

# Weaving the Word

## *Focused on the Fish*

Part 15 – October 19, 2014

Welcome to a place where we count the cost to follow the One who paid the price!



When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, He revealed himself as the Right Hand of God, and God's Arm, reaching out to save. And, the religious leaders conspired to kill Him, so He brought His disciples back to Bethsaida (House of Fish), the village of **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN**. And, the masses followed.



Today, we're focusing on the astonishing catch that almost sank the two boats of four followers: **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN**.

Simple question: **How many fish is enough?**

Habakkuk (1:14) says, *"God has made man like fish in the sea."*



And what a profound picture Jesus painted for the angels to ponder: **The Son of God teaching the Word of God, from a small, bobbing, fishing boat, on the Sea of Galilee, at the House of Fish, fishing for men among the score in His school on the shore.**

Then, after the teaching, came the astonishing catch that was left for the crowd to consume.



But, just before He called the fish, and fed the masses, **I wonder if He read what Moses had said when he questioned God's ability to meet the needs of His chosen people.**

"Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?" The Lord answered Moses, "Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you." – Numbers 11:22b-23 NIV



So, how many fish is enough?

**Have you ever been blessed with failure?**

**If someone is going down a wrong path, with great success, sending them further, faster, is their success a blessing or a curse?**

Anyone who has attempted suicide, and lived to tell about it, should know all about what it means to be blessed with failure.

**How many times have you perceived failure as a curse, when in fact it was a blessing** – to get you, keep you, or return you, to the right path, your true calling, your created purpose?

Why did Jesus need the boat?

**Because of the crowd** he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, **to keep the people from crowding him**. For he had healed many, so that **those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him**. – Mark 3:9-10 NIV

Why weren't **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN** holding them back?

Because, **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN** were *busy*; they ...

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who **were washing their nets**. – Luke 5:1-2 NIV

Why were they washing their nets? They'd gone fishing.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, **[Peter]** "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." – Luke 5:4-5 NIV



Can you imagine trying to stay awake while Jesus was teaching in that swaying boat, exhausted from fishing ... *all night*?

And, **why hadn't they caught a single fish?**

Because, **God was blessing them ... with failure.**

**Why were they fishing in the first place?**

Well, **they were being prudent**. Practical. Money's tight. Food, scarce. Clothes wear out.

So, when they return to the boats they'd left, to follow Jesus, they can't resist the lure to return to some financial success.

**But, when the crowds of the diseased crush in, and their Master needs 'em most as "fishers of men", they're tied up in their nets and tired out, having returned to being "fishers of fish".**

They *were* being prudent. But, **in the pursuit of meeting their needs, they made the mistake of forsaking their first priority.**



Sea of Galilee from the Mount of Beatitudes

Now, Jesus will lead them directly from here to the hillside where He'll deliver His well-known Sermon on the Mount.

Saying, among other things ...

"You cannot serve both God and Money." – Matthew 6:24b NIV

Now, He doesn't say, "You cannot *make* money," **money can serve you, you just can't serve money.**

### **We must choose our Master.**

And, though this sermon is delivered among the crushing masses, the point of His message is directed directly at His *disciples*.

And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all. And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." – Luke 6:19-20 NAS

You see, **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN** had been worrying (**which is normal but unnecessary**), and it led them to question Him, which is why He quotes 'em, when He scolds 'em, on that hillside.

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." – Matthew 6:31-34 NIV

So, back in the boat, when Jesus had finished teaching the Word, He began teaching the lesson, to **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN**. They want *fish*? He'll *give* 'em fish! He'll swamp 'em with fish.

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they [**PETER and ANDREW**] signaled their partners [**JAMES and JOHN**] in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. – Luke 5:6-7 NIV

Their focus was *still* on the fish! "***Catch the fish! Catch the fish!***" *Until* they begin to go under and lose everything. "***Pitch the fish! Pitch the fish!***"

**And, Jesus was *still* in their boat ... patiently watching it sink.**

**So many don't see it till after they've sunk.** Some never do.

And even those who do, don't always turn to the Lord and confess.

But, the disciples did, on the brink of the sink!

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees [He can't fall at His feet; they're buried in fish!] and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. – Luke 5:8-10 NIV

What's the sin he's confessing? **Trusting in himself; focusing on the fish; and doubting, even for a moment, that Jesus would easily supersede his *biggest dreams and highest expectations.***

**No matter what earthly needs go unmet, He is the eternal source.**

**When cancer comes, or my job goes, or I lose my house, or my child rebels, He is enough.**

And, there is no other Way.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything [their fantasy catch; ultimate success; biggest payday ever!] and followed him. – Luke 5:11 NIV

**They've been captured by the sovereign Savior, the true Fisher of Men, being so profoundly hooked that they'll walk away from any degree of material gain, to remain by His side, in His will.**

A year earlier, He calls **PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN** to follow, promising to *make 'em* fishers of men. A year later, He says, "from now on you *will* catch men," and He calls 'em up to that hill.

... he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named **PETER**), his brother **ANDREW, JAMES, JOHN** ... [and the rest] – Luke 6:13b-14a NIV

And they truly left everything and followed Him as fishers of men.

**This doesn't mean you quit your day job to follow Jesus. It means you identify *your* calling, and you guard it as your first priority, and you keep the secondary things secondary.**

And, you trust. ***It's all about the trust.*** And, when things get lean, whether death, disease, divorce, or depression, you lean not on yourself; and, don't return to the old ways you left behind, just to get a false fix of security.

**It's never prudent to forsake our Savior for a little success; *especially the kind that comes as a curse.***

So, how much *does* it cost to follow the One who paid the price?

**Everything that would lead you down the wrong path.**

And, *how many fish is enough?*

**According to the enemy, *just enough* to sink your boat.**