

FISHERS OF MEN

The Disciple's Task

"Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17)

Many people followed Jesus while He was upon the earth. From these followers, Jesus chose twelve men to be His apostles. Two of these men were Peter and Andrew. These brothers were fishermen by trade. Jesus approached these men as they were casting their net into the sea and said, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Jesus called these men to a spiritual work using language that they would understand. The work of winning lost souls is much like that of fishing. Fish are caught out of the water. Lost souls are caught out of the sea of sin and sorrow, evil and error, guilt and greed, darkness and death. Fish are caught with a net. Lost souls are "caught" with the gospel – not with gimmicks, food-fun-frolic, worldly philosophies and pop psychology, feel-good stories, bait and switch tactics, etc. Fishermen have to know how to use the net, and where and when to catch the fish. Soul winners learn the most effective ways to reach men with the gospel.

Peter and Andrew knew the work of catching fish, but Jesus would teach them the work of catching men (Luke 5:10). Disciples have to be taught how to "become fishers of men." It does not come naturally to everyone. However, every disciple must learn how to win souls and follow Jesus in this important work.

Disciples are to be made (Acts 14:21). One of the responsibilities of discipleship is to make more disciples. Before Jesus left this world, He commissioned His apostles to go into the world and make more disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). These new disciples were to be taught to observe all things that Jesus had commanded them. The last thing that He had commanded them to do was to go and make disciples.

Why should we be fishers of men? Why should disciples of Jesus be concerned about making more disciples? What is our

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motivation? If we understand and appreciate why we need to save the lost, the question of "How?" will take care of itself.

1. Because We Are Following Jesus

Disciples are followers. We are to follow the teachings and examples of Christ. We are to be like our Master. What did our Master do? If Christ is living in us (Gal. 2:20), what would He have us do?

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). If we are truly following Jesus, we will be found where He was found, doing the important work He was doing.

2. Gives Us A Sense Of Purpose

Jesus called Peter and Andrew for a purpose: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." When they "fished for men," they were fulfilling the purpose of their calling and training.

Disciples are to be made. It is the Lord's will and design for His kingdom that disciples make more disciples.

Many people are longing for a sense of purpose in their lives. The true disciple of Christ has no greater purpose than to be involved in his Master's work, especially that of saving the lost.

3. It Will Please Our Master

As disciples of Christ, who are we trying to please in our lives? We are not trying to please ourselves, because the first step of discipleship is to deny self (Matt. 16:24). We are not trying to please our family, because no one is to come before Christ (Matt. 10:37). We are not trying to please people in the world, because we are not to love the world (1 John 2:15).

We are to do those things that please Christ (2 Cor. 5:9). As a soldier of Christ, we are to please our Commander (2 Tim. 2:4) by faithfully executing His orders to go and make disciples. We are to walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him by being fruitful in every good deed (Col. 1:10). Being entrusted with the gospel, Paul sought to please God with his words, not men (1 Thess. 2:4).

God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9; Ezek. 33:11). He wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4). Thus, God is pleased when we are involved in this important work.

4. Because There Is A Great Need

Jesus felt compassion for those who were lost in sin (Matt. 9:35-38). He was touched by their plight. He had created them, He loved them, and He was aware of the possible fate that awaited them.

As followers of Christ, we are to look upon the lost as He did. The masses of men we see are not mere mortals who are involved in worldly endeavors. They are immortal souls on their way to judgment! Jesus lamented the shortage of workers in the great harvest for souls. Indeed, the harvest is plentiful, but the amount of laborers is pitiful.

There is a need for those who have the truth to share it with the lost. Those lost in sin are not laboring in the harvest. Those promoting error are sabotaging the harvest. Lazy and indifferent Christians are ignoring the harvest. Will we respond to the Master's call for laborers in the harvest with the words of Isaiah, "Here am I! Send me" (Is. 6:8)?

5. Because It Is The Right Thing To Do

2 Kings 7:3-10 tells of four lepers who wandered into the deserted camp of the Syrians and found their "salvation." These men were dying outside the gate of the city. They could not enter the city because of their leprosy. Instead of sitting and waiting to starve to death, they decided to surrender to the enemy. However, when they came to the camp, they found that it had been deserted. They entered a tent, ate and drank, and started carrying away the treasure. They had their "salvation," but in the midst of their joy, they remembered others needed to hear about this discovery they had made.

"Then they said to one another, 'We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household'" (v. 9).

After receiving their "salvation," these lepers realized the right thing for them to do was to let others in the same condition know about it.

Those who have received the forgiveness of their sins know how precious this gift is (Ps. 32:1-2). Such individuals are obligated to let others know this gift is available to them as well.

6. Because It Is Our Duty

Disciples have duties (Luke 17:10). One of these duties is to make other disciples.

The prophet Ezekiel was made a watchman over the house of Israel (Ezek. 33:1-9). The watchman has an important duty – he warns of approaching danger. When he makes the warning, the

The Anatomy Of A Soul Winner

A mind that understands the importance of winning souls.

Eyes that see lost souls.

Ears that hear the "Macedonian Call."

Feet that are ready to take the gospel to the lost.

A heart that cares about the plight of sinners.

people may ignore it and perish, but he has done his duty. However, when he fails to sound the warning, the blood of the people is on his head.

Those who are lost in sin are in danger of losing their eternal souls (John 8:24, Rom. 6:23, Rev. 20:15). They must be warned and rescued. We are the ones who know about the danger. Thus, it is our duty to warn them (2 Cor. 5:9-11).

7. For The Joy Of Saving Souls

The work of making disciples should not be viewed as an undesirable duty, but as a blessing and a privilege. There is great joy when those who are lost have been found (Luke 15:7, 10, 32). Disciples in the first century rejoiced over the salvation of souls (Acts 15:3). There can be no greater joy for a disciple of Christ than to know he has helped someone find his salvation.

Conclusion

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. He calls us to join Him in this important work. A true follower of Christ can be found following in the work of His master – winning souls. We know our soul is worth more than the entire world (Matt. 16:26), but we must realize every soul is equally valuable. Among other things, a disciple is a fisher of men. Let us busy ourselves in the work of casting the net of the gospel upon the sea of humanity and bringing a harvest of great souls upon the shore.

Questions

1. Why did Jesus come to this world (Luke 19:10)? _____
2. Why does Jesus call Peter and Andrew to follow Him (Mark 1:17)? _____

3. Who does a disciple seek to please (2 Cor. 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:4)? _____
4. How can one walk "worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:10)? _____

5. What does God want for mankind (1 Tim. 2:3-4)? _____

6. What dilemma does the Lord discuss in Matthew 9:37-38? _____

7. Why do the four lepers feel compelled to tell others of the good news that they had found (2 Kings 7:9)? _____

8. Name one of the duties that disciples have (Matt. 28:19; Acts 14:21). _____
9. What happens to the watchman who fails to warn of approaching danger (Ezek. 33:6-8)?

10. Why is Paul innocent of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26-27)? _____

11. Why does the father rejoice when his prodigal son returned home (Luke 15:32)? _____

12. Peter and Andrew used a net to catch fish. What are we to use to catch men (Rom. 1:16)?

Thought Question

Do you know someone who needs to hear the gospel? What can you do to help bring that person unto Christ?