
DEEPER WATERS

Going Deeper in God's Love for the World

When was the last time you went fishing?

Jesus made it very clear when He first called His disciples to follow Him that synonymous to following Jesus means being a fisher of people. The call was one in the same. It's a little bit like the great commandment to love God and love others. You are not supposed to do one without the other.

In every account found in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10), of when Jesus called His first disciples, He said come follow me and you will fish for people, or I will send you to fish for people.

For most people the idea that Jesus expects that following Him is explicitly linked to reaching out to others with His love, is a little bit terrifying. But don't be afraid!

Fishing for People

The same Simon who is undone by the miraculous haul of fish (Luke 5:8-10), becomes Peter who stood boldly before a crowd and realised the prophetic act of Jesus making him a fisher of people, when about 3000 repented and became followers of Jesus (Acts 2:42).

We shouldn't be afraid of being sent to fish for people because we have the presence of Jesus by His Holy Spirit with us. Ordinary fisherman Simon becomes the first great evangelist sharing the Good News and love of God with thousands.

Simon who becomes Peter on whom Jesus builds His church, didn't have at his roots, great wisdom, or talent, or spirituality, but he responded to God's call. God calls whom God calls—and God often gets the best mileage out of the least likely candidates. Jesus says, "For whoever is least among you all, this one will be great" (Luke 9:48).

He chose broken people, far too familiar with the depths of sorrow: social outcasts, misfits, prostitutes, tax collectors, zealots and poor fishermen. He's counting us all in on His call to follow Him and become fishers of people.

Jesus the Fisherman

Jesus got into one of the boats belonging to Simon, and it seems He never got out (Luke 5:4-8). Not only did Jesus not get out of the boat it was because He was in the boat that Simon experienced the miraculous catch.

Jesus is the cause of the miraculous haul of fish, and likewise Jesus is the reason that people come to faith in Him. We aren't the ones tasked with the responsibility of the catch – that's Jesus' job, we are obedient to Jesus and go fish for people, but who ends up in our nets is up to Jesus.

God is strengthening and stretching our nets, we join Him in doing the preparatory work of loving God, loving others, being ready to give reason for the hope we have in Jesus, declaring and demonstrating Christ's Kingdom, and living lives that speak well of Jesus in everything we do.

He draws people near to Him and into a saving relationship with Him as we faithfully prepare and obediently lower down our nets.

Fishing Together

Did you notice that this isn't a solo expedition into the deeper waters (Luke 5:6-7)?

Also, it was more than Simon who responded to the invitation to follow Jesus and fish for people (Luke 5:10-11).

The call for everyone who accepts the invitation to follow Jesus is also a call to be sent to fish for people.

Deeper in our Expression of God's Love to the World

Picture what it would look like for the Riverlife family when:

- + Transformational encounters release/propel people into their everyday frontline opportunities.
- + People are so in love with Jesus they can't help but talk about Him everywhere they go.
- + Declaring and demonstrating God's supernatural love is as commonplace and passionately displayed in the community as it is in our worship on a Sunday.
- + People following their call to be fishers of people but celebrating together as a family.
- + Meet the needs of our community, pastor the city of Brisbane and release revivalists to the nations.

Jesus is still calling us to follow Him. He's still calling us to fish for people. He's still inviting us out into deeper waters so that He might do the miraculous.

This year God is calling us as we go to seek and save the lost to go a little deeper – will you go fishing?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that we have often separated the call to follow Jesus with His command to fish for people?

2. What has previously stopped you from being sent to fish for people, or to make it a priority?

3. What does it mean for you to know that the catch isn't your responsibility?

4. How is it that we can strengthen our nets in readiness for fishing?

5. What does deeper water look like for you in the context of ReachingOut to others?

6. Spend some time asking the Lord where it is that He is asking you to lower your net. Pray that God might draw people to Himself as you faithfully obey Him in going fishing for people.