

Read: Mark 1:14-20

Faithful Fishermen

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Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

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. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Do you like fishing? Would you like to do it for a living? Before you answer, know this: Being a fisherman is not easy. There are times that they don't catch many fish even though they spend an entire day and night on the water. A professional fisherman can tell you how hard and dirty the work is. Their hands smell of worms and fish. It gets hot, and they sweat. It gets cold, and they shiver. They often get tired and angry. Many fishermen quit.

Here's another question: Do you like being a Christian? Before you answer, know this: Being a Christian can be a lot like being a fisherman. Sometimes it is really hard because it doesn't seem like anything you do works. God tells you to be honest. But when you are honest, you get in trouble with other people. God tells you to love people even when they are mean to you. But when you do, they are still mean to you. God tells you to share the good news about Jesus with people so that they can believe, too. But when you do, someone might ignore you or maybe even make fun of you. You become tired. You become frustrated. You may want to yell, "I quit!"

In the Bible reading today, Jesus calls fishermen to be his first disciples. In the years that followed, the work they did was hard and dirty. Many of them were beaten and killed. And yet these disciples did what Jesus told them to do.

Why would anyone live this life of a fisherman for Jesus? Listen to Jesus' answer: "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" The good news is that Jesus has "caught" you and me. He has put people in your life who have shared God's Word with you. They are the fishermen Jesus used to catch you. They are your parents, your pastors, and all your Christian friends.

Jesus has made you a fisherman, too. He has called you to a life that sometimes feels hard and dirty because of the sin that surrounds us and lives in us. Don't give up! Instead, keep faithfully

living your faith according to God's Word. Keep faithfully sharing your faith with people. Who knows? God may already have a fish he wants you to catch!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Fishing requires bait to catch fish. What good news does God give us to “catch” people?
- Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their jobs as fishermen to follow Jesus. Who does God want to be the most important person in our lives?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What tools does a fisherman or woman use to catch fish? What is the only “tool” that you need to fish for people?
- Agree or disagree. The only way we can obey Jesus' command, “Come, follow me!” is by becoming a pastor or teacher.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- “Repent and believe the good news!” Jesus said. How does that message prepare you for your calling to fish for people?
- Make a list of the important things in your life (family, friends, activities this week, etc.). Then place “following Jesus” at the top of the list. What are ways to make sure that following Jesus remains your *top* priority?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the many people you have put in my life who share God's Word with me. Please help me also to share your Word with others. Amen.