



**Sermon for Sunday,
January 25th, 2026**

Text: Matthew 4:12-25

Recorded by Tammy Springer

Let us Pray: *Lord God, You have given us the greatest Gift to fill our hearts with JOY. As we come before You this morning to hear Your Word, help us to listen with eagerness to know more about You! May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in Your sight, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.*

Imagine you are hiking and someone in the group says, “Let’s go *this way*.” You say, “Well, where does it lead? How far is it? Is it a clear trail?” “Don’t worry about it,” says the self-appointed leader, “Just Follow Me.” **What would you do? Would you be willing to blindly follow that leader?** I suppose it might depend on how well you knew the person. Suppose you didn’t know them at all? Would you follow?

This is kind of what happened in our Gospel lesson for today (Matthew 4:12-25). **Jesus was at the beginning of His ministry** and he left Nazareth to go to Capernaum, which was located on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus’ ministry can be summed up in these three ways:

His MESSAGE: The Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 4:17)

His MANDATE: Follow Me (Matt. 4:19)

His MINISTRY: Discipleship (Matt. 4:20)

As **He was walking by the lake**, he saw two fishermen casting a net into the sea: Simon and his brother Andrew. **Notice that Jesus doesn’t start with the higher-ups in government. He starts with everyday, ordinary fisherman.** Fishing was central to Galilee’s economy and fishing was hard, physical labor, requiring patience and teamwork. By choosing fisherman, Jesus chose men familiar with struggle, persistence and community life.

Then, down the shore, he saw two other fishermen, brothers James and John. Jesus called to them, “**Follow Me** and I will make you fishers of men....” (Matthew 4:19,21) The request

itself is rather unusual. But their response is even more amazing! Matthew tells us, “**Immediately.....**” they left their nets....their boats.....their father.....and they followed Him!! Common sense tells us that no one in their right mind would follow a complete stranger!

Jesus had gained popularity in the region since His baptism in the Jordan by John. Perhaps these fishermen had heard of Him? Or, perhaps there was just something commanding and different about Jesus that prompted them to IMMEDIATELY drop everything, their source of income for living, and follow Him. In any case, **they were responding in faith to follow Jesus.**

Following Christ involves more than just making a LIVING. Jesus wanted them to make a LIFE. **Jesus wanted to teach them about discipleship – becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.** A follower is one who seeks to imitate another. Jesus wanted to teach them to apply what they already know about fishing to His calling on their lives to be fishers of people! Now, no matter how good a fisherman you think you are, you’re never so good that you can’t learn from a master. **Do you think fishing for fish is the same as fishing for people???**

Here are some “fish” facts that apply to fishing for fish AND for people:

1. No one ever wanders into a lifestyle of fishing. No one ever just wanders into a lifestyle of evangelism. Most people are intentional about both.
2. There are more fish being born everyday than there are being caught. Jesus said the fields are white unto harvest with souls needing to know the Good News.
3. The primary reason that people are not catching fish is that they are not fishing! Less than 5% of Christians ever share the Good News of Jesus or are willing to disciple someone.
4. The two main reasons that people do not catch fish are
 - a. They don’t know how
 - b. They don’t see a need.
5. We need to **learn** how to fish! How? Well, either formal lessons or “on the job” training! But we have to be **WILLING** to learn!

Fishermen take every opportunity they can to go fishing. We, as Christians, need to take every opportunity we can to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. The biggest fear people have is not knowing what to say. **What did Jesus say?** He preached the same message as John the Baptist: **Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!** Remember, repentance means a radical change of mind, heart and life. It is not just regret – it is **transformation.** Repentance is the doorway into God’s Kingdom. **The “Kingdom of**

Heaven” was a revolutionary idea to the people at that time. Many expected a political kingdom, but Jesus announced a spiritual one.

Now, that probably doesn’t mean we stand on a street corner and shout out, “Repent, Repent!” But, sharing our story of what Jesus has done in our lives and how the Holy Spirit led us to repent and turn towards Christ is something we can all do.

Fishermen need fishing gear. What do Christians need? The Word of God and Prayer. Knowing the truth of God’s Word comes from reading the Bible. Planting God’s Word in our minds and hearts. And, we know how God has worked in our lives and what He means to us. That is what we share with other people. Showing unconditional love, compassion, understanding is all part of sharing the Good News. The Holy Spirit will lead us, guide us and give us the words to say if we ask Him (prayer). Prayer prepares the hearts of people to receive God’s Truth.

Finally, **fishermen use a different bait for different fish.** Isn’t it wonderful how God has made us all uniquely different? If one of us can’t connect with someone, maybe another one will. We just have to be open and willing for God to use us and He will put people in our path. It is really amazing how it works, but He does!

Now, what if you don’t even like fishing or you aren’t good at it? Not ALL people like to go fishing, believe it or not! Why would some people not like to go fishing? Well, for **one** thing they may not know how. Maybe they have never been fishing. **Secondly**, they maybe just don’t want to – they have no interest. **Thirdly**, they may not like fish. They might be too smelly for some people. **Fourthly**, some people are afraid of water. They maybe can’t swim and are afraid they will drown. **Some people** may be afraid they will catch too big of a fish and they won’t be able to handle it or they might scare the fish off for everyone else.

There is an old Andy Griffith show that had a story line about the first day of the fishing season. Everybody was getting out their equipment and talking about the big day. Along came Howard, the town ‘jinx’ and nobody wanted to go with him. He would ruin the fishing for everyone else. The end result was that soft-hearted Andy gave in and took Howard with him. And, wouldn’t you know?! Guess who caught the illusive biggest fish in the lake that everyone had been trying to catch for years? Howard!

We can’t predict how God will use us.....we just need to be willing to follow Him and trust that He will work in and through us. God is more concerned with our **AVAILABILITY** than our **ABILITY**. He is looking for common, ordinary people who are **WILLING** to trust in Him.

I wonder, would we be as willing as those first four fishermen to leave jobs and family to follow Jesus?? The disciples left everything to follow Jesus. What areas of our lives require a deeper level of commitment to Christ? How can we take steps to strengthen our devotion to Him?

We can **Follow Jesus** immediately and willingly, Share the message of the **Kingdom of Heaven**, and make **disciples** of others.

We can say with the hymnwriter,

*“I can hear my Savior calling.....
Where He leads me I will follow.....
I’ll go with Him, with Him.....
All the way.”*

Amen.