**Fishers of Men**

*Matthew 4:19*

**Introduction**

1. Jesus said of Himself, ***“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).***
   1. He would do so by dying on the cross for the sins of the world.
   2. **He would do so by preaching the gospel** – ***“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matthew 4:17).***
2. Shortly after He began His ministry, Jesus called disciples who would go with Him to perform the important task – **Matthew 4:18-22**
3. We too are called to be ***“fishers of men.”***
   1. God has prepared us for this purpose (**cf. Ephesians 2:10**).
   2. We, like the apostles, must not hesitate, but ***“IMMEDIATELY”*** go out with fervency, and diligence to catch men in this way.
   3. ***If we fully comprehend what Jesus has done for us we will be diligent in evangelism. If we are truly following Christ we will be seeking and saving the lost.***
4. **The success of our evangelism is determined by our attention to Jesus’ call. The formula is in His command.**
5. “Follow Me” – Something We Do
6. Abide with Jesus
   1. **Acts 4:7-13** – Peter and John, healed lame man, and preached Jesus.
      1. Arrested for preaching.
      2. Before Sanhedrin council.
      3. ***“By what power or by what name have you done this?” (Acts 4:7)***
      4. **Acts 4:8-12** – The healing of the man done by AUTHORITY of Jesus – HAS ONLY AUTHORITY FOR SALVATION.
      5. **Acts 4:13** – They had been with Jesus:
         1. **Taught by Him** – MASTER TEACHER.
         2. **Taught like Him** – WITH AUTHORITY AND CONVICTION.
         3. **Motivated like Him** – TO SAVE THE LOST, AND WOULD NOT CHANGE THE MESSAGE, OR BE KEPT FROM SPEAKING IT (**v. 12** – only by Christ’s authority are men saved).
   2. **We must have firm conviction in the truth and realize the importance of the preaching of it to lost souls – IF WE ABIDE WITH JESUS, WE WILL!**
7. Imitate Jesus
   1. ***“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).***
   2. If we are going to fulfill the command of God to make disciples, we must first imitate Christ – HE HAD A FERVENT DESIRE TO SAVE SOULS! 🡪
   3. Paul – ***“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).***
   4. **Consider what Christ left (heaven), and why He left it – to save souls. *Do our lives even bear a semblance of that initiative?* (cf. Luke 19:10** – SEEK…)
8. Obey Jesus
   1. *Those who aspire to be fishers of men without first submitting to Christ themselves will do so to no avail and do themselves no good.*
   2. **Romans 2:17-24** – Gentiles are guilty of sin, BUT SO ARE THE JEWS.
      1. The Jews thought themselves to be the source of enlightenment; teachers of truth.
      2. **However, it is preposterous for the Jews to claim to be such a source for others when they show themselves to be unlearned, not convicted, thus, unchanged.**
      3. **Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees:**
         1. ***“Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do” (Matthew 23:3).***
         2. ***“You travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (v. 15).***
   3. ***We cannot teach the world effectively if we do not learn and submit to Jesus ourselves.***
9. “I Will Make You” – Something Jesus Does
10. Evangelism by Transformation
    1. **In part, Jesus convicts men and converts men through the example we set as we are created anew, and conform to His image.**
    2. **Matthew 5:13-16** – Salt and light.
       1. **Salt** – OF THE EARTH – make the earth more palatable for God (Children of righteousness among a world of moral filth).
          1. Also, preserving agent in the world.
          2. **We season others as we live for Christ – evangelical.**
       2. **Light** – OF THE WORLD – in a world of darkness we shine light so that men may come to it and be saved by it. (**cf. Ephesians 5:11-14** – to expose darkness, and call men to light – spiritual life.)
       3. **(v. 16)** – Men observe and bring glory to God – **by submitting to the gospel and being transformed the same.**
    3. **1 Peter 2:11-12** – Good conduct before Gentiles.
       1. **Same need** – Salt and light before men.
       2. **However – STILL NEED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.**
          1. **It is a mistake to think living right before men is enough to convert them WITHOUT GIVING THEM THE TRUTH.**
          2. The power of God to salvation is still the gospel! (**cf. Romans 1:16)**
       3. **Day of visitation** – ***when God visits them with the gospel (MUST PREACH GOSPEL TO THEM)***, and they submit to it.
          1. Realize their works are evil by observing yours in Christ.
          2. **Visited with opportunity for forgiveness and transformation.**
          3. Obey – glorify God.
       4. **Cf. 1 Peter 3:15** – Ready to give an answer for the reason of our hope.
11. Submission to His Blueprint
    1. **Psalm 51:12-15** – God wants those who have been recipients of His grace and mercy to share it with others.
    2. **Matthew 28:18-20** – Great commission given to us as well.
    3. **His blueprint? – DISCIPLES MAKE DISCIPLES – FISHERS OF MEN.**
12. “Fishers of Men” – A Figure for Instruction

Fishermen are…

1. Eager, Diligent, Perceptive, and Persistent
   1. Those who fish:
      1. **Do so because it is a necessary work, and/or they enjoy it** – must fish to eat, gain living, EAGER TO DO SO.
      2. **Put forth effort to catch fish** – correct bate, technique, attention to detail.
      3. **Are attentive to surroundings** – fish bites, don’t miss it! – PERCEPTIVE OF OPPORTUNITIES.
   2. **Colossians 4:2-4** – It was Paul’s desire to be given more opportunities to present the gospel to others.
      1. **Eager** – He couldn’t get enough!; **Diligent** – asking prayers for opportunities; **Perceptive** – awareness of opportunities, and taking advantage of them
      2. ***“THAT I MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK”*** – His obligation that he wishes to fulfill.
   3. **Persistent** – Fishermen do not give up after the first try, nor the second, etc.
      1. **Luke 5:4-7** – Simon (Peter) fished ALL NIGHT – *why did he keep fishing if he wasn’t catching?*
      2. **A fisherman casts his net, or line because he thinks he will catch a fish. He continues to do so, thinking the next cast will be successful.**
      3. IT SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN!
      4. **NOTE:** **vv. 5-7** – at Jesus’ word, we WILL catch many fish if we put forth the effort and are persistent.
2. Self-Denying, and Daring
   1. Those who fish:
      1. **Often practice self-denial** – deny sleep, wake up early to catch fish, etc.
      2. **Some are daring** – commercial fishermen who put themselves in harm’s way to catch fish – make a living. (Uncomfortable situations as well.)
   2. **Acts 18:8b-11** – Apparent danger in Corinth, but Paul told by Jesus to preach!
      1. **Two reasons Jesus gave for Paul to preach even though it seemed dangerous:**
         1. Jesus is with him – promised protection.
         2. ***“for I have many people in this city”*** – THERE WOULD BE GREAT SUCCESS IN THE PREACHING – i.e. MANY CONVERTED.
      2. **We must understand that if we preach, good WILL come from it. WE MUST NOT HESITATE FOR ANY REASON!**

**Conclusion**

1. God has called us to be fishers of men.
2. We should not hesitate to accept this title and enact it in our lives.
3. **We should consider it a blessing to be involved in such an important work.**
4. **Are you fishing?**