

“Go Fish: The Thrill of the Catch”  
Mark 1:16-20 NIV  
April 8, 2018  
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Palm Harbor United Methodist Church

(Video after scripture at 8:05 and 9:30)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2az5JMO62Xw&feature=youtu.be>

I am not sure that is what is meant by being a fisher of men!

Today we begin a sermon series of 5 entitled “Go Fish.”

We have remembered, celebrated and experienced the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus said, “Go tell!” Jesus said “Go make disciples of all nations.” Jesus said, “Go will be my witnesses in Palm Harbor, Pinellas County, Florida and the entire world.” Okay, I took some liberty with that last one. Jesus was very clear post-resurrection that we were to go and share the good news.

Let’s go back to the calling of the first disciples when He told them go and He would send them out to fish for. I believe it is calling of any disciple, those first ones as well as those today to be fishers of men.

Whoa...you may be saying I didn’t know that was part of the deal. To be honest I have Jesus alive in my life and, well...it is a bit selfish, I have Jesus in my life for what Jesus can do for me.

Well, as we examine scripture we will see the calling Jesus places on all of us is to be His followers and what that includes.

Andy Stanley several years ago had a study called “Go Fish,” so the concept and ideas and some of the sharing I’ll be doing comes from that study.

Now I confess I don’t know a hole lot about fishing for fish. I am not a fisherman, but I am called to be a fisher of men.

When I was a child I went fishing with believe it or not a cane pole with a red and white bobber. I fished in a pond. Yes, even with that cane pole little Davide somehow got the line of the cane pole caught in a tree. By the end of the time my brother and I had caught a mess of catfish.

Now I remember we didn’t just use worms we used Night Crawlers—big juicy, thick worms---not the small thin ones that were itty bitty and looked they had been on a perpetual diet.

When my oldest son was in elementary school we lived 2 doors from a pond. I was pastor of a church on the east coast in Merritt Island. Merritt Island is by Cocoa Beach and is an island between the Indian and the Banana Rivers. Well, I was going to take Ben fishing and went to a bait shop. Having grown up with Night Crawlers I went into the bait shop and asked for some of those.

The man looks at me and said, “What?” I said, “You know...worms.” He said, “Where are you going to be fishing.” I said, “Right around here.” He said all the water around here is brackish (part salt water). Oh. So, I left the bait shop got a lure and went to the pond 2 doors from the house. We caught no fish, but an alligator did grab the line...I’ve never moved so fast to cut that line. By the way that same pond with the alligator was where I baptized the neighbor by immersion. Believe me when I tell you it was quick dunk and out baptism!

So, I am pretty ignorant about fishing for fish. It takes know how. Someone would have to teach and show me how to fish. Jesus tells first disciples to be fishers of people. Now I’m going to use the term fisher of men. It is a more common term. By fisher of men we mean men, women, and children.

Perhaps you have heard the children’s song:  
 I will make you fishers of men, fishers of men.  
 I will make you fishers of men...if you follow me.  
 If you follow me.  
 I will make you fishers of men if you follow me.

Notice even in the song the little big word IF. If is a word that indicates a conditional clause. I will make you fishers of men IF you follow me. Following Jesus and being a fisher of men is a combo deal. It’s the fish meal deal. You can’t have one without the other.

The scripture that was read was of Jesus calling His first 4 disciples. They were out fishing in the Sea of Galilee. Brothers Andrew and Simon were out casting a net in the lake. Sea of Galilee was also called a lake, so it is the same body of water.

**17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”**

As we keep this verse up, notice the 3 things Jesus tells us. I believe these 3 things are critical for us today as well as those first disciples.

First Jesus says, “Come.” That’s a choice they had to make. Simon and Andrew could have refused to come. It says at once they left their nets and what they were used to and followed Jesus into the unknown and doing something they really knew nothing about. We too are called by Jesus to come. We can ignore the call and refuse or we can respond to the great adventure.

Secondly notice the Disciples are told by Jesus to “follow me.” Now we don’t know how much they actually know about Jesus. Who is that Jesus that is telling them to come and follow? Again, a choice, but they chose to follow.

I wonder what made them follow? Maybe like us---If I follow Jesus will make me smarter. Jesus will make me more disciplined. Jesus will make be a better person.

To me a little Bible humor when Jesus sees James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. Jesus calls them, “come, follow.”

**19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.**

James and John's father is left standing there in the boat with the hired men. "Uh, boys...it's not break time." "Something fishy here." "Sons this is a family business where are you going?" They followed Jesus.

We too are to be like those first disciples. We are to come, follow and thirdly Jesus will send us out to fish for people. Many other translations say that Jesus will "make you fishers of men." I actually like that phrasing better. Hold it, Simon, Andrews, James and John are saying, "We are fishers of fish not fishers of men. We know how to fish for fish, but how do we fish for men?" Jesus say, "I will show you. I will *make* you a fisher of men." But I don't know how to do that. Ah notice Jesus says He will show you, He will *make* you a fisher of men.

