

## **Fishers of People sermon notes 12.7.2015**

Just what is the point of fishing?

Jesus call to first fisher men... Follow me and I will make you fishers of men says Jesus. I think this is a simple passage, it's all about what discipleship is all about.

The central purpose of the church is to make disciples... Jesus gives us the great commission: go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

If you have faith in Christ, then your core identity is: "I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I am a follower of His." That's what counts. That's what matters.

Jesus says to the fishermen on the beach: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

He invites them in ways they can understand. They are fishermen – they know what he's on about.

I think there are 3 important but simple things to learn about discipleship in our verse tonight

### **1. "Follow Me"**

The first two words that Jesus said to Peter and Andrew are an invitation. An invitation of trust in who Jesus is, in his authority. Jesus said, "Follow me." A disciple of Jesus must follow Jesus. It's that simple. Jesus leads. We follow. You can't get any more basic than that. A disciple is someone who accepts Jesus' authority to lead.

Following Jesus means we understand and accept who Jesus is as our Lord, leader, and master of our lives. He is in charge! That's what Emma and Rebekah were saying in the waters of baptism this morning.

It's not that we just believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life, and then forget about Him. No. Being a disciple of Jesus means we daily accept Jesus' lordship over our lives. It's not what I want, it's what He wants. May His will, not my will, be done. That's what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

When Jesus says, "Follow Me," He doesn't say the direction He will take us, or if our path will be easy. If anything, He tells us the journey is going to be hard.

In Matthew 16:24-25, Jesus said to His disciples: (picture)

If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

The promise is: As difficult as the journey may be to follow Jesus in this life, it will be eternally well worth it. You will find your life. You will be fulfilled – not only in this life, but in the next one as well.

So the first part of being a disciple of Jesus is being willing to accept Jesus as our leader, our coach, our boss, our Lord. That's step one to being a disciple.

Are you willing to do that? Yes or no? There are days when my obedience is sadly lacking, how about you?

Step two is found in the next phrase Jesus uses in His invitation to Peter and Andrew.

### **2. "And I will make you"**

These words speak of a process. Discipleship is a process. I will make you. Not I have made you. Not – you are there already! What Jesus is telling us by these words is that discipleship involves Jesus moulding our hearts to become more like His.

A disciple is someone who is being changed by Jesus. Discipleship is an on-going, life-long process. The goal is to become like Jesus. And we will never fully arrive there until the day we die and go to be with Jesus. But until then, we need to be continually pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones when it comes to loving God and loving others. We need to be continually growing in how we love others, forgive others, in how we handle our anger, in how we handle our money, our habits, our thought life, our words.

The growing never stops.

The apostle Paul talks about this process of being changed into the image of Christ in several passages.

- Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Transformation involves a process. It’s an ongoing process of change.

Are you motivated to become more like Christ? So being a disciple means letting Jesus remake you in His image. That involves testing, pruning, a bit of forging – and none of that is every comfortable and easy.

So discipleship is a process, whereby we are being changed by Jesus into His image.

Jesus also said He would make us ...

### **3. “Fishers of men”**

These final three words indicate purpose. It emphasizes action. What does a disciple do? He fishes for a living.

What this means is we join Jesus in His mission to love and reach a lost and hurting world.

For all their lives, Peter and Andrew had been fishers of fish. Fishing was all they knew. They knew that to catch fish, you would throw a net into the water, wait a while, and then haul out fish to sell at the market.

Now Jesus was going to change all that. He is saying to them: “From now on, you are going to fish for people. You’re going to have the privilege of drawing them closer to the Lord. So you’re no longer in the fish business. You’re in the people business. You’re purpose is to help people come to know God and to grow in their relationship with God.”

So what’s the purpose of a disciple? It’s to make disciples. Disciples who make disciples. A disciple is someone who is committed to the mission of Christ.

What is His mission? It’s to make disciples. Jesus put it this way in Luke 19:10, (picture) “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” There is a whole world out there who are spiritually lost. They do not have a relationship with God. We are called to point people to God – as many as we can.

That’s our mission!

**Fisherman church parallel story.**

An interesting story. It challenged me. **We are called to be fishers of men. Not keepers of the aquarium.**

When it comes to our core identity, we should each be able to say: "Who am I? I am a disciple of Jesus Christ who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is actively engaged in the mission of Jesus." That's what is important. So let's be a disciple-making church! Let's go fishing!!!!