

More Fishing Techniques

Mark 1:14-20

May 26, 2024

Last week we talked a bit about fishing techniques and we'll do more of that today. Of course most women know that if you give a man a fish, and you'll feed him for the day but if you teach him to fish, you'll never see him again. Speaking of fishing, I don't know why Pastor Dale gets so worried about viruses. He never catches anything anyway! I tried to fish professionally but I couldn't live on my net income! Please open your Bibles to Mark 1. Pew Bible.

If you've been with us since the beginning of 2024, you know that our theme this year is what? The Great Commission! Sharing Jesus with others that they might be saved! John MacArthur says, "Evangelism was the primary purpose for why Jesus called the apostles and it remains the central mission for His people today!" If you've been here the last couple Sunday's you also know that we've been talking about fishing for what? Men! The first Sunday we read Luke's account and talked about the Sea of Galilee, its fish and fishing methods as well as how those first disciples left everything to follow Jesus. Last week we looked at Matthew's version and discussed some specific fishing techniques: where to fish for men, what to use for bait, how to present the lure, etc. If you missed any of these, you can find them on YouTube or our website. Today if you're able, please stand as we read from Mark 1:14-20. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 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. (Pray, sit)

It's amazing how much time and effort we put into our hobbies. We read magazines, go online, talk to others to find out how they land a fish or get a turkey. A couple weeks ago, I asked Hank Hoover and Michael Brill how much corn they bait with and they wouldn't tell me. Many of us are geniuses about fishing and hunting. We come up with all kinds of strategies, lures, gadgets, etc. but sadly we don't even try to fish for men. If only we applied our brainpower to that. If we put as much thought, energy, time and effort into fishing for men as we do fishing for fish or hunting for deer or shopping for bargains, imagine what might happen!

Just like hunting or fishing or shopping, we need to try different strategies. One of the most important strategies of witnessing is our pre-prayer preparation. Say prayer. We should pray for ourselves that our motives might be pure and that the Holy Spirit would empower us even as we were promised in Acts 1. That He would give us

the words to say, the questions to ask, the timing, etc. That He would help us know what the particular fish we're going to talk to will especially respond to. He knows our prospective fish infinitely better than do we. Since He knows them even better than they know themselves, this would be unfair if it weren't for their infinite and eternal good. Imagine having perfect knowledge of what that trophy bass was thinking, feeling, and hungering for. Witnessing without the Holy Spirit's help is pointless, powerless, and fruitless, and it's fishless.

Pray for yourself, but pray also for your fish. Do you have a list of unsaved friends or relatives that you're praying for? If not, start one right now. And then pray for them everyday. If you picture them in hell forever, it will give a fervency, passion, and urgency to your prayers. We've spoken before of an Andrew list. Almost every time Andrew is mentioned in the Gospels, he's bringing somebody else to Jesus. We never have a record of him preaching or even teaching although he certainly did. But instead, he's bringing his brother, the boy with the lunch, some Greeks, and others to meet the Savior. He wasn't the leader his brother Peter was, but he was vital in reaching that first generation of Christians that laid the very foundation for our church for the next 2000 years.

Pray that God will open their hearts. Pray that He will use events in their lives to draw them to Him. Pray that He will give them a nightmare of hell and a glimpse of heaven. Pray that God will use you and that He will put other people in their lives to witness for Him. Sometimes they'll listen to others quicker than they will family. But don't let that stop you. Pray for the Holy Spirit to pry their hearts open some way some how. Something on the radio, TV, internet or social media. I've got a relative I'm praying for God to surround with Christian influences at work, at home, next door, in their social group, etc. Can God do that? Yes, He can, so let's ask Him to.

Pray too even for strangers, for the person who will sit beside you on the airplane, on the bus, at the theatre or at the ball game. It's no accident that God placed them there. Pray for them in advance that their hearts will be open to Jesus and that He will help you speak to them about Him.

One fishing strategy that costs a little money but often yields good results is chumming the water. Say Chum. It's a method of putting ground up meat into the water to attract your target fish. Whenever we go fishing for blues in the Bay, the mate will often chum the water to get their attention.

This often works when fishing for men as well. Say tracts. Gospel tracts are a great way to chum the water. We have several on the table in the fellowship hall. They are a great way to start a conversation or plant a seed. If you share one with a coworker or friend, you can ask them to read it and tell them you'd like to talk about it next time you're together. And then talk about it next time you're together. What did you think of

what you read? Did it make sense? Do you have any questions? Have you ever asked Jesus to save you? Why or why not?

Leave tracts laying behind. Not to make a mess for someone to clean up, be respectful, but to catch someone's eye. Maybe it will get thrown away. Many are. We're out ten cents. Let's say 9 of ten get thrown away, but one results in salvation! Keep some in your car. Carry them into stores and look for people to hand them to or places to leave them. If you leave one for a waitress, be sure to leave a nice tip with it. Nothing turns somebody off quicker than a cheapskate who leaves a tract with no money. Who wants that God? We talked before about attitude. If you're a rude demanding customer who leaves a tract behind, it's almost certain to turn them away from Jesus rather than towards Him. Generosity, kindness, and honesty, on the other hand, are all good flavors to chum the water with. Even if you never catch a fish, they alone glorify the God who called you into this business.

And although we need to go where the hungry fish are, we must be careful not to compromise our faith. Say don't compromise. Charles Spurgeon once said, "We cannot be fishers of men if we remain among them in the same element with them. Fish will not be fishers. The sinner will not convert the sinner. The worldly Christian will not convert the world." We don't have to get drunk to witness to a drunk. Don't compromise your faith.

