

Fishing for People

- I like to fish, but wldn't say I'm fshrmn. I like to fish; enjoy going fishing; look forward to spending time out on water w/rod/reed, bait/tcklbox. It's part my chldhd; used to fish all/time w/U Paul; we'd fish lakes of northern lower pensla of MI. Ev summer when in HS I'd spend sev days w/uncle; we'd take his boat out onto Lk MI. I like to fish, but wldn't say fshrmn. Don't: have lot gear; know tchnqs. And while I have cght a few fish in my life, I've certly've nvr cght lot. I've hrd legndry stories of guys who just slay it out on lake – catch tons/fish. That's nvr hapnd to me before. I've taken my kids fishing; and it was always lot/fun when they'd catch little fish out on Browns Lk. I like to fish, but wldn't say fshrmn.
- Today's Gos is story re fishing. But really, it's not story re fishing; it's story re disciplshp. J finds these guys who like to fish (& are in fact real fshrmn) & calls them be his first discs. Gives them new career – even more than that: new calling – to fish, but not for fish, for ppl. Today we see these discs fishing for fish; in fact, J blesses them w/such a catch: boats about ready sink. But this rdng really isn't re fishing for fish. In today's Gos, J shows us what means to go fishing for ppl.
- And actly here we see J himself fishing for ppl. **Vs. 1-3** (Sea/Gal; Smn=Pt). See, J is in boat, & fishing – not for fish but for ppl. He's tchnng ppl. So many ppl had gthrd to hear him prch/tch that J decided to turn boat into his pulpit, & beach his amphthtr. You see, hills surrndng Sea/Gal slope gently upward, forming natural amphthtr. I know that bec been there. 16 yrs ago I was on study trip to Isrl; visited Sea/Gal; in fact, I was in boat on Sea/Gal at practly exact spot this took place. And as our boat got closer to shore, I remem looking out at gentle hills rising up fr lake, thinking: this what looked like when J prchd to crwds scattrd on hills. Fr boat, his voice'd carried over wtr; evone wld've hrd him speak – he turned boat into pulpit; tght ppl. And that's what J came to do! This rdng: begng Lk 5. Very end of Lk 4, wrds right before this rdng, J: **“I must prclm GN/kngdm/God to other towns also, bec that is why I was sent” (4:43)**. J was sent: go fishing for ppl, teach ppl GW, bec tchngs/J catch ppl.
- What haps when you catch fish? If keeper, gets thrown into fish cooler on boat & probly end up as main course Fri night FF. So if you're fish & get cght: probly not going end well for you. But when J catches ppl: pulls them up out dangrs wtrs; brings them to faith, opens eyes to see: him as Sav & themslvs as dearly loved chldrn/Fr/hvn – whose sins had seprtd them fr holy God, but by sacrfl love/J on cross have been bght into peaceful rel w/Lord. When J catches ppl, pulls them up out of dangrs wtrs of sin/unbelf, hplssnss/despair into safety/boat. That's what J does when catches ppl. 1st rdng: **“Faith comes fr hearing msg; msg heard thru word re Xp” (Rom 10:17)**. It's that Gos msg re Xp (re his sinless life, innocent dth, glorious res, daily presnc/lives, gift/forgvnss, prom/etrl life) – this is what: creates & stngthns faith; changes hrts/lives; brings fish safely into boat.
- Did you know: early Xians of 1st/2nd cents after J saw fish as symbol/Xianity? That's bec letters of Grk wrd for *fish* spell out acronym. Grk word: *ichthus*; acronym: *JC, God's Son, Sav*. That's why, if you remem on Xmas trees here at ch, some ornmnts: in shape/fish; dwn mid: Grk wrd *ichthus*. Also why there's fish right here (pulpit). One step further: those early Xians also saw a ship/boat as symbol for Ch. This hapnd at time great persctn, when dangrs to be assctd w/Xp & cross. So ship became symbl for Ch. Here's how: God's Ch – rockd/tossd back/forth in raging storms/life – has one captain (J) & one destntn (shores/hvn). And even when sails are trimmd, you can see how mast & main horzntl beam form cross.
- This idea of ship symblzng Ch comes fr sev diff Scr psqs, such as: Noah's ark during flood (God kept his ppl safe in boat); or when J calmed raging storm on Sea/Gal (J kept discs safe in boat); or here in today's psg, J is fishing for ppl to get them safely into boat/Ch. Even in Xian archtctr, in physcl ch bldng, sanctuary, place where Xians worship, place you're sitting right now: this room is called nave. Comes fr Latin *navis, ship*; where get English *nautical*. So, this nave is like ship; you can even see that in ceiling. Look up: see how ceiling of this ch almost looks like bottom/boat turned upside down. This center beam, like keel; supprtng beams, like supprt strctr for hull. And if you've ever been FLG, our sister WELS ch just down road, you know: their ch really was desgnd look like ship; in fact, their altar is a boat. And whole idea w/this symblsm: when you're in ship/boat/Ch, you're safe. Tchngs/J bring you safely into boat/Ch.

