

Mark 1:16-20 — "Follow Christ & You Are Fishers Of Men!"

"The work of evangelism, of spiritual live-saving is nonetheless the purest, truest, noblest, and most essential work the church will ever do. The work of fishing men and women out of the sea of sin, the work of rescuing people from the breakers of hell, is the greatest work the church is called by God to do."

(John MacArthur)

Where we are in the Life of Christ:

- **Putting the 4 gospel records together (Matt, Mark, Luke, John):**
 - After the 40-day temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Mark 1.12-13)
 - Then John identified Jesus & gathered disciples (John 1)
 - Then Jesus turned water into wine (John 2)
 - Then Jesus cleansed the temple the 1st time (John 2.12-22)
 - Then Jesus was met & interacted with Nicodemus (John 3)
 - Then Jesus left Judea for Galilee & traveled thru Samaria & met the woman & his fame spread (John 4)
 - Then the overview of Jesus' teaching/preaching ministry in Galilee (Mark 1.14-15)
 - Then Jesus healed the Nobleman's son in Cana (John 4.46-54)
 - Then Jesus made his new home in Capernaum (Matt 4.13-16)
- **Then, now, Jesus calls the 4 fishermen to be FISHERS OF MEN (Mark 1.16-20)**

The main point of this account: **JESUS demonstrates his authority by summoning 4 men to be disciples & soul-winners.**

>>> *We'll see this in 2 main points.*

1. You are CALLED to follow Christ! (following Christ)
2. You are COMMISSIONED to fish for souls! (evangelizing the lost)

I. YOU ARE CALLED TO FOLLOW CHRIST!

- *This highlights the truth of "FOLLOWING Christ"*

To follow Jesus Christ (=true discipleship/true salvation) demands:

1. full allegiance (I'm committed!)
2. total obedience (I'm submitted!)
3. immediate response (I'm unhesitating — without delay)
4. careful imitation (I'm following)
5. persevering continuance (I'm walking)

- Simon/Andrew show **prompt/immediate** response. they submitted **right away**
- James/John show **complete/sacrificial** response. they submitted **all the way**

II. YOU ARE COMMISSIONED TO FISH FOR SOULS!

- *This highlights the truth of "Evangelizing the Lost"*

2 important features>>

- (1) **The Transformation - *I will make you*** (Jesus does it)

- (2) **The Ambition — *fishers of men*** (17b)

The disciples were to become fishers for souls. They were to labor to draw men out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan to God. They were to strive to bring men into the net of Christ's church, so that they might be saved alive, and not perish everlastingly. (JC Ryle)

The gospel minister is like the fisherman with a net. I have sometimes heard the comparison drawn as though the gospel fisherman had a hook and a line, which he has not. His business is not to entice a fish to swallow his bait but to cast the net all round him, and lift him, by his grace, out of the element in which he lies in sin, into the boat where Christ still sits, as he sat, in the olden days, in the boat on the sea of Galilee. To shut the sinner up to faith in Jesus Christ, — that is the main work of the true gospel fisherman. (CH Spurgeon)

Saints who have modeled a love for soul-winning & have challenged all saints to be winners of souls:

- John Knox: "Give me Scotland or I die"
- John Wesley: "The whole world is my congregation"
- CT Studd — "Christ wants not nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible."

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- John Wesley- "You have one business on earth - to save souls."
- Leonard Ravenhill – "Could a sea-captain sit idle if he heard the drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die? Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no hand? Can you sit at ease in Zion with the world around you DAMNED?"
- Spurgeon– "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one GO there UNWARNED and UNPRAYED for."
- Horatius Bonar: Is it for this I spend and am spent, counting it, next to the salvation of my own soul, my chiefest joy to be the instrument of saving others? Is it for this that I exist? To accomplish this would I gladly die?
- Whitefield was heartbroken when people would turn away from the gospel. He would often weep in preaching & he said: 'How can I help weeping for people when they won't weep from themselves? Every time I preach I wonder if someone is hearing the gospel for the last time.'
- Paul: we are ambassadors, GOD makes an appeal thru us, we beg you, be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5.20)
- Solomon: "Deliver those who are being taken away to death & those staggering to slaughter: O Hold Them Back!" (Pr 24.11)

- **True man-fishing requires P.L.U.C.K. = Perspective. Love. Urgency. Courage. Knowledge/fear of God.**

Christian: follower of Christ, disciple of Jesus Christ — **You are a Fisherman!**

1. Your design & work is to catch fish.
2. You must get up & go *TO* where the fish are.
3. You are to work hard till you catch.
4. You may go thru many storms.
5. You must catch the fish in the water with a net.
6. You find a fishing spot with prayer, thought & courage.
7. You expect a catch. You trust, pray, believe & expect fish will be caught!

Thomas Boston (*The Art of Man-Fishing*. >> *A puritan booklet; can be accessed online as a PDF for free*)

"My heart cries out after Christ each day and my soul is moved when I read the sweet promise of Christ: Follow me and I will make you fishers of men, directed to all those who would follow him. O how gladly would my soul follow him, so that I might be a fisher of men. O that my soul would know what sort of following Christ this is, to which this sweet promise is given. I would KNOW IT, that I might DO it, and so CATCH poor, lost souls by the gospel."

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;
 Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
 It is well, it is well, with my soul.

**It is well (*it is well*)
 With my soul (*with my soul*)
 It is well, it is well, with my soul!**

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
 Let this blest assurance control,
 That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
 And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
 My sin, not in part but the whole,
 Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
 The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
 Oh trump of the angel! Oh voice of the Lord!
 Blessèd hope, blessèd rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
 The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
 Even so, it is well with my soul.

PRAYER MEETING FORMAT

1. Thanking Christ FOR THE GOSPEL.
2. Praying that we'd be ZEALOUS & FERVENT DISCIPLES.
3. Praying for "fish" that need to be caught by the gospel BY NAME.
4. Enlarging our prayer requests — praying BIG PRAYERS, impossible prayers in faith (Ps 81.10)