




FISH *in*
the **BOAT**

OPPORTUNITY

- Jesus never said evangelism would be *easy*, but He does make it clear that we would have plenty of opportunities (John 4:35, Matthew 9:37-38).
- The key is to be **DISTINCTIVE**. The people loved hearing Jesus preach because He stood out, “speaking with authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29). He broached subjects that were taboo with refreshing frankness, reached out to outcasts and the marginalized, and was not afraid to call out those in leadership for their hypocrisy.
- A later story involving a tax-gatherer (Matthew/Levi) serves as an illustration of this very point (Luke 5:27-32).

“Matthew may have been only one of that numerous class to whom religion is merely a matter quite outside of, and in another region from life, and who, having first gone astray through ignorance, feel themselves even farther repelled, or rather shut out, by the narrow, harsh uncharitableness of those whom they look upon as religious and pious. But now quite another day had dawned on him. The Prophet from Nazareth was not like those other Rabbis, or the pietist, self-righteous imitators. There was something about Him which not only aroused the conscience, but drew the heart — compelling, not repelling . . . His very appearance bespoke Him not harsh, self-righteous, far away, but the Helper, if not even the Friend, of sinners.”

The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Edersheim, p. 358

A photograph of a wooden pier extending into the ocean. In the foreground, there is a tangled fishing net with several wooden buoys attached to it. The background shows the calm, blue water of the sea under a soft, hazy sky. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

Similarly, our stand for simple New Testament teaching will be refreshing if we simply live it (Acts 5:12-14)!

TEAMWORK

- Even Jesus recruited people to help Him — not because He couldn't do it by Himself, but because His desire was to build a kingdom where teamwork, community, and accountability to the job were at a premium (John 15:15-16, 17:11-21, 2 Timothy 2:2).
- Evangelism doesn't have to be a lonely job. Find others who are willing to join you for a Bible study, or volunteer to help during the week following up with visitors or sitting in on a study with other teachers or our elders.
- Jesus was very intentional with His recruiting (John 6:70). He found people with potential and put them to work!

A close-up photograph of a wooden pier or dock. The foreground is dominated by several thick, dark ropes and a tangled mass of white fishing nets. Several light-colored, cylindrical wooden buoys are attached to the ropes. The wooden planks of the pier run diagonally across the frame. In the background, the calm surface of the water is visible under a soft, hazy sky. The overall lighting is warm and natural, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

LUKE 5:1-11

“BUT AT YOUR BIDDING”

- **“The deep water”** — Get out of your comfort zone, do something you have never done before, stop letting your excuses dictate your level of investment in kingdom work.
- **“We worked hard all night”** — Not every evangelistic effort will work out. Sometimes it just feels like we're hitting our heads against a wall!
- **“But at your bidding”** — We do not evangelize at our convenience, but when Jesus calls us to the work. Perhaps it is just a matter of getting out of the gospel's way and trusting that it will work on receptive hearts.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a fishing net floating on the ocean. A line of brown, spherical floats is attached to the top edge of the net, extending from the foreground into the distance. The water is a deep blue with some ripples. The net itself is a fine mesh, and some green seaweed or debris is visible on it.

**“AN AMAZING
CATCH OF FISH”**

AMAZEMENT

- Peter and his companions certainly would have used every trick they knew to attract the fish the night before. It was only when the fish were drawn by the power of God that the fishermen had any success (John 6:44, Acts 16:14).
- Human wisdom, gimmicks and giveaways, moral compromise, etc., might work to bring in big numbers, but that doesn't mean anybody has been converted. The numbers are not amazing — the love of God is (Romans 5:6ff)! While the gospel produced quite a catch on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), it was just as amazing when only a single soul was saved at a time (Acts 8:35-39, Luke 15:7, 10).

A close-up, low-angle shot of a fishing net floating on the ocean. The net is made of dark mesh and is strung with a line of light-colored wooden floats. The floats are arranged in a diagonal line from the top right towards the bottom left. The water is a deep blue with some whitecaps. The overall scene is bright and clear.

“FISHERS OF MEN”

THE “EASY” CATCH

- Remember that not everybody out there is going to be hard to convince. Believe it or not, people still want the Gospel (Matt. 9:37f) and are only in need of a little guidance and encouragement. Instead of spending all our time casting our pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6), let's make sure we are not wasting the opportunities that are right in front of us.
- Children of Christians, visitors from the neighborhood, friends and co-workers who are receptive, etc. If this story from Luke teaches us anything, it's that Jesus will make sure we are never lacking opportunity. We must seize the fish that are jumping into the boat! Remember Isaiah 2:2-4.