October 29, 2017

Series: What is Truth?

**Gone Fishin’**

John 21:1-14

No Growth Track today … begin next week with Step 1 …

**Intro:** Fishin’ - Today’s message is a Fish Story - but not one of those enhanced fish stories … this is a real fish story …

8th grade - book report - in the library searching - Teacher recommended The Old Man and the Sea … said it was a great book - I’ve since found out it is very popular - supposedly very influential - Ernest Hemingway …

Gotta tell ya - it’s one of the most boring books I’ve ever read!

I like to fish when I’m going with people who know how to fish - i.e, know where to fish, what bait to use, and how to clean them …

My uncle in Florida -

Had a blast one night until 2 a.m. - San Sebastian inlet on the inter-coastal waterway - just caught one - but it was just big enough to keep!

We’re at the end of the John’s book about Jesus - he’s been telling us answers to the question, “What is Truth?”

1st message - in the story of Jesus’ death by crucifixion, we saw 5 simple truths:

* Jesus is Lord
* The Bible is true
* Jesus cares
* Jesus died for you
* You have a choice

2nd message - in the story of Jesus’ resurrection, we saw how His closest followers moved beyond uncertainty - to understanding - then making a difference by telling others the story of Jesus’ resurrection.

Last week, Knowledge of the Truth leads to real peace!

* Peace through forgiveness
* Peace through faith
* Peace through purpose

What’s this got to do with fishin’? We’re going to find out!

Has anyone ever asked you the question, “What’cha fishin’ fer?”

Some like freshwater fishing - crappie, bluegill, trout, catfish … some like deep sea fishing - marlins, swordfish, grouper …

Maybe I could rephrase the question -

Why do you fish? What is the purpose of fishing?

For some, it’s to catch fish! For some, it’s to relax - get your mind off the craziness of life - get some peace.

John 21:1-6 - Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

In further answering this question, What is truth?, let me give you two simple yet profound facts about fishing:

**> God is in charge of the fish.**

Why did they go fishing? Because they liked to fish!

It had been there business! They were fishermen! What do fishermen do? They fish!

(It’s not that complicated!)

However - they weren’t catching any fish!

Cast your net on the other side - are you kidding me? What difference is that going to make? At this point they hadn’t recognized that it was Jesus, so why would they pay any attention to this guy?

Luke says that something similar happened at the very beginning - when they were first meeting Jesus -

So - they probably thought - I know this is crazy - but it worked once before!

The last time it happened, it was Jesus, and He told them He was going to make the fishers of men. They may have forgotten that point

Jesus tells them to cast the net on the other side - they do this - they get a bunch of fish - this happens twice -

Jesus says, “You will be fishers of men.”

John 6:44 - For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me.

God is in charge of the fish - and God is in charge when we are fishing for men.

We should be trying to reach people in the places where God leads us -   
  
He’s been telling me for three years now that we need to build a bridge to the next generation.

Have you ever used bread for bait? Camp …

John 6:48,51 - Yes, I am the bread of life! …I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.

Maybe when we go fishing for people, the bait we should use should just be simply Jesus.

It’s not that complicated -

* Do you know Jesus?
* Do you know what He’s done for you?

People all over Facebook aren’t ashamed to tell people about their weight loss program, their wraps, their patches, their stop smoking miracle cures … and they don’t mind making money off of those things -

I don’t mind it either - free market - free enterprise - if something has helped you and you can help others, and make a profit at the same time - YES - go for it!

But shouldn’t we be just as enthusiastic to tell everyone about the One who has forgiven us of all of our sins and changed our lives?

How do you fish for people? Just use Jesus as the bait! Just tell them how Jesus has changed your life! Anywhere and everywhere you can - and yes - you will get a reward for that - it’s better than profit!

Here’s some guidelines:

**We are responsible to go fishing.**

John 20:21 - As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.

