

Mark 1:14-20

From the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, there has been an interesting phenomenon in the world, known as **work**. I think it is safe to say that **nobody** works for **nothing**, but the things for which they work are actually quite **different**. Some people work only for the **money**. As long as they are paid a fair and liveable wage, they are happy. Others work for the **satisfaction** it provides. There is a tremendously satisfying feeling in knowing that you have done something **well**, or that you have successfully **mastered** a challenge, or that you have **helped** someone else. These people are happy just to know that their talents are **needed**, and their services are **appreciated**. But for the **Christian**, there is still **another** reason for working - a very **important** reason. **Work** gives us the opportunity to serve our **Lord** - to do what pleases **Him** - and to do what furthers the welfare of His **kingdom** on the earth.

Now, wouldn't it be nice to find a job which successfully meets **all** of the above reasons for working? Such a job **exists**, and it can be **yours**, if you become a **fisherman - The Lord's Fisherman**. Being a full-time laborer in the Lord's kingdom as a pastor, teacher, or staff-minister provides you with a liveable wage, a tremendous amount of satisfaction, and the assurance that you are helping to further God's kingdom here on the earth. I would like you to think about your future very **seriously** today as we consider the question, "**Will You Be The Lord's Fisherman?**"

Some of you might be saying, "**Sure**, I'd like to work full-time for the Lord, but what does it **take**? Do I have the **qualities** for which Jesus is looking in His fishermen?" Let's see if we can **find out** from our text for today. We read, "*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 **make** you fishers of **men**.'*" Notice that the disciples didn't come to **Jesus** and **ask** if they could help. It wasn't **their** idea to tag along with Jesus, so they could see the **wonders** He would perform, or hear the amazing **words** He would speak. It was **Jesus'** idea. He came to **them**, and **asked** them to fill the positions which He had **established** for them.

It is both **interesting**, and also **comforting**, to know that Jesus didn't ask Peter and Andrew a lot of **questions** about what **talents** they had, or about the things they **could** or **could not** do. Instead, He asked only one thing of them. He

asked them to **follow Him**. Can **you** follow Jesus? Of **course** you can - you've been **doing** it from the time of your **baptism**! It's the most natural thing in the world for those who **love** Jesus, to **follow** Jesus.

But, **following** Him was just the **beginning**. From **there**, Jesus **took over**, and began to make these followers into pastors and teachers. He didn't expect them to be prepared **already**, but instead, He promised to **train** them personally. Jesus said, "*I will **make** you **fishers of men**.*" I'd like you to put yourself back into **grade school** for a moment. Imagine how **unreasonable** it would have been for a teacher to give us 100 **algebra** problems to solve, when we were just learning how to **add** and **subtract**! We would have been completely **overwhelmed** and said, "I just **can't** do it. I don't know **how**!"

Jesus' **disciples** would have said the same thing. "Lord, we are fishers of **fish**, not fishers of **men**! We don't know **what** to **do**!" It was going to take some **time**, but they would gradually **learn** what to do as they followed **Jesus**. They would hear **His** words, and see **His** works. They would witness His **suffering** and **death**. They would view His **empty tomb**. And after His resurrection from the dead, Jesus would prove to them that He was **alive** again, and He would **continue** to teach them what His resurrection **meant** - for **them**, and for **all** people. But **none** of those things could take place for them, unless they **first** followed **Jesus**. Jesus' disciples had their **work** cut out for them.

Did you ever stop to consider who the followers of Jesus **were**? Among the original 12 there were several **fishermen**, a **tax** collector, and even a political **activist**. Among **others** who followed Jesus, Luke was a **doctor**, while Paul was a **Pharisee**. They were just **ordinary** people - people who had come from different **backgrounds** - people who had differing amounts of **education**. But, the one quality which **connected** them all, was that they all **followed Jesus**!

And with that in mind, we'll turn the spotlight back to **you** again. The Lord has given each one of you different **talents** and different **abilities**. He has brought you together into this Christian congregation from different **backgrounds**. But there is one common tie which binds us all **together**: Jesus has revealed Himself to us as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world - and so, **we follow Him**. Now the question remains, how will we **respond** to the Lord's invitation when He says, "*I will **make** **you** a **fisher of men**?*"

Now, I **realize** that not **everybody** is cut out to be a pastor or a teacher. But that **doesn't** mean that you can't serve as His **fisherman**. In more recent years, our Synod has been making use of a training program for **staff ministry**. The people who enter **this** part of the Lord's work will be equipped to **assist** pastors, teachers, and the members of congregations in areas of ministry like **youth** work, **family** ministry, **evangelism**, and **administration**. It's just one more avenue which allows individuals to serve the Lord with the talents He has **given** to them.

Hopefully, many of you are at least **considering** full-time work for your Lord as a pastor, teacher, or staff minister. But anyone who has **gone fishing** can tell you that there is a tremendous difference between **wanting** to catch fish, and actually **catching** them! A good fisher of **fish** needs the right **equipment** - and so does a good fisher of **men**. Fortunately for us, the Lord **supplies** us with all the right equipment. We **know** it's the right equipment, because it has already been **tested** by our Lord Jesus **Himself**.

This equipment comes in a **simple** and **compact** package. It is a **message** - a message of **Good News**. In our text we hear that, "*Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the **Good News** of God. 'The time has come,' He said. 'The kingdom of God is near. **Repent, and believe the Good News.**'*" When God sent Jesus to the earth, the kingdom of God was **nearer** than it had ever been before. In Christ's **life, death, and resurrection** are found the key to **our** eternal life.

That is extremely **Good News** - and our **response** to that news is to **repent**. Dear friends, face the real **depth**, and the **extent** of **sin** in your heart and life. Look at how **far away** you are from the holiness and purity which God **demand**s. **Repent** of your sins, and **believe** the **Good News**. Recognizing that we are sinners does **not** mean that we have to carry the **burden** of those sins. That's where **believing** takes over. We believe the **Good News** that **Jesus** is the Lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world. So, don't even **try** to carry the burden of your sin. Place it on the shoulders of **Jesus**, the One who wants to carry that burden **for** you, and let Him take your sins **away** - far, far away!

That's the **equipment** which Jesus gave to His disciples - a divine **message**, with the divine **power** to bring lost mankind the **hope** of eternal life. That's what it means to be **the Lord's fisherman**. What about you? Would you like to help your neighbor deal with the greatest **problem** he faces, and do the **Lord's** work at the same time? Would you enjoy **comforting** a child, or **assuring** an adult that

God loves them dearly, and that in **Jesus** He has **forgiven** all their sins? The position is **there**, the equipment is **waiting**, and you have heard the Lord's promise, "*Come, follow Me, and I will **make** you fishers of men.*" In conclusion, let's bow our heads in **prayer**:

Lord Jesus, we praise You for the sacrifice of love which You brought on the cross for all mankind. We thank You for causing us to be caught in the net of the Gospel, which Your **fishermen** threw out to us in Your Word and Sacrament - bringing us to faith in **You** as our Savior. Do not allow the casting of the net of the Gospel to **cease** because of a shortage of willing fishermen. Move the hearts of young men and women throughout our Synod, so that they may begin **preparing** to join the ranks of Your fishermen - that in our **pulpits**, in our **classrooms**, and throughout the **world**, Your life-saving **Gospel** may be shared, and Your work may continue. Amen.