For us today we need to come, follow and be made a fisher of men. If you are a follower of Jesus then by definition you are a fisher of men. Yes, you are part of a Fish Club! The goal is to follow. Those first disciple didn't know what it meant to be a fisher of men. We too may be wondering what that means. You see, it is not all up to us. Jesus will show us and make us what we need to be. If you are a follower of Jesus you are also a fisher of men. You can't separate the two.

You may say, well pastor---You are the one more skilled at that. That's your job. You know the Bible, you've had hermeneutics, you have studied soteriology, you've read about eschatology, and even heilsgeschichte.

Well now a couple of honest things I need to share with you. Some know this about me and others will find it hard to believe. My nature is more of an introvert nature. Oh...here at church I smile, I'm talkative, I'm woo-hooing, but out in public I'd rather not be seen. I would rather be quiet and reserved.

You see I too have a hard time beyond these walls being a fisher of men. I want to work with you on that as part of this sermon series. I can't expect you to do something I am unwilling to do.

It is each disciples job to come, follow, and make fishers of men. You are not too old, excuse me chronologically gifted, you are not really too young. Jesus said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Now becoming a fisher of men does not happen overnight. If I were to be a fisher of fish there are several here in the congregation that could teach me the proper equipment, what lures, what to use, when is the best time go, and where the good fishing spots are. Likewise, you have to know how to fish for men.

To some degree I have a disadvantage. As soon as I reveal I am a pastor...I get the look of "Oh that's his job...here comes the sales pitch."

But when you invite/share they listen to the message because in most cases you have a relationship with them. Your story is different than mine. You're 'fishing spot' is different than every other person's in here. You can fish for people that I can't fish for. You can reach people for Jesus that I can't reach.

Your faith story doesn't have to be a story of the worst sinner of the world and how Jesus dramatically transformed your life. Everyone does not have the story of drugs, prison, salvation. But no one can question your story...because it is genuine, it is real, and it is your story. It happened to you. No matter you past God can use you to be a fisher of men. In fact, God can use your past no matter what it is to impact another's faith.

Are you out there looking for fish?

Now as I said I don't know much about fishing for fish. There is one thing I do know though. This is so profound you may want to write it down. Here it is: If you don't put your line in the water you aren't going to catch any fish.

Are you with me? ?????

Stop and think just a moment. How were you introduced to Jesus and the church? Who introduced you to Jesus and the church? Think right now of the person who made that initial contact. Why, you may not even know their name. It could be a parent, a pastor, a neighbor, a relative, a coworker. Think right now of who that was. On the count of 3 I want to shout out that person's name if you know it. 1...2...3...

Did you know that you can be that person to somebody?!!

Someone can someday say, "I came to Jesus because of (fill in your name here)." Wow! An eternal kingdom thing!!!!

Oh, the thrill of the catch!!!! How excited when you fish and you catch your first fish. You're excited, you're nervous. You're smiling.

Sometimes the thrill of the catch takes a while. We snag the fish and they try to get away. You tug and they continue to run. You let the line out and you let them run. Then you slowly reel it in. Stop. Wait. Reel some more. It may take some time, but eventually you keep reeling and WOW when the catch is made there is excitement. Look at this!!! It's this.....big!

**Luke 15:7 Common English Bible (CEB)**

**<sup>7</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.**

Woo-hoo the thrill of the catch!!!! Praise the Lord! Glory to Jesus!

Now when fish travel together it is called a “school.” So, since it’s called a school I thought I would give you some homework. I want you to walk up to 10 strangers and say, “Jesus loves you and I do too.” NO...I’m just kidding. That would be awkward.... unless the Holy Spirit moves you to do that.

But I do have some other homework for you to do for next week. You will find a place in your bulletin on the inside after the scripture for a place for notes.

### **Fishing School Homework---Thrill of the Catch**

**1. Recall who introduced you to Jesus. Give a prayer of thanks for them.**

If not for that person you would still be swimming in a sea of sinfulness, a lake of longing or a pond of perplexity. Remember you may/could be that person for someone.

**2. Recognize the “fish” around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of someone you can pray for and eventually talk to about Jesus and the church.**

**3. Receive an invite card and give it to someone this week.**

Invite card has the church vision statement on it. Back it says “We are saving a seat for you!” It gives a description of each of our 3 worship services. You may not be ready or called to speak up--but how about just giving someone this invite card. Leave along with a healthy tip at a restaurant. Maybe even the boldness to say, “Uh...here.” And give them the invite card. By the way this card you can fold in half and put in your back pocket and be ready to give it out.

You will find the invite cards at the exit doors this morning. I’m hoping we will run out and we can make some more.

Next week: Go Fish: Into the Deep (**Image**)