



# Fish

“Symbols, Metaphors, and Similes”

*“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”*

Matthew 4:19-20

How can we fish for men? As we read about Peter and Andrew, we notice that they didn’t hesitate at all. They left their nets without hesitation and followed him. They had been fishermen all their lives, we are told, and they knew that their fishing was their source of revenue. I wonder if they realized in their enthusiasm they were giving up the livelihood they had known for sure.

So often we hesitate when we are asked to do something. It may be a small thing or a big thing. Sometimes our hesitation is a good sign to others and sometimes it is negative. Sometimes people can read that we really don’t want to do what they asked. Peter and Andrew didn’t hesitate in this instance, but we know that at other times Peter did. His hesitation and denial when he was asked if he knew Christ before the crucifixion was a definite negative sign.

We also know in reading about the feeding of the 5,000 people that Andrew was the one that didn’t have any hesitation about Christ’s being able to feed all the people there with the five loaves and two fish.

Later in the same chapter we know that James and John are also asked to put down their nets and follow Christ. According to verse 22 “they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.” They didn’t say “I’ll give you my answer tomorrow.” Or “Let me think about it for a little while.”

We can ask why he chose to compare their work as disciples to fishing. There are so many varieties. They are so numerous, and worth very little. But to some they are a vital part of their food supply. I am constantly amazed at how something so insignificant in my eyes, can be so important to others.

As I studied this passage and references to it, I found out that these men were not just casting a line out there. They were net fisherman. They would cast out heavy nets day after day and wait for the fish. Sometimes they had a good catch and sometimes they did not. It is a lot like seeking to tell people about Christ. Sometimes we have willing listeners, and sometimes we might as well be talking to the wall. Sometimes they have had something happen in their life to let them know they need help and they come seeking Christ. The ways of telling the people about Christ, and the variety of people that the Word is sent to help are every bit as varied as the fish in the sea and the bait that is used. If we want to be a fisher of men, we must pray and then follow the leading God gives us as the answer to our prayer. But we must always be ready because we never know when “the big one” is going to bite!

I have a cousin who is an avid fisherwoman. Each year, she and her husband would go north and fish for salmon. Then they would can it while they were there, bring it home, and serve their entire church congregation a salmon dinner. In my eyes, one fish was just as good as another. And, was it really necessary to go clear up there, just to catch and can salmon? They could buy the salmon in a store here. But they loved to fish and the really enjoyed the salmon and they loved serving it to others. I don’t think I would do that, and yet we should all be that willing to serve, to use our talent(s) to help others and spread God’s love. I think they are being “fishers of men” by their love.

How can we fish for people? We can’t put a fish hook in their noses, like was done in the Old Testament to some people so they would follow the leader. God doesn’t want us to react that way. What do we use for bait?

It would be so easy if we could buy Christianity and eternal life, but that is not the way God wanted it done. He doesn’t want us to “hook” people by some artificial means. He wants us to love. That is sometimes not so easy to do. How do we show love to others?

Young children are taught a little song called “I Will Make You Fishers of Men.”

“I will make you fishers of men,  
Fishers of men, fishers of men.  
I will make you fishers of men,  
If you follow Me.”

I wonder if they ever stop to think of how they are supposed to do that. The other verses go on to say. “I will give you rest.” Are they tired? Do those words mean something to us as we grow older? I don’t think the children ever stop to think about it, but we do. But do we do it?

Prayer: Thank you for all that you have given to us. Sometimes, we are so confused by everything that happens in the world, and we forget that it has all come from you. Help us to be Fishers of Men by showing our love through all you have given to us. Help us to never forget that the way we live speaks volumes. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

1. Are you a fish that needs food? How can you be a "fisher of men?"
2. What is your responsibility as one called by God? Do you really want to be called to be a fisher of men?
3. How much did Peter, Andrew, Jams, and John give up as the first "fishers of men" for Christ? What did they gain?

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