health; righteousness, without sin or envy. We must wait for these in order that our fellow servants also may be saved. Our guarantee is the Holy Spirit, the supply of the Spirit. He gave the signet ring to the Apostles, saying ‘take this and give it to all’ (Matthew 28:19). The ring is portioned out, and yet is not divided”.

“The dowry of the bride was divided into two portions consisting of things present and things to come. The things present are those seen, given, experienced and belonging to this present life. The things to come are things heard, things taken on trust, and things to come after the resurrection. The former things you see, the latter you hear. The former things are great and surpassing all understanding. ‘Listen daughter and behold; hear the latter things and see the former that you may not think that you are to depend only on hope, faith and the future’. I give some things, and I promise others; the latter depend on hope, but receive the others as pledges, as a guarantee, as a proof of the remainder. I promised you a kingdom, and let present things be the ground of your trust in Me. He promised us a kingdom, and He has given us the greater part: the Lord of the kingdom. He promised us the resurrection of the body and He has given us the greater part: release from sins. Since sin brought forth death, by destroying the parent (i.e. sin), He shall also destroy the offspring. He has dried up the root, and shall also destroy the produce. What do I see? Dead men raised to life, lepers cleansed, the sea restrained, the paralytic braced up into vigor, paradise opened, loaves poured forth in abundance, sins remitted, the lame man leaping, the robber made a citizen of Paradise, the publican turned into an evangelist. Hear and see. Accept from present things a proof of the others”.

Basil, on the other hand, describes²⁰ the lot of those who reject the “Guarantee” and grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways. They will be deprived of their “dowry”, and it will be given to others.

“Anyone who carefully uses his reason will find that the Holy Spirit will have a function to discharge, even at the moment of the expected appearance of the Lord from heaven; in the day of His revelation, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him. For who is so ignorant as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion, as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are ‘many mansions’ (John 14:2) in the Father’s house, that is, differences of dignities; for as ‘star differs from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead’ (1 Corinthians 15:41-42). Those that were sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30), and purely preserve the first fruits, which they received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words ‘well done you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things’ (Matthew 25:21-23). In like manner they, which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others. They shall even be wholly cut in half (Matthew 24:51), the cutting in half meaning complete separation from the Spirit. The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; nor is the soul cut in two. The cutting in half is the separation forever of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not allow mixture with the unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which follows on their conversion. But then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His grace. For this reason ‘In Hell there is none that makes confession; in death none that remembered God’ (Psalm 6:5 LXX), because the aid of the Spirit is no longer present. Thus, the judgment cannot be accomplished without the Holy Spirit. The Word points out that He is Himself the prize of the righteous, when instead of the guarantee is given that which is perfect. The first condemnation of sinners is when they are deprived of that which they seem to have”.

²⁰ Basil, On the Spirit, XVI, 40.