

*CALLED
TO*

ACT

FOLLOWING JESUS IN TODAY'S CULTURE

*CULTURE FOLLOWING
JESUS IN
TODAY'S*

What America needs to hear before election day

Daniel said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; **He removes kings and establishes kings**; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; **He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.**”

Daniel 2:20-22

In today's hurting and fallen culture, what should Christ-followers know and do?

- We have willingly surrendered to follow Jesus.
- We have chosen to be people of God's Word.
- What have we committed to be and do?
- What are our responsibilities?

Last week...

Subjects of the King

Leviticus 19:1-18

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You (2nd person plural) shall be **holy**, for I the Lord your (2nd person plural) God am **holy**.’” Leviticus 19:1-2

- All followers of Messiah are called to be holy [קָדוֹשׁ qadosh].
- Why are the people of God to be holy? Because our King is.
- How are the people of God to be holy? By living a certain life.
- If only God would give us **specific** and **relevant** instructions.

What should we do?

- Revere the family
- Prioritize sabbath worship
- Recognize the emptiness of idolatry
- Participate in joyful sacrifice to God alongside fellow believers
- Intentionally find ways to share resources with those in need
- Stop stealing and then denying it and lying about it
- Do not rob from your neighbor
- Be honest and timely in paying your bills
- Respect the labor of others
- Don't neglect or reject those with medical and physical struggles
- Make decisions with honest judgment and impartiality, treat people equally
- Stop slandering and gossiping
- Speak up (personally, directly and respectfully) when others hurt you
- Forgive others, do not bear grudges
- Love your neighbor as yourself

This week...

Fishers of Men

Matthew 4:17-22

How does King Jesus begin His ministry?

From that time [after the death of John the Baptist] Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17

How does King Jesus begin His ministry?

“Repent” Matthew 4:17

μετανοέω *metanoëo* means “to change one’s mind”

Definition: A change of choice that applies to one’s entire life

- As we sit here today, do we need to change our minds?
- Do we, as individuals, need to change direction?
- Do we, as a nation, need to change direction?
- As a nation, have we heard the spiritual wake-up call?

Crises facing America today

Virus pandemic

Economic fears

Protests

Riots

Racial conflicts

Spiritual apathy

Debate about police

National debt

Religious liberty restrictions

Political disagreements

Contentious elections

Dishonest politicians

Failing schools

Businesses shut down

Travel restrictions

Moral decay

How does King Jesus begin His ministry?

“the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 4:17

- In whose kingdom do we live?
- Who is the ruler of our lives?
- Where does our King reside?
- From where do our values come?

How does King Jesus begin His ministry?

