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The Miraculous Catch of Fish Essay Competition

My name is Heraya Sarrasri. I am 11 years old and my family has lived by the edge of Lake Gennesaret for many generations. It is a good place to live, as it is right near the lake so we have a constant supply of fresh, relatively clean water. I am now helping mama in the washhouse most of the time, but I still remember the man by lake. It was 3 whole years ago, when I was just 8 years old, but I remember it like it was yesterday.

Mama had needed fresh water for the washhouse since it was the 6th day into fishing season so most people needed their clothes washing after being in their boats for almost 7 days in a row, getting up at dawn and returning after dark. I went down to the lake with the big water container that mama uses to collect water for the washhouse only – she uses the smaller one for water in our home. Lots of people go to watch the fishermen in their boats on Saturday so I wasn't too surprised at the huge crowd around the lake, even though it was bigger than normal, but what I was surprised at was how many people had brought a picnic lunch because normally they only stay for about half an hour at the most. I was also shocked at how quiet it was. Normally people are talking and shouting, with small children running around yelling, but it was almost silent! The children were still, the people were silent, and even the babies had stopped crying. I quietly asked a lady what was happening, and why everyone was silent but all she said was that the lord was coming and that everyone was waiting to see if he really was the son of god as not many people believed him. I

had heard stories about a heretic man who claimed to be god's son but I hadn't believed them. Who would be mad enough to make such a claim? I dismissed the story as gossip and went to fetch mama's water – she doesn't like it when I keep her waiting – but as I was climbing up the little hill because I couldn't get past the people round the side of the lake, I saw over the people's heads that there were only a few boats on the lake, even though it was the middle of fishing season and almost all the men in town should be out in their boats. Did they actually believe the stories about the man who said he was god's son? If they did then they are even more stupid than I thought. If he were really god's son, why would he come here anyway? And why would he talk to fishermen and washerwomen such as the people of our town when a son of god would outrank even the king?

I had thought they were all stories, but the people of the town seemed so sure that I decided to sit on the hill and watch for a bit. If nothing happened in 10 mins, I would run home to mama with the water and say that I got distracted with the boats. I sat in the warm sunshine and wondered whether the man really was god's son, but I decided that that was ridiculous. Suddenly, even the quiet murmurings in the crowd fell silent and everyone sat up, trying to see what was happening. I was glad of my place on the hill because from there I could see that a man that I had never seen before walked up to the edge of the lake and spoke to a man there. The man smiled and pointed at a boat on the shore. The stranger went over to the boat and got in then the man he had been talking to pushed him off the beach then went to sit down again. This seemed perfectly normal until I realised that he had no oars, yet the boat was leading him straight to the boat of some people I vaguely new from the village called Peter and John. They were brothers and both very good fishermen. I heard the man call out 'Good fishermen, cast your nets

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this side of the boat for a better catch.' They looked at him like he was crazy because even though I am just a girl, even I know that you can't catch fish somewhere so shallow. But they did as he said and cast their nets the other side of the boat. Everyone sat waiting in silence, and the only noise was the fish splashing in the water.

Suddenly, there was movement on the boat! The fishermen were pulling in the nets, and they were writhing with fish! They called for more men to come and help them haul the nets in and bring the fish back to shore, and when they got back, everyone cheered. There was enough food to feed the village for weeks, and people wanted to celebrate. But then, a wave of silence washed over everyone as we remembered *him*. The man was standing there smiling at the cheering crowd as a grandmother does with her grandchildren, and we watched him with awe, though some with suspicion and one or two with open hostility. Slowly, the people at the front, starting with the fishermen, began to kneel and eventually no one except God's son, for that he must be, remained standing. Peter spoke then, saying 'I apologise for doubting you Lord. You truly are God's son.'

Peter and Simon left with him that day to serve him, as he was God's son. They became his disciples and I hear stories of them with him a lot. They say that he performs miracles for people and preaches in every town he visits with his 12 disciples and even though it was 3 years ago and I now work full time in the wash house as mama is getting old, every time I hear a new story I say 'I knew his first 2 disciples before they became his disciples *and* I saw him once.' People are always impressed. He came back one time and I saw him again out of the washhouse window but he didn't speak. I wish he would come again. I like him. Praise be to God.