



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 1

The Bible is full of characters like Peter who seem to be a bit of a mess. He was a strange mix of doubt and boasting, eagerness and insecurity. But when Jesus told him to launch out into the deep and drop his nets again (after an evening of fishing failure), Peter went along with Jesus' command. The nets were filled beyond capacity. Jesus seemed determined to use the unlikely character of Peter to build his church. In this current series, Rascals Who God Uses, we might discover that God wants to use us who are a bit rascally too.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 5.1-4 (ESV)

*On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, <sup>2</sup> and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup> And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."*

- The fishermen that Jesus encountered were going about their normal routine after a night of unsuccessful fishing. Their nets were empty, but still they have to be washed and put away until the next evening. It was an ordinary day until Jesus stepped into a boat and pushed out into the water. His teaching was amplified off of the water and into the ears and hearts of the people on the shore. We don't know the content of this particular teaching, but it was compelling enough to lead to a tentative response. The response was set up by the command, "Put out into the deep..." **Have you ever felt yourself drawn into "the deep" by God? What places or situations would you consider to be deep waters?**

- *O God who calls His people into new depths and opportunities, open my ears and my heart to your teaching and your call. Prepare me for the abundant life you are preparing me for. Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: LUKE 5.5-11 (ESV)**

*And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”<sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.<sup>7</sup> They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”<sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,<sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”<sup>11</sup> And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.*

- All of the other fishermen would have been nodding in agreement with Simon Peter’s quick rebuttal of Jesus’ command to cast out the nets in the deep water. They all knew that you don’t catch fish in the deep waters during the day—you go to the shallow waters for that. They must have thought that Jesus’ command was a little suspect, but Peter, inspired by Jesus’ teaching, showed respect by going along and dropping the nets. **Have you ever felt led in a direction that went against what you had previously been taught to do? When has doubt kept you from responding to God’s Word?**
- *Jesus, I want your word to ring louder than my doubt. Call me out into the deep and I will go. Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY: MARK 2.13-14 (NIV)**

*Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them.<sup>14</sup> As he walked along, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.*

- In this passage from Mark, Jesus is again by the lake, and again teaching a crowd. This time, it is a tax collector who was in his booth off to the side that Jesus singled out and called into the deep. Walking away from his job as a tax collector might have meant walking away from some sense of financial security and a position in life. Following Jesus put all of that at risk. **What have you had to leave behind in order to follow Jesus?**
- *God, you call us out into new territory that sometimes requires reorienting what we thought was most important. You give us grace and guidance to follow Jesus. Amen.*

## **THURSDAY: HEBREWS 11.6-7 (NIV)**

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

<sup>7</sup>*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.*

- The writer of Hebrews lists heroes of the faith who responded to God’s call to deeper waters. If faith is believing in unseen things, then Noah had great faith (and fear) when commanded to build an ark well before a time of flood came and made it necessary for salvation. Notice how often a response to an invitation out into the deep waters is accompanied by rational fear or doubt, but also faith that comes from having heard the Word of God. **Do you ever struggle to discern God’s voice? What practices help you to stay tuned into God’s Word?**

- *God, tune my heart to hear your voice. Whether it's loud or soft, I want to build a life based on your Word. Amen.*

### **FRIDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 3.21-23 (NIV)**

*So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours,<sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours,<sup>23</sup> and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.*

- Paul was writing these words to a confused community that was struggling to live out what it meant to be disciples of Jesus. They claimed other authorities for their identity. Paul reminded them that they are of Christ. They belonged to him first. Jacob taught that Providence is a “Belonging and then becoming” church. You don’t have to have it all figured out. We are each in the process of becoming the kind of disciples that Jesus calls us to be, but we belong to him already. Thank God! **What are some organizations where you have to become a member before you know you belong? Most of them right? What does it mean to you that you belong to Christ even as you are becoming more like him?**
- *Jesus Christ, I find my identity in you. I belong to you and you belong to the Father. Thank you for showing me the way. Amen.*

### **SATURDAY: PSALM 100 (NIV)**

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.*

<sup>2</sup> *Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.*

<sup>3</sup> *Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

<sup>4</sup> *Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

<sup>5</sup> *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

- Read this Psalm aloud. Once we know that we belong to God, (*we are his people, the sheep of his pasture*) we have cause for joy, gladness, thanksgiving and praise in our hearts. Best of all, he is good and his love endures forever. **If you have been baptized or made a recent profession of faith, think back to that day...how does your identity as a child of God impact the way you live and worship?**
- *Almighty God, I know that you have made me, and I am yours. Today may I shout for joy and sing songs of gladness! Amen.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Re-read Luke 5.1-11 (ESV)

*On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,<sup>2</sup> and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.<sup>3</sup> Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.<sup>4</sup> And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."<sup>5</sup> And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."<sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.<sup>7</sup> They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."<sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,<sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."<sup>11</sup> And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.*

If we're honest, we all have a bit of a rascal story. Like Peter, at times we might be a little rough around the edges at times. And like Peter, we have forgotten what we had previously learned.

In what ways has/does the label rascal (as defined in this week's message) apply to you? Share any appropriate stories.

When has God seemed to use you in spite of being a rascal like Peter?

Have you ever felt that you were too far off for God to work a miracle in your life?

What stuck out to you from this week's message?