“is at hand” Matthew 4:17

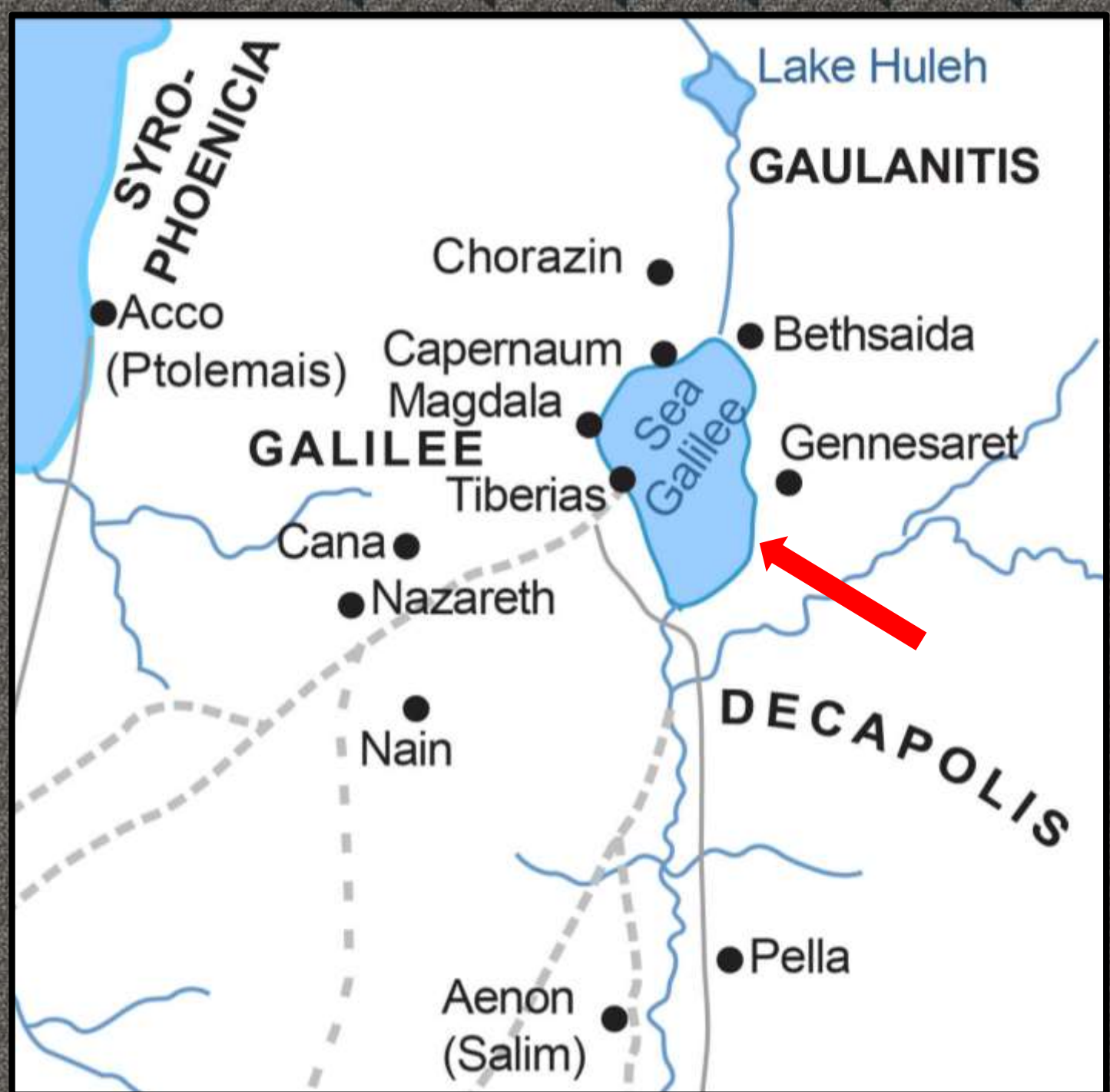
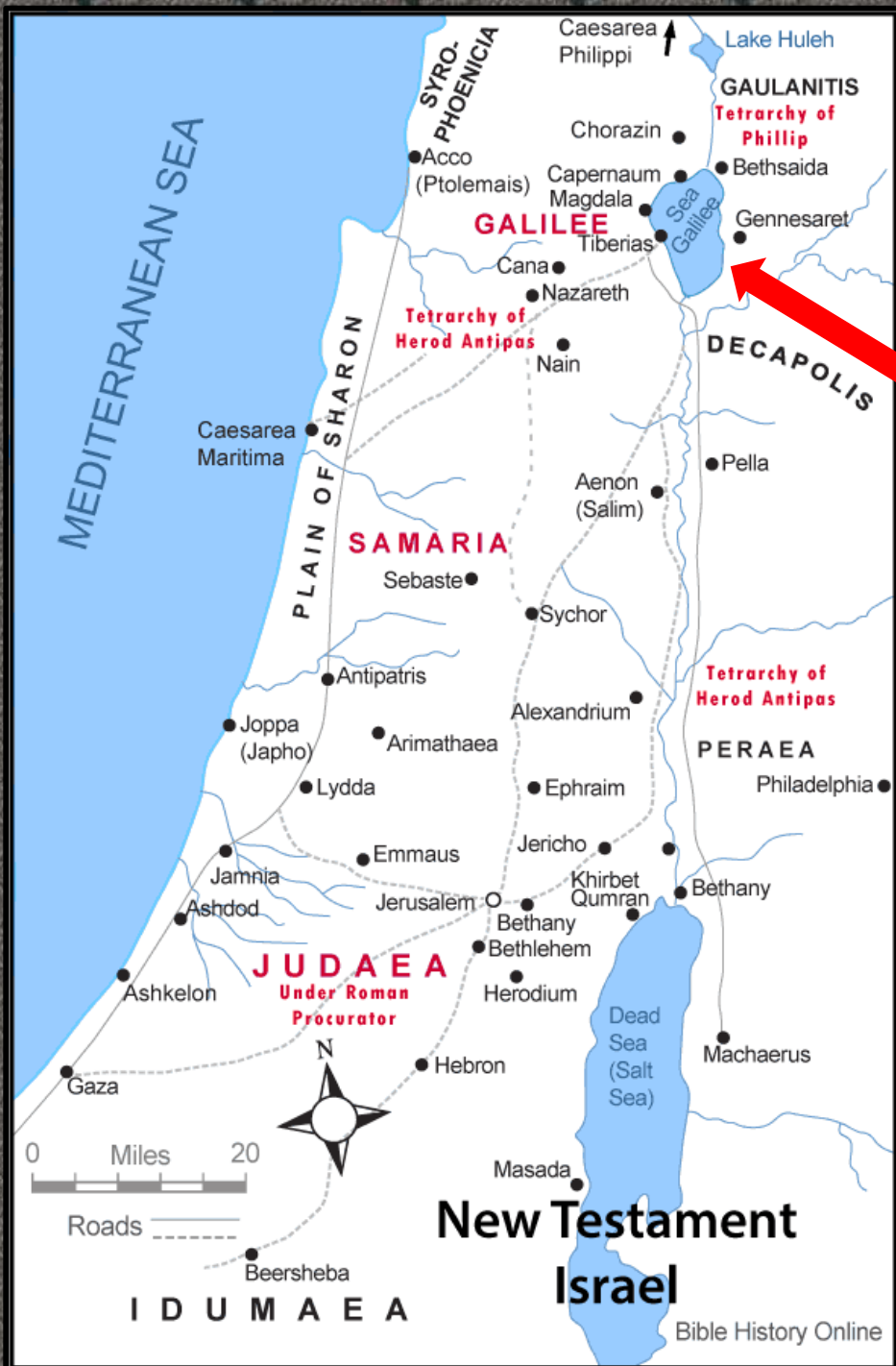
- The time to pay attention is now
- The time to change one’s mind is now
- The time to change one’s spiritual direction is now
- The time to recognize Jesus as Savior is now
- The time to declare Jesus to our world is now
- We must understand the urgency of the gospel

