

The Lord's Message: Let's Go Fishing

Date: January 22, 2023

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Matthew 4:12-23

I know that this morning I am preaching to many in the choir. What are the three things that you need for to be successful in fishing? Proper gear, correct bait, and you need to go where the fish are. If you have too light a tackle, a large fish will break the line. If you have too big a hook, then you will not be able to hook smaller fish, like perch. If you have bait or lures that the fish are attracted to, then you will be successful in catching them. If you have the proper gear and correct bait, but if you are not where the fish are located, then you will not be successful. For example, last year we went fishing in June. The dolphins had chased the stripers up to Tolchester. We left on a charter boat out of Romacoke. If we had fished out of Romacoke, then we would not have been successful. We rode all the way to Tolchester and we had to fish off of Peach Island. We had the proper gear. We used Spot as bait. Live bait, such as Spot, blood worms, and clams, give me greater success than simply lures. We caught our limit and also plenty of channel cats. We came home successful. The same principle that applies to fishing for fish also applies for fishing for people.

Let us pray.

We are helicoptering into the book of Matthew. Let me bring us up to date on what has taken place. Jesus is a grown man. He is about 30 years old. He has been baptized in the Jordan River by his cousin, John the Baptist. When He came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in what is best described as a dove. God spoke from Heaven, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased," **Matthew 3:17**. Right after this, Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. There, he is tempted by the Devil to fall into sin. Jesus does not fall for the temptations. Jesus deals with each temptation by correctly quoting scripture. When the Devil tries to use scripture to tempt Jesus, Jesus knows the Word of God, and says to the Devil, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test," **Matthew 4:7**. Jesus overcame all the temptations, so the Devil left Him.

If you have a Bible, and you would like to follow with the message for today, open it to Matthew 4:12. Today, we start off with the acknowledgement that Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist has been arrested by King Herod. King Herod is not the King Herod that tried to have Jesus killed when Jesus was a young child. This King Herod is the son. He is called Herod Antipas. He divorced his first wife, so that he could marry his step brother's wife, Herodias. John spoke out against this. So, the king had him arrested.

Jesus is concerned that he might be arrested as well. So, he leaves Nazareth and settles in Capernaum. Capernaum is located in Northern Israel right on the Sea of Galilee. In verse 14, this fulfills what the prophet, Isaiah, says about the Messiah. The Light has come to these people. Jesus' message of repentance is the same message as his cousin, John the Baptist. John's ministry is coming to a close. Jesus' ministry is just beginning.

Now, if you are living in a fishing village, then you are going to meet fishermen. Just like living on Tilghman Island, you are going to meet waterman. In verse 18, Jesus is walking by the water and wouldn't you know it, Jesus meets up with some fishermen, brothers Peter and Andrew. Jesus simply says, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people," verse 19. Now, this seems a strange statement. Their response is amazing. Look at verse 20. They left their nets, their business, their livelihood, their families and went and follow Jesus. Not only they follow Jesus, but in verses 21 & 22, two more fishermen, brothers James and John do likewise.

In **Matthew 10:2**, we have a list of the names of each of the disciples. Four of these disciples are fishermen. One is a tax collector. One is a zealot, someone who wants to overthrow the Roman government. Three others may have been fishermen as well, Thomas, Nathaniel and Philip, **John 21:2-8**. Thomas means twin. We know Judas was a thief, **John 12:4-6**.

Even though possibly 7 of the 12 were fishermen, Jesus called the other 5 from their occupations and families. For three years, they all went and followed Him. After the Holy Spirit came upon all of them at Pentecost, they all gave their lives, except for Judas, to the work of fishing for people to bring them to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The same continues today. Jesus calls fishermen, farmers, cooks, bakers, teachers, builders, lawyers, government leaders and all other occupations. Jesus calls people from all genders and age groups. Jesus calls people from their families. Jesus gives them a new occupation fishing for people and a new family, the family of God. As Thomas Long puts it, "The kingdom of heaven does not exist to serve the family. The family exists to serve the kingdom of heaven. The goal of the kingdom is not to serve us in being more effective and productive in our jobs. Our work is truly effective when it serves to express the will of God. The patterns of our lives are not made secure by the kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of heaven rearranges them into the new design of God's own making."

They are called out of their ordinary lives and transformed to be the hands and feet of Jesus here on earth. They are called out to share with the world the love of God that passes all human understanding. They are called out to be the conduit that God uses to bring people to Him.

God has not stopped calling and will not stop calling until Christ returns upon the earth. God is calling you. Will you say, "Yes" to God's call? You are in the proper location. Your work, your friends, and your family are your location. If you have accepted Jesus into your heart, then you have the proper gear, the Love of God. The bait is the Holy Spirit living inside of you. The Holy Spirit flows out of us and other people can see the change in our lives. There is no reason for you not to fish for people. So, Let's Go Fishing! Amen.