

Jesus Calls
Mark 1:14ff

“When you became a Christian what did you think God would do with your life?”

Maybe you had no idea what He would do, you were just hoping He’d do something. Or you wanted Him to clean up some mess, make you rich, or a “better” person, a better spouse, parent, child, student, find you a job, a relationship, more discipline, more freedom, better friends, deliver you from some besetting sin or addiction, etc.

The bible tells us that when Jesus called his first disciples, he gave them His agenda. Jesus calls his first disciples, and he gives them His agenda right up front. I’m going to turn you INTO something you’re not already.

What would he have said, or would we assume he would say???

Make you better husband, wife, student, child, parent,

His answer may surprise us.

His agenda for them is his agenda for me and you, and like it did for those first 4 disciples, it can sound odd.

Mark 1

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” **18** Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. **19** Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. **20** Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

V. 14 After John was taken into custody...

We learn from John’s gospel that There was some overlap between the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptizer in Judea near Jerusalem. Upon John’s arrest, Jesus went to Galilee.

Matthew gives a similar fairly short narrative that leads up to the calling of the first disciples.

Luke gives a more extensive picture of Jesus’ time in Galilee after the Temptation. **If fact Luke points out that he “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit”. The news spread about him, and he began teaching and healing (Luke 4).**

NOTE THE LOCATION: - Sea of Galilee – this was where Jesus grew up, so he was familiar with the people and the area. It was off the radar in terms of religious significance, i.e. it wasn’t Jerusalem.

It was an area that contained many Gentiles, and it was a heavy fishing region. The fishermen that Jesus encountered were not guys out trying to catch fish for supper. They were businessmen, and it seems that at least James and John were part of a rather successful business. Their father had hired servants, so he must have been doing pretty well.

They are casting their nets into the sea. This is a specific detail recalled by an eye-witness to the events (Simon Peter). These nets were about fifteen feet in diameter, and on the edges of these circular nets were weights that held them down. The fishermen would throw them in a circular motion onto the surface of the water, and the weights would sink the nets down to the bottom and close them, catching several fish.

There were several kinds of nets, but the two most common had a rope in the middle of the net, so after the net sank to the ground, the fishermen pulled the rope, and the outer hems of the nets would close and trap the fish. The men would pull the net to the surface, get their catch of fish, and sell it in the marketplace.

v. 19 “cleaning their nets” – another eye-witness account detail.

AN UNUSUAL APPROACH

In the ancient Jewish world, rabbis never went out and recruited students. Students would apply to study with a rabbi, just as we do in our educational systems today, and they would have to jump through hoops, pass examinations, and make sure they were qualified before they would be accepted to study under an established rabbi. Also, the custom of the day was that students first commitment was to the TORAH, not the rabbi, yet here Jesus calls them to ‘follow him.’

This rabbi, who is different from any other rabbi in Israel, goes out and handpicks His students: “I want you, you, and you. You’re fishing for fish. Follow Me, and I’ll have you fishing for men.”

That was the extent of his recruiting speech, but Jesus already had their attention because of the miracles he had done.

That said, it is an odd job description given by a religious teacher, even one talking to fishermen.

Jesus was a peripatetic rabbi. He would go from town to town and lecture on the way, and His disciples would literally follow Him. They would walk behind Him and memorize the pithy sayings and parables that Jesus taught. They committed them to memory. That is why so much of the teaching of Jesus survived in oral tradition after His death, before His words were written down, because His disciples were skilled in memorizing His teaching. That was their task....

What Jesus said to these first four disciples applies in some degree to every Christian who has come after that is called to be a disciple of Christ.

TO FOLLOW IS TO FISH

This narrative is about far more than just fish. This is about the central mission of the church, THE early disciples weren’t great at first, even chased people away; fought over who is greatest, can’t cast out demon, etc. They had lots of problems, but by the end of NT they are not just followers, but they fishers of men.

His goal for us is to follow and do for others what someone did for us. -Followers First

We may think that we didn’t sign up for this when we came to faith. We wanted to escape hell, or needed a better life, marriage; we just needed fixing. But when we encounter Jesus, The Christ, the Son of God, he changes our trajectory. If we follow, we will fish. We WILL cast some sort of net or put some sort of lure in the water. It may not be the most effective, but we will have some effect.

We can pray and ask for help and protection, etc and God is patient, but His agenda is that you would fish. To non- Christians – we LIKE being a Christians; it’s Good to follow Jesus.

This narrative happened after fishing all night – Matt 4; Luke 5; Jesus gives Peter the great catch, then Jesus gives the call. They followed because of what he did for them, but he’ll lead us beyond “what did I do for you lately.” He’ll take all the mundane stuff and use it to bring eternal life to others, if we follow him and become a fisher of men. It’s more than just this life; it’s all going to end, but Jesus takes it and makes it eternal.

God will use your experience to bring eternal value to someone else, if you follow Him.

NOTICE FROM THE TEXT of Mark – there’s not much detail as compared to Luke 5 where we get the story of Jesus getting into Simon’s boat and teaching. After that he told Simon to put out the nets again for a

catch. Simon was reluctant but obeyed and he got a great quantity of fish. Simon and his were amazed and Simon Peter said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." At that point Jesus said, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

V .Luke 5: 1-3 – We don't know the content of the sermon- the focus is on what Jesus does to get Peter's attention, and the call to follow Jesus.