- **“Faith comes...msg, word re Xp.”** Here we see J sharing that word re Xp, casting net/Gos into sea/humnty, bringing many fish into boat, bells into Ch. And in fact, that’s what he’s done for you! J cght/tght/brght you to faith, pulled you out dangrs wtrs into safety of Xian Ch, where continues to tch/strngthn/protct you on voyage/hvn. As Xian, you: safe w/J in boat. J fished for you; J fishes for ppl.
- And of course: J wants boat full! J came: **“seek/save lost” (Lk 19:10)**; fill Ch w/bells. J wants boat full. So to illstrt that, performs mrcl: **vs. 4b-7**. These: profssnl fshrmn; skunked night before but now their boats: so full/fish, wtr about to crest over hull – and it’s not their doing. This: incrdble/unmstkble mrcl. And Pt rcgnzs this! **Vs. 8b**. That’s what haps when you come face/face w/reality: there’s huge chasm btwn J’s holiness & your sinflnss. J, holy God, demands perfectn & judges wckdnss. We are sinful ppl who break his coms & deserve pnshmnt. Undrstndng that ought fill us w/fear & make us realize we don’t deserve: J; his tchns; forgvnss; be in boat.
- But J wants boat full; so says: **vs. 10b**. You see, this mrcl/J (catching all fish) – this mrcl also metaphor for smthng bigger/greater. At commnd/J, these fshrmn cast net, caught fish, filled boat. In same way, at commnd/J, these same fshrmn’d cast net/Gos, catch fish/bells, & fill boat/Ch. So w/this mrcl/metaphor, J calls these first discs to share w/him in work of fishing for ppl.
- **Vs. 10b**. May remem KJV or old NIV: **“catch men;” “fishers of men” (Mk 1:17)**. But discs/J are both male/female; so we fish for ppl. And it’s not just apstl/pastors who fish for ppl, but all Xians. If J has called us to faith, also called us to discplshp; and part of being disc: fishing for ppl, sharing Gos, inviting ppl to ch, evnglzing commnty, witnessing for J, giving reason for hope we have (1 Pt 3:15) – filling boat. That’s where J takes us w/this rdng. It starts w/J tching & fishing for ppl – and we realize: J cght us. Then comes miraculous catch: boat full/fish – where J is saying, “Here’s: what evglsm looks like; how I want fill Ch.” And then comes the call – “Come follow me; let’s go fishing for ppl.”
- I like to fish, but wldn’t say I’m fshrmn. Well, maybe I am a fshrmn. I may not be very good at fishing for fish. But J has called me to fish for ppl. He’s called you, too, in your own way, life, corner/lake. So take up the call, cast the net, catch the fish, fill the boat – go fishing for ppl.

Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” ⁵ Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

