Intro: Enjoying the Shallow Waters (at the beach) (safe, clear, refreshing, see little minnows swimming around, tickles your ankles) – The shallow water is great if you want to play in the water, but if you plan to go fishing... you need to get out into the deeper waters. This year we have Jesus moving deeper into deep waters – moving deeper into the ministry to which he was called:

Through January we focused on Jesus’ beginning ministry – his call, baptism, testing and first public miracles. Last week as Jesus presented himself as Messiah, we saw his hometown turn on him because he reminded them of how God cared for all people and focused on examples outside the Jewish faith. That was pretty deep water! Today’s text in Luke brings us to Jesus calling his first disciples… and he calls them to go fishing.

TEXT: 1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” 9 For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

I. The Narrative
A. The Scene – Lake Gennesaret – aka Lake Tiberias & the Sea of Galilee
   1. Imagine the smells (lake water, green grass & wild flowers, fish??) and the sights (sun dancing on the water) sounds of small waves on the shore and feel of a refreshing breeze coming off the water, giving relief to the hot sun
   2. People have crowded to see and hear Jesus – people are pushing forward to better hear what this Rabbi / teacher has to say... trying to get a better view in case he heals someone.
B. Jesus gets into a boat
   1. To keep from being overwhelmed by the crowd, Jesus gets into a boat and is pushed out into the shallows of the shore. From there he sits down and teaches the people, telling wonderful stories and parables – teaching about the Kingdom of God
   2. When he finishes teaching, he speaks to Peter – the owner of the boat, and the disappointed crowd watches as they sail the boat out into the deeper water
C. The conversation that Jesus had with Peter was this: Jesus told Peter “Take the boats out into the deeper waters and put down your nets for a catch” – Remember, these seasoned fishermen had already fished all night and had caught nothing – they had been busy cleaning their nets while Jesus taught. But Peter agreed saying "If you say so, we will"

II. Going into Deeper Waters
A. So they went into the deeper waters, put down their nets and caught so many fish they had to call their fishing partners over to share to load of fish so that their net wouldn’t break and their boat wouldn’t sink
   1. Peter immediately fell to his knees and told Jesus that he was unworthy to be in Jesus’ presence: “Please leave me because I am a sinful man”.
   2. Peter recognized that there was something special, even godly or maybe even divine about Jesus, and Peter thought that his sinfulness disqualified him from receiving anything good from Jesus
   3. Jesus’ response was like the response of the angels found in the Christmas story: “Don’t be afraid” – You see, there is never room for fear when we place our trust in Jesus… we don’t have to ever be afraid. – Then Jesus said to Peter, Andrew, James and John: “from now on, you will be catching people” – and they all left everything they knew and followed Jesus
B. Now these fishermen had reason to NOT go out into the deeper water
   1. First: THEY were the professionals, and they knew their lake – they knew how to catch fish, and Jesus was a carpenter and teacher… not a fisherman. It seems that they would know if there was any chance of a catch
   2. Also: daytime was not when anyone would go fishing… it was during the night that you catch fish and not in the heat of the day
   3. Finally: they had already been out all night… their nets had been cleaned and they were tired
C. We have excuses for not following what Jesus calls us to do:
   1. We know what’s best for us… we know what we are comfortable doing. We know our strengths and weaknesses, our dislikes and our preferences – if God has something for us to do… it will fit into our guidelines and won’t be outside our comfort zones – Right???
   2. Also, we know how things work; how people will respond; what will cause other people to feel uncomfortable; And we know if something will be a waste of time
   3. We believe that we are not worthy or good enough to have the attention of God. Surely, there is someone more qualified, more righteous, …less sinful that would better fit the job
   4. Finally, we are just too tired – we have spent our energy and our resources and we simply need a break: it’s time for someone younger to take up the slack – I deserve a break today!
   5. How might you respond when Jesus calls you go deeper?
D. What might it look like for us to “put down our nets into deeper waters”?
   1. Deeper relationship with God – prayer, worship, time with God
   2. Deeper relationships with one another – reaching out to each other, spending time together, being real (open) with others, showing love
   3. Taking opportunities to serve – giving ourselves / sacrificially
   4. Stepping outside of our comfort zones
5. As a church “putting our nets into deeper waters” might mean that put aside the ways we have always done things and respond as God leads us to new things.

6. God is truly at work here at First Baptist – it is up to us all to look and see what God is doing and where God is moving us. But for us to move into new things, it will require us to let go of the past – to forget about how we did it yesterday – and follow God into the deeper waters.

7. Pastor Patti and I are blessed to serve alongside you in deeper waters.

III. It is Good to Go Deeper

A. Imagine what Peter and his colleagues would have missed if they had refused to do what Jesus asked them to do.
   1. They would have missed seeing a miracle.
   2. They would have missed the joy of catching all those fish.
   3. Their families would have missed the financial benefit of all those fish.
   4. They would have missed knowing that Jesus has power beyond their comprehension.

B. You see, we are all called to head out into the deeper waters.
   1. It is in the deeper waters that our faith is tested – where our fears are put to rest – where we are forced to trust God because we are no longer in control of our destiny… we are no longer standing with our feet on the shore, so we call out to God for help and protection.
   2. It is in the deeper waters that we come to recognize not only God’s presence with us, but we observe God’s power that goes far beyond anything we could ever hope or imagine – and so we grow close to God.
   3. It is in the deeper waters that we grow closer together as we help one another and depend on each other for help. In the deep waters, where storms sometimes arise, we become both givers of help and receivers – we support each other and encourage one another, and find that God is close to us because we see God in those who serve and in those whom we serve.
   4. Finally, Jesus calls us to fish for people: to reach out to people with grace, compassion and love – introducing people to Jesus and inviting them to experience this abundant life with God … There are plenty of people that we can reach, but they are mostly in the deeper waters – out the doors of the church – in the schools and desperate neighborhoods, they are at the methadone clinic and the hospital and the prison… they are visiting the food pantries, and hanging out near the bars and street corners.
   5. These are the deeper waters of our community – it is here that fish are in abundance – people who are trying to survive on their own… who feel unworthy of God’s love – people who would flourish with the knowledge of God’s love. In these deeper waters, there is great need for mercy, grace, forgiveness, kindness, peace and love.
   6. These are the people who need to experience to love and grace of Jesus, and it is to these people that God continues to call us.

Closing – Jesus invites us to join him out in the deeper waters. To put down our nets and trust him for the results. How will we answer?