

## A Different Kind of Fishing

**Intro.** There are different kinds of fishing. There is fresh water and there is salt water. There is bass fishing and deep sea fishing. Other kinds have nothing to do with dinner. “Fishing” for an invitation may be bad manners, but worse is phishing for information on our digital devices. All these share the common image of catching something. That is the image the Lord used when he called the four fishermen. It probably comes from Jeremiah 16:15b-16a, “For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave their ancestors. I am now sending for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they shall catch them.” It goes on to say something similar about hunters.

**I.** The Lord began his mission in Galilee which is the far north of Israel, a place ignored by those in power who believed Jerusalem was the center of culture and worship. It was often called “Galilee of

the Gentiles” because it was near the border of where two cultures – Gentile and Jew – intermingled and intermarried. It was a strange place to announce the arrival of God’s Kingdom. There, the Lord began to put together his team. The pairs of brothers had their own businesses. Andrew and Peter were inshore fishermen, wading the shallow water and casting their nets. James and John were offshore fishermen, using a boat to pull larger nets. Like good fishermen, they were cleaning their gear after a fishing trip. Mark tells us when the Lord called to them, they dropped everything and followed him. The brothers must have felt an immediate and powerful pull and presence. So strong was it they left family behind. Imagine James and John’s father saying, “Where do you think you’re going? We have work to do.” The Lord had *other* work for them to do. It’s not clear what special talents or skills these four disciples had aside from fishing. But they had

something the Lord would use to proclaim his message. History and tradition bears that out in the things they and the other disciples did. The Lord didn't catch everyone he offered new life to. Some were not interested and so he moved on.

**Concl.** Fishing isn't catching; sometimes it's just good being outside, away from the phone and the computer. *Fishing for a living* is **only** about catching. The Lord was interested in catching, but we hear from scripture and know from our own lives, he sometimes came up empty. But is that his fault or ours? For every Samaritan woman at the well or cured leper who believed, there was a Nicodemus or a young man with a few too many possessions who couldn't quite commit. At times we are interested in knowing the Lord. During different times, other things seem more important, like being well-liked by a particular person or group. Or when making a career keeps us so busy we don't have time

for God. **Like every other disciple since the first ones, we may not think we have a talent for the Kingdom of God, but the Lord has a place for us. Through all of these times the Lord is there, making cast after cast for us and we refuse to be caught. Then one day, when we are weak or hungry for something more in life, we take his bait. And we begin to understand why Andrew, Peter, John and James dropped everything for the Lord.**

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January 24, 2021