Take a Daily Bread Devotional or a Keys for Kids or something from our resource table. The banquet invitations, etc. Many of you shared the Christmas gifts, Resting In His Shadow with others. We've run out but even if it costs your own money, it's some of the most eternal investments you can ever make. Life in a Deer Stand for a hunter. Prayers for busy moms, etc. These aren't expenses, they're investments. They're bait. It takes money to make money and it sometimes takes money to win souls to Jesus but it's the best money you'll every spend. John Wesley once said, "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work." Spend and be spent leading people to Jesus!

Free Bibles are also great chum. We try to make them available to folks who want to share one with others. God promised His Word would not return void and we heard how God used a Bible in a trash can to lead Christopher Yuan to Jesus. One young man from Antioch recently put a \$5 bill in each Bible to be sure his coworkers would take them and improve the odds they would read them. The message of this book is worth infinitely more, but they don't know that till they bite on the hook, or on the Book!

Once they've nibbled a little, then you have to set the hook. Say set. Try to get Jesus into their psyche, into their heart. Follow up on the tracts or free Bibles, etc. Ask what they thought of what they read. Or if they have any questions. You can start by saying something like, "I don't want this to be weird, but I really feel like I need to ask

you this.” That’s a great way to raise the issue in a way that disarms them and lowers the temperature for a decent conversation that isn’t so tense.

Then be patient. Say patience. Once a fish is on the line, it may take some time and skill to land it. Patience is important. You may need to “play them.” It may take more than one conversation and more than one week. Don’t hound them, but let them know you’re available anytime they have a question. People you talk to about Jesus probably will have some questions. How do you know the Bible’s true? Why do you say Jesus is the only way? Does God really send people to Hell who reject Him? Why do innocent people have to suffer? The best way to respond is by preparing ahead of time. That’s where Bible Study, Sunday School, apologetic seminars, and other preparation pays huge dividends. Those are great questions and legitimate questions and we’ve got great answers for them that we have shared many times! Be prepared for their questions. Successful salesmen prepare for possible objections customers may have ahead of time. And if you don’t know the answer, find it and get back to them.

One of the best strategies is to answer their question with a question. Greg Koukl’s Tactics provides a great way to do that. Why do you believe that? What do you mean when you say Christian, agnostic, atheist, faith, etc. What if you’re wrong? Now don’t feel like you have to be prepared to answer every question they could possibly have, that you have to know everything, but a fisherman certainly prepares for numerous possibilities. That’s why he takes a tackle box. A pair of pliers, wire cutters, extra hooks, swivels, sinkers, multitools. Get as prepared as you can but get your line in the water. Witnessing is like fishing in that the more you do it, the better you’ll get. You’ll be more prepared. The first time a fish slips your hook prepares you to keep him from doing it as quickly next time.

As we said last week, we must help people think about eternity since 100% of them will live that long in one of two places. We will all be dead a whole lot longer than we will be alive. Dwight Moody once said that if he could get people to think about eternity for just five minutes, he could lead them to Jesus. Just five minutes. Do you have five minutes this afternoon to talk to an unsaved friend or loved one? Tomorrow? Each day? But what do we spend most of our time talking about. Temporary stuff. Our cars, our hobbies, our jobs, our problems. Ask God for the courage as well as the wisdom to know how to take those conversations to the next level.

One good way to do that is by using a current event. Say Disaster. Disasters happen every week somewhere in the world. Floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, plane wrecks, etc. In addition to local events, like the two men who drowned kayaking. This past week, 8 people died in the tornadoes in Houston. As people invariably talk about these disasters, take it to the next level. Ask them, “What do you think happened to those people when they left this earth?” Most people are curious about what happens after

death since 100% of us are headed there. 10 out of 10 people die and will spend eternity somewhere.

George Harrison of the Beatles once said, "There is nothing more important than finding out what is after death. What happens to us after we die." Although he sang the song, My Sweet Lord, it wasn't about the sweet Lord Jesus. It was about a Hindu god he trusted. And unless he changed gods at the last minute, he's in hell today and will be forever. Not on my word, but what God assures us of in His word. We all love John 3:16 and rightfully so, but we also need to remind folks of John 3:18 Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands **condemned already because he has not believed** in the name of God's one and only Son." We gotta tell people that. All roads do not lead to heaven so we must help folks find the one who does and avoid all the ones that don't. Unless they've been saved, they're already on a wrong road. A strong faith in a false god is eternally much worse than a weak faith in the one true God.

And then let's apply that to our own lives. What will matter 20,000 years from now? It won't matter how much money you had, how many awards you won, how many people knew your name, how big a buck you killed or how big a fish you caught. The only thing that will matter is how many people you led to Jesus. Imagine how grateful they will be 20,000 years from now. Imagine heaven filled with redeemed souls that you helped get there by telling them about Jesus. As a teacher, one of the best feelings was having a student come back and say thanks for helping them. One who went on to be successful in some field. Imagine that forever. Think of the person or people in your life who led you to Jesus. Aren't you glad they did or do you wish they had never told you? And think how thankful for them you'll be 20,000 years from now and 200 million years from now and 40 trillion years from now. Imagine if they never did. Their eternity really is in the balance.

Charles Spurgeon also said, "If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over **our** bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees, [begging] them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned or unprayed for." If you don't have a passion for the lost, pray for God to give you one. Pray for Him to give you a burden and to help you see your unsaved friends and relatives in hell. And then to help you reach them for Jesus that they might be in heaven.

Jesus called His followers to be fishers of men and Mark Cahill has said, "If you're not fishing, you're not following." The weather's perfect, the lake is overstocked, the bait is delicious. Let's get our lines in the water this week.