If you are a follower of Jesus, this is not a matter of what gift He has given you - it’s a matter of using your gift to bring others to Him …

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year, those who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings for local fishing headquarters. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn’t do, however, they didn’t fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, to promote the idea of fishing in faraway straps and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived. Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, to decide what new streams should be through about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Large, elaborate, and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Over the years courses were offered on the needs of the fish, the nature of fish, how to define fish, the psychological reactions of fish, and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in “fishology.” But the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. Presses were kept busy day and night to produce materials solely devoted to fishing methods, equipment, and programs to arrange and encourage meetings, to talk about fishing. A speakers’ bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

After one stirring meeting on “The Necessity of Fishing,” one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported that he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fisherman’s General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it’s true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen’s clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend and talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

Imagine how hurt some were when one ay a person suggested that those who don’t fish were not really fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn’t fishing?

We are responsible to go fishing!

Let me put this thought in your mind: Holidays are coming up - Prime Time to invite people to church … Prime Time to talk about Jesus - Plan and pray now how you can do it.

**We are responsible to obey directions.**

If you’re going to catch fish you have to go where the fish are. Often they are not where we are.

If you’re going to catch fish, you have to use the right bait.

Sometimes fish get smart, it seems like they have to figure things out. A great fisherman will keep experimenting and change the bait.

Why is it that we commend a fisherman for noticing that he’s not catching any fish, so he experiments and changes the bait to begin catching fish - and we criticize those in the church for changing ANYTHING in an attempt to be more effective at being a fisher of men?

Why is it that we can’t realize that with each passing generation, a different kind of bait is needed? Why do we keep relishing in our confidence that the bait we used years ago will still bring in fish when no fish are coming in?

“I’m blessed! Isn’t that good enough? Keep doing it my way!”

Where’s the fish?

**God is responsible for the results**

Shortly after Sharon and I were married we went fishing on Lake Holden in Orlando behind my grandmother’s house.

We caught 19 bass - I say we - she caught 18 and I caught 1.

I baited all the hooks! I would bait - and before I could pick up my rod, a fish hit on hers again …

Who is responsible for the results?

God is responsible - we keep fishing - we keep baiting - we keep doing the best we know how - we never get satisfied - and we always trust God!

**> Fishing builds relationships**

John 21:7-14 - Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

“Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

Do you see how much Peter wanted to be with Jesus? He left everything behind again - just to be with Jesus.

Mark 3:14 NIV - He appointed twelve that they might be with him…

Mark 10:28 - Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

But he had gone back to his fishing for fish - instead of fishing for men - he would never do that again!

What was he giving up to be with Jesus, compared to what he was gaining?

We’ve got to fish for men - it forces us to spend time with Jesus - and that’s what we really need.

If a son wants to go fishing with his father, but Dad is too busy - what is Dad giving up?

If Dad would take the time to go fishing with his son, what would he gain?

Peter gave up everything he had, then gained everything Jesus could give!

Not only did Peter want to be with Jesus - Jesus wanted to be with His followers! He still does!

I Miss My Time With You - Larnelle Harris

*There He was just waiting*

*In our old familiar place*

*An empty spot beside Him*

*Where once I used to wait*

*To be filled with strength and wisdom*

*For the battles of the day*

*I would have passed Him by again*

*If I didn't hear Him say*

*(chorus)*

*I miss my time with you*

*Those moments together*

*I need to be with you each day*

*And it hurts Me when you say*

*You're too busy*

*Busy trying to serve Me*

*But how can you serve Me*

*When your spirits empty*

*There's a longing in My heart*

*Wanting more than just a part of you*

*It's true, I miss My time with you*

*What will I have to offer*

*How can I truly care*

*My efforts have no meaning*

*When Your presence isn't there*

*But You'll provide the power*

*If I take time to pray*

*I'll stay right here beside You*

*And You'll never have to say*

Jesus tells us to fish - for men - He is in charge - and He wants to spend time with us.

The two are not separated - they are inseparable -

If you are going to fish for people, you are going to have to spend time with Him. If you are going to spend time with Him, you will be driven to fish for people.