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# **Go Fish: Becoming Fishers of Men**

## **Mark 1:16-20**

### **Introduction**

1. Have you ever noticed that people who love to fish, really love to fish.
2. Some of them have several rods and reels along with a tackle box full of various baits and lures.
3. Some have even invested small fortunes in boats and motors to get them to the fish.
4. These people will fish in all kinds of weather throughout the year.
5. Pictures of fish caught and trophy fish can be found throughout the house.
6. It's amazing what some people will do to catch a fish.
7. Today, we are going to look at a different type of fishing. One to which Jesus called four of His disciples.
8. It is the same fishing in which He wants us to engage today.
9. In Mark 1:16-20, we find these words.

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## **I. Follow Me**

### **A. WHO WERE THE MEN JESUS CALLED?**

1. They were simple men.
  - a. They did not come from the educational establishments of their day.
    - 1) As a matter of fact, Peter and John were recognized as being “uneducated and untrained” (Acts 4:13).
    - 2) Unlike the apostle Paul, they had not been educated by one of the

recognized Rabbi's of their day (i.e., Gamaliel, Acts 22:3).

- b. They were not from among the religious leaders or the aristocracy.
  - 1) None of them were priests or Levites.
  - 2) They were not from among the scribes, Pharisees or Sadducees.
- c. They were not learned or wealthy.
2. They were fishermen — ordinary people.
  - a. They had grown up learning the waters of the Galilee.
  - b. They had been trained in the art of casting nets.
  - c. They were familiar with long hours and hard, backbreaking work.
3. Abraham Lincoln once said, "God must love the common people — he made so many of them."
4. It is as if Jesus said, "Give me twelve ordinary men and with them, if they will give themselves to me, I will change the world."
5. William Barclay wrote, "a man should never think so much of what he is as of what Jesus Christ can make of him."<sup>1</sup>

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## **B. WHAT DID JESUS MEAN WHEN HE SAID, "FOLLOW ME?"**

1. Go where I go.
  - a. You can't catch fish if you don't go near the water.
  - b. You have to go where the fish are — the same is true of catching men.
  - c. Jesus didn't lock Himself away in an ivory tower — He was out among the people.
  - d. If we are to catch men, we must get outside these walls, for that is where they are.

### 3a

2. Watch what I do.
  - a. He spent time with sinners (Luke 5:29-32; 15:1-2)

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<sup>1</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 28.

“The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:30-32)

b. He touched the outcast (i.e., Lepers; Matthew 8:2-3)

“And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”

c. He reached out to the grieving:

- 1) Martha and Mary at the death of their brother, Lazarus (John 11:1-46).
- 2) The Widow of Nain following the loss of her only son (Luke 7:11-15).

**3b**

3. Listen to what I say.

a. Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, but He didn't teach as others did.

b. Following His Sermon on the Mount, Matthew reveals the crowd's reaction and their reason:

- 1) He said that “the crowds were amazed at His teaching” (Matthew 7:28).
- 2) The reason: “He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:29).

c. After John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus changed his teaching method — He used parables — heavenly stories with earthly meanings.

d. He spoke about

- 1) Sowers and Soils (Matthew 13:18-23)
- 2) Tares among Wheat (Matthew 13:24-30)
- 3) Mustard Seeds (Matthew 13:31-32)

- 4) Leaven (Matthew 13:33-35)
- 5) Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
- 6) Costly Pearls (Matthew 13:45-46)
- 7) Lost Sheep, Lost Coins and Lost Boys (Luke 15:1-32)

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## **II. I Will Make You Become**

### **A. TRANSFORMED INDIVIDUALS**

1. These men were fishermen, not fishers of men.
2. Several terms better describe them:

- a. Self-seeking (Luke 9:46; 22:24; Matthew 20:20-28)

“An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.” (Luke 9:46)

“And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.” (Luke 22:24)

- b. Hot tempered (“sons of Thunder,” Mark 3:17; Luke 9:53-56)

“When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”

- c. Weak in faith (Matthew 8:26; 14:31; 16:8)

“He said to them, “Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?” Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.” (Matthew 8:26)

“Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”” (Matthew 14:31)

“But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss

among yourselves that you have no bread?" (Matthew 16:8)

3. However, with the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, Jesus transformed them into bold, proclaimers of the truth who had no concern for their own safety.

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### **B. MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE**

1. God strengthens us through His Spirit in our inner man (Ephesians 3:16).
2. His strengthening produces "endurance" and "patience" and "joy" in our lives (Colossians 1:11).
3. The study of His Word transforms and renews our minds so that we can live out that "good and acceptable and perfect" will of God in our lives (Romans 12:1-2).

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## **III. Fishers of Men**

### **A. THEIR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

1. Twice, Mark uses the word "immediately" to describe the responses of those Jesus called.
2. Peter and Andrew "left their nets and followed Him" (v. 18)
3. James and John left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants and followed Jesus (v. 20).
4. There was no delay:
  - a. No, "give us a day or two to think about it."
  - b. None of today's often asked question, "what's in it for me?"
5. They simply got up and walked away from that which they had known all their lives in order to follow Jesus.

#### 6a

### **B. A CHANGE OF VOCATION**

1. No longer would these fishermen spend their days fishing the waters of the Galilee for fish to sell at the market.
2. Now, they would travel the roads of Judea, Samaria and the farthest parts of the earth fishing for men (Acts 1:8).

“You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth”

3. They would go forth telling about a man who lived among them, walked the dusty streets of Judea and Galilee, was crucified on a Roman cross, buried and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”

4. Again and again they would profess this man to be the “Son of God” (Peter, Acts 2:36; Paul, Acts 9:20 ).

## **Conclusion**

1. In order to catch fish, you have to go where the fish are:
  - a. The weather may be perfect.
  - b. We may have all the right equipment.
  - c. But we will never catch fish if we don't go where the fish are.
2. Statistics from a few years ago revealed that only 3% of all lost people come to church on their own.
3. This means that 97% of those who are lost are outside these doors, alienated from God and without Christ.
4. We must go where they are and share the Good News.
5. We will never see any souls brought to Christ if we never go fishing.
6. What about you, are you ready to go fishing?