

Feb. 9, 2025 Sermon "Going Fishing" (Rev. Patricia Wentworth)

Billy D. Strayham shares this story-

in 1992, the Washington Redskins won the **Super Bowl** with an explosive victory over the Buffalo Bills. Seventy five thousand people gathered on the mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument to cheer their team and Coach.

Four days later, Chuck Colson called the Redskins' office to see if any football players could attend a rally at a prison the next day. Many of the players had given their life to Christ.

Joe Gibbs the head coach answered the phone and told Colson that all the players had left the city for a well-deserved rest. With his characteristic humility, Joe Gibbs asked Colson, "Will I do?"

Colson immediately accepted the offer by the coach of the championship Washington Redskins. Five days after winning the **Super Bowl**, Joe Gibbs could have opened any door in Washington DC but he was willing to walk behind the locked steel doors of the penitentiary for the District of Columbia to speak to men about his faith in Christ.

Joe Gibbs stood up to speak to the cheers, whistles and applause of 500 prisoners five days after he had won the most prestigious event in pro sports. 1

Jesus came to give our lives purpose, hope, peace, and assurance of everlasting life with Him.

---

1 Billy D. Strahyam, Sermons online.

Luke tells us in chap. 4 that Jesus, had healed a man with an unclean spirit,. 2

Soon after that healing ,“Jesus entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. <sup>39</sup> Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.”<sup>3</sup>

Many people began to bring their loved ones to Jesus and Jesus would lay His hands on them and heal them. <sup>41</sup> Moreover, demons also came out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.<sup>[a]4 4</sup>

As chapter 5 beings, Jesus is standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and as usual, a crowd had gathered around Him, to “hear the word of God”.<sup>5</sup>

.....  
2 Luke 4:36-37 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

3 Luke 4:38-39 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

4 Luke 4:41 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

5 Luke 5:1 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Wanting everyone to be able to hear Him, and knowing that a lake provided a natural amplification area, Jesus approached two boats on the shore. He knew at least one of which belonged to Simon. The fishermen apparently had finished fishing and were washing their nets. 6

Fishing for a living was a natural choice—living by the water, but it was no easy career! Even skilled fishermen could not always predict when the fish would be biting. Some nights their nets came up empty.

Jesus got into Simon’s boat and asked him to move the boat a bit farther out in the lake. Simon complied with Jesus’s request and Jesus sat down in the boat.7

Jesus sat down! I thought of two reasons for this, 1. Unlike teachers today, who stand at podiums while their students sit in rows of chairs, in those times, a rabbi would sit with his listeners gathered around him on the floor and the rabbi would teach from there,

2 Jesus didn’t want to literally rock the boat! (which He did figuratively on many occasions!)

When Jesus had finished teaching the people, He turned His attention to Simon

.....

6 Luke 2 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

7 Luke 3 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

. “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” 8

Jesus didn’t seem to be making a suggestion, or sharing a random thought, but more like a command.(Jesus knew what He was planning to do.) Clearly Simon didn’t think it was a great idea.

“Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” 9

Simon and his helpers were tired, frustrated. They were experienced fishermen, yet they hadn’t caught a single fish all night!

But Simon was beginning a relationship with Jesus. He had witnessed Jesus heal his mother-in-law, he knows that Jesus is both powerful and caring. Simon calls Jesus, Master”. Simon was willing to do what Jesus told him to.

With Jesus around amazing things happen!

Verse 6 says: “When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst.”10

.....  
8 Luke 5:4 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

9 Luke 5:5 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

.10 Luke 5:6 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Luke tells us “For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. 11

Simon and his helpers were careful to bring the fish safely to shore., All those fish would bring a great income and blessing to those who received them. Everyone was amazed! And I’m sure they were thankful that Simon had obeyed Jesus’ instructions!

But instead of shouting, “Thank You, Jesus!”,

Simon fell down at Jesus’s knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!”<sup>12</sup>

What? Simon sounds like the prophet Isaiah, who said

“Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” <sup>13</sup>

..... ..

11 Luke 5:9-10 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

...12 Luke 5:8 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

13 Isaiah 6:5 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

What were Isaiah and Simon afraid of? God's anger at their sins?

When Simon saw the miraculous catch of fish, he realized that Jesus was much more than a good preacher, or a talented healer, He was the Son of God!

Both Isaiah and Simon felt that they were not worthy to be in the presence of God. Isaiah was troubled by some unclean words he had spoken. Perhaps some sin was nagging at Simon as well.

Isaiah was assured "Now that this (coal) has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." 14  
Isaiah's sins were forgiven, he was relieved and ready to serve God.

Isaiah said, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I, send me!"15

But Simon wasn't ready to say that yet, He knew that he had fallen short and he was afraid.

Jesus wasn't there to condemn Simon, or to put him down, , but to call him into ministry. Jesus had great plans for Simon!

.....

.14 Isaiah 6:5 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

.15 Isaiah 6:8 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

We never need to fear our past, the blood of Christ has cleansed us. We can be at peace, and to joyfully serve Him.

Jesus offers to Simon, and to each of us, God's Grace, forgiveness, Eternal life and love, and the ability to follow Him and serve others.

'Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." <sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.<sup>16</sup>

I don't think that Simon, or any of the other men that Jesus would call to be His disciples could fully understand what "Fishing for people" meant.

Probably very surprised that Jesus would want to use these uneducated folks, skilled only in fishing, not evangelism, in His work, yet they trusted Him!!

Simon and the others walk away from their boats, their families, , to begin a new life, fishing for people, following Jesus.

,,,  
,.16 Luke 5:10-11 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

There is an old legend out of India about a water bearer who had two large water pots in which he carried water daily from the river to his master.

One of the pots was perfect. The other one had a crack in it.

The perfect pot always arrived at the master's quarters perfectly full. The cracked pot was always half empty.

„Embarrassed and ashamed, the cracked pot said to his carrier one day, ‘Why don't you get rid of me? I never arrive at the master's quarters more than half full.’

‘Ah’, replied the water bearer, ‘you don't know the full story.

Look beside the road where I carry you each day. There are flowers growing that I pick for the master's table.

The flowers only bloom on your side of the road. It is your cracked pot that waters them." 17

Jesus doesn't look for perfect people, He calls the men and women who are willing to serve Him by helping others.

God called Isaiah, Simon, James and John, and many others including you and me! Because of Jesus Christ, Each of us is called by God to serve, each in the way God intends for us to.

17ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc., Faith Breaks, by J. Howard Olds