There is a lot going on in the Luke 5 narrative, but the takeaway is the challenge that Followers Fish. An encounter with Jesus calls for a response – either Repent and Believe or Follow and Fish.

But HOW???

We all come at it from different angles, but as with Simon and his companions, **Fishing for Men is a group endeavor.**

One objection rattling around in your heads is this: "Preacher, this is your thing, and you'd be so much better at it than me."

NOT SO FAST- A big part of my calling is to "equip the saints for the work of service", so that's why we're taking some time for this. I believe that God can use YOU to be an effective fisherman.

HOW MANY OF YOU CAME TO FAITH PRIMARILY because a pastor led you to Christ? How many because of a family member? A Christian friend? A Sunday school, VBS, youth group leader?

The reality is that You're better at it because you're NOT a preacher. People expect the preacher to talk about Jesus.

EX: in France, people expected Americans to be religious, so when we talked about God they didn't really pay attention. BUT WHEN A FRENCH Christian shared her life and testimony, the message of Christ got their attention.

You have the advantage. **God will leverage your life and experience to impact others that no one else could reach.**

Here's another interesting statistic: **Newly caught fish are more effective than those who've been caught for more than 5 years.**

It tends to be the case that the longer you're in the faith, the fewer connections you have with non-believers. **"Time In erodes awareness of" :**

The longer you are in a church the less aware you become of how the church comes across to first time attenders, or to those in the community. (new people have fresh eyes to see the culture)

Jesus is not talking about an EVANGELISM PROGRAM. You don't have to add anything to your life or schedule. Most people come to Christ because of a relationship with a Christian. So just be yourself – Live for God's glory and with His help.

Your place of impact, your fishing pond is where YOUR PASSION INTERSECTS THE WORLDS NEED.

God uses the message, the person, and the life circumstances to bring people to faith or bring people back to faith.

It's the message and person who intersects with a life at a certain time. And God wants to use you to be that person for someone else, just like someone was that person for you.

If we don't think in those terms, then we live our lives, but miss the opportunities that could be in front of us.

EX: D you know who finds a 4-Leaf Clover??? People who look for them. We won't catch fish if we don't follow Christ and expect him to make us fishers of men. So, get in the boat and engage in fishing activities.

DEEP SEA FISHING – 10 years old – on the boat all day and did not catch a single fish, didn't get a nibble. Others did, but not me. WHY??? I never cast a line in the water. I got sick the moment the boat stopped and I was sick all day.

THREE KEY WORDS...

INVEST, INCUBATE, INVITE

In light of the Gospel truths pray about this simple approach to being missional –

Invest – build relationships with unbelievers (neighbors, at the gym, family, civic/social organizations)

Incubate - ask your small group or SS class to be praying for them – create an “incubator of prayer”

Invite – use a church event (a connecting, service, fellowship, small group, or worship event) as an occasion to invite them so that they can connect in some way with God's Word and God's people.

Pray for outreach opportunities.

Listen for the 3 “NOTS” ...

..... when you hear someone say...

- “Things are not going well right now”
- “I was not prepared for this...”
- “I'm not from here”

...Those are good times to invite someone to church THIS SUNDAY

God wants to leverage your mess, your mistakes and your changed life to fish for others, and He'll use you to intersect with others in their mess.

Will you say, “God if you can use my life to catch fish, then I want you to do it, and I'm going to be on the lookout for that to happen. I'm going to be alert as I go through my daily life.”

You don't fish for everybody in the world, but for those God has placed in your life right now. “Use my life with your message to impact others.”

TIPS for Fishing in your Sea of Galilee

1. Let people around you know you are a Christian (in a natural, unforced way)
2. Ask PERMISSION to ask friends about their faith – and just listen!
3. Listen to your friends' problems – maybe offer to pray for them
4. Share your problems with others – testify to how your faith helps you
5. Share your story
6. Give them a book to read
7. Answer objections and questions
8. Invite them to a church event
9. Offer to read the Bible with them
10. MOST IMPORTANT – PRAY FOR THEM REGULARLY

Doug Pollock has an idea called “God space”, which is to create a safe place where people can poke their head out of their spiritual shell and have someone meet them where they are. – Doug Pollock

One helpful idea is to think about what it is like to be on the other end of a conversation with you.

Some of you may be excited by this and have been waiting to get some input and constructive tools to help you.

Some of you may be like – “Well, ok; it does seem to be something that Jesus calls us to.”
Some of you may feel like – “No way, no how”

All of us need to be challenged to See as God sees and Seek what God Seeks. When we start thinking about fishing in our pond, one immediate impact should be that we will pray more – and THAT IS ALWAYS A GOOD THING.

Aren't you glad that someone fished for you?

If you know Christ, it's most likely because God used someone's life and the gospel message to intersect with your life.

THE TABLE – The Ascended Christ is King and He will give you the grace, strength, and words to speak. As you come to the Table to feed on Christ, you might also ask God to open some fishing ponds in your life.

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