

“Called to Catch People for the Kingdom”

Matthew 4:12-23

1/22/2022

18 As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen.

21 Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets.

– Matthew 4:18, 21

I hear that Carl Mancilman went ice fishing last weekend...

It reminds me of a story...

There was this old retired Methodist preacher
who was sitting on a dock with a fishing pole in his hand
It was early in the spring, before the season opener

As he's sitting there, he watches the DNR pickup truck
Pull into the parking lot next to the boat landing
An officer in a uniform gets out, walks over to him
And stands quietly behind this old preacher
who has his fishing line in the water

After about five minutes,
the Methodist preacher says over his shoulder,
“You the game warden?”
“Yup,” says the officer

The old man starts moving his fishing pole from side to side,
And then lifts his line out of the water.
He points to the minnow wiggling on the end of the line and says,
“Just teaching this little fellow how to swim...”

Today we are going to talk about fishing,
But the catch is not fish

18 As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." 20 Right away, they left their nets and followed him.

21 Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets. Jesus called them and

22 immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

– Matthew 4:18-22

Last week we mentioned that Jesus told us what

The Greatest Commandment was

And that we around here, we combine that with

The Great Commission

This is our calling and also from where our strength to do it comes

35 One of them, a legal expert, tested him. 36 "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."

– Matthew 22:35-40

10 Then Jesus said to [the women as they left his empty tomb,] "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers that I am going into Galilee. They will see me there."

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go.

¹⁸ Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

– Matthew 28:10, 16, 18-20

The Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission

Don't just apply to the 12 disciples
They apply to us

We, too, are called and commissioned
To catch people for the Kingdom of Heaven

We are to go fishing.
When we go fishing,
What do we need?

Fishing license (Great Commission)
Fishing pole
Bait

Remember that retired Methodist preacher?
He had a minnow (but it wasn't bait)

He was teaching the little fellow to swim, right?

If it would have been later in the season,
During the fishing opener
He would have been using that little minnow to catch a fish

But you and I, we are fishing for people

So, what is our bait?
What entices and attracts people to come closer to Jesus?

Hmmm...

Let's look at the story again,
and see that happens right after Jesus promises
Simon and Andrew, and James and John
that he'll **show them** how to fish for people...

²¹ Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets. Jesus called them and
²² immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. He announced the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness among the people.

– Matthew 4:12-23

What's the bait?
What's the thing that entices and attracts people?

The Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven
The promise that we can have our hearts filled with the gift of abundant, eternal life
And that our lives can be changed, transformed for the better

You want your life changed for the better?
You want your heart filled with joy?

This is good stuff, right?

And it's not bait that's meant to trick someone
into biting into a hook
It's a promise and gift that that's true

Has anyone here felt the love and joy of Jesus in your heart?
Is anyone's life here different because of Jesus' love and grace?

It's true.

And we are called and commissioned to help others find this too!

One of my favorite definitions of evangelism is
(Evangelism literally means having Good News and sharing it!)
One hungry person telling another hungry person where they found bread

We are called and commissioned
To catch people for the Kingdom of Heaven
To help people find the God News
And then help them live in this realm, this kingdom
This reality on earth
Where those who were sick are healed
Where the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed
to all who need to hear it

What a glorious realm this is!
A place where everyone is loved,
And everyone loves one another in return
A place where no one is in need

Remember what Jesus did right after
Simon and Andrew, James and John, left their boats?

²³ *Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues.
He announced the good news of the kingdom and healed every
disease and sickness among the people.*

And what he was doing right before he called them?
¹⁷ *From that time Jesus began to announce, "Change your hearts and
lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!"*

– *Matthew 4:17*

I don't know about you,
But I love being loved by Jesus
And I love telling others about where I see Jesus at work in my life
It just makes me smile
Have you ever sat with another person
and shared stories about Jesus?

Who wants to go fishing?!

Oh, one more thing...

If you ever want to teach a young child to fish,
Do you just plop them in a boat
And then just push that boat away from the shore
And just stand on the shore and wait and see what happens?

What do you do?

You take them fishing
You go fishing together
You might talk about where the fish are
And show them what kind of bait to use
Has anyone here ever put bait on the hook of a young child?
(Isn't that a great feeling?)
You might even talk about where the fish like to hang out
So you can find them and catch them

Guess what?

Jesus did the same thing with those disciples
He didn't just go and send them out to preach to the crowds.

In the Gospel of Matthew,
It takes six more chapters before Jesus sends out the twelve
On their first mission trip

It is only after Jesus spends some time fishing with them

First, in the next chapter of Matthew,
they listen to Jesus' sermon on the Mount
Then, after listening to his teachings,
they get to witness Jesus healing
The leper
The paralyzed servant of the Centurion
and so many others

Then they witness Jesus calming the storm at sea
And then there are even more miraculous healings

And only after witnessing this
And having their eyes opened to Jesus' power
And their hearts opened to Jesus' love,
Only then does Jesus commission them and send out the twelve.

The same is true for us,
Jesus does not send us out fishing as disciples
Until we have heard his call
Until we have known his love
Until we have seen his power in our lives

But keep in mind that Jesus doesn't keep preparing us indefinitely
There comes a time to do it
Our call is to follow
And be fishers of those who God longs to be brought home

There is a word of warning here
If you and I are not eventually fishing,
we are not following Jesus as a disciple
Jesus promises to make us **fishers of people**.

The evangelist C. Sumner Wemp once noted that
church members are no longer fishers of men anymore,
but look like we are keepers of aquariums!
We have the temptation to be more concerned
With the upkeep of the tank
And caring for the fish that are already here
Instead of inviting those who are not yet here
Instead of inviting them to the place where they can be
Cared for and fed and healed
and brought home with abundant, eternal life

So, let us decide to follow Jesus and to be trained
Let us follow Jesus and learn from the master fisher of people

Let us leave our boat on the shoreline behind us
And follow Jesus
And go fishing

Let's decide to go fishing and catch people for the Kingdom!

(Response "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" # 2129)