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

Matthew 4:18

*Simon Peter and Andrew were fishermen... this was not their hobby, it was their occupation, their identity.

*What is your identity?

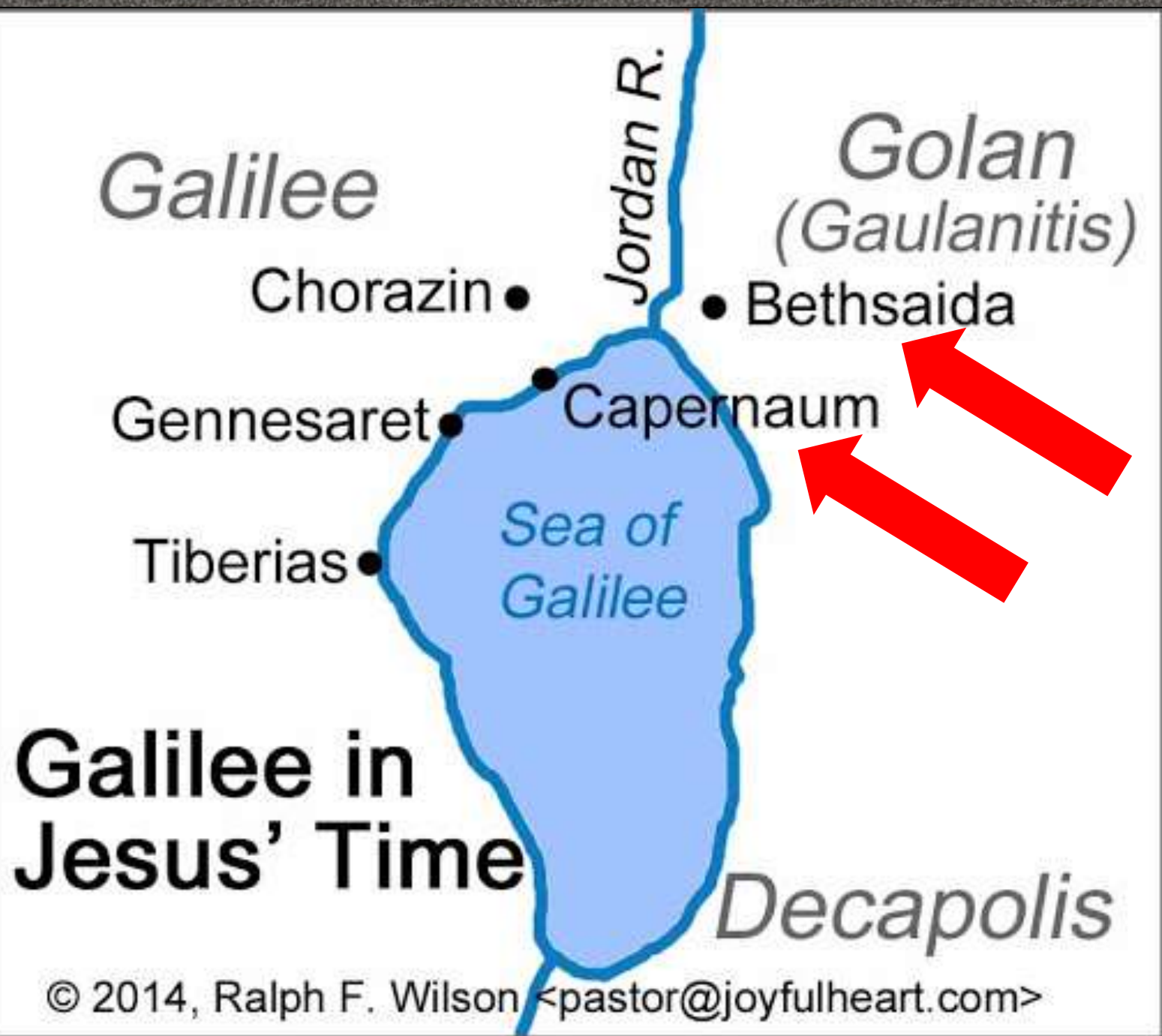


Sea of Galilee



Sea of Galilee





Capernaum, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a fishing village of about 1,500 people in the days of Jesus.

Fishermen and Fishing Nets

Fishermen have fished the waters of this lake for thousands of years. Occasionally people would fish with a hook and line (Matthew 17:24-27), but commercial fishing took place with nets and teams of fishermen to handle them. They primarily used two types of nets:

- **Casting net.** Poorer fishermen who didn't own boats could use casting nets along the shore. The casting net was thrown out over the water. Weights at the edge would pull the net to the bottom, catching any fish that might be under it. The net opening was 10 to 20 feet in diameter. The fisherman would wade out to the net, and gather it in, bringing any fish to shore. The Greek word *diktyon* is the more general word used for "net for catching fish." When used with Greek *amphiblestron* it indicated "a circular casting-net" (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16).
- **Seine net or drag net.** These were large vertical wall-like nets that could be attached to the shore or to another boat. A boat could drag other end out into the water in a semicircular arc and then back to the shore again, pulling in the fish as it came. Then a team of fishermen on both ends of the net would heave it into shore. One might dive in the center to disentangle it from any rocks or obstructions on the bottom as the net dragged across. This net is sometimes indicated by the Greek word *diktyon* and once by *sagene*, "a large dragnet."
- Another way to use this kind of net was to take it into deep water, often at night and sometimes with another boat, and lay it out the floats at the top of the net in a long line across the water. Fish might be driven into the net by the splashes of the fisherman. Then the ends would be pulled together surrounding a school of fish, and they would be pulled on board the boat.

Fishermen and Fishing Nets

- You can imagine the need for mending the nets. Disentangling fish from the nets sometimes broke the fibers, as did debris from the lake bottom, or the strain of too many fish. The hours must have been rugged. The best deep water fishing was at night, then the mornings would be given to mending the nets, sorting fish, and perhaps using casting nets along the shore if their nights labors hadn't "netted" any fish (Matthew 4:18; Mark 1:16).
- Peter and his brother Andrew, and their neighbors James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were partners, often working together as they fished the Sea of Galilee. They fished commercially. In addition to Capernaum, there were other commercial fishing towns: Bethsaida ("house of fishing") and Magdala (Migdal Nunaya, "bulwark of the fishes") or Tarichaea ("salting installation for fish," the Greek name of Magdala). They would sell their fish fresh in the local markets. The rest they would salt and dry for export as far as Spain. As owners of their own ships who sometimes hired others to help, Peter and his partners should be regarded as members of the lower middle class.

And He said to them, “Follow Me” Matthew 4:19

This was not the first time these men had met Jesus, for the Fourth Gospel relates Jesus’ first meeting with some of the disciples (John 1:35–42). – Bible Knowledge Commentary

Maybe people have heard about Jesus before but have never chosen to follow Him. Like Simon Peter and Andrew, people in our culture are being given another chance today, especially through technology.

“Come, follow Me” is literally, “Come after Me,” a technical expression that meant “Go behind Me as a disciple.” Unlike a Rabbi whose pupils sought Him out, Jesus took the initiative and called His followers.

What kind of people did Jesus call?

- Fishermen were physical laborers
- Fishermen were vital to the economy
- Fishermen were often overlooked
- They were 1st Century essential workers

Why would Jesus call fishermen?

- These are people who get up early every day and go out to work, come back (successful or not) and prepare for the next day. They then go out the next day and do it all over again (successful or not the day before).
- Fishermen are completely aware of their environment; they know and understand the weather and the environment and the surroundings. Ignorance is not helpful.
- Jesus knew that near the Sea of Galilee is where He would find that kind of person.
- Magdala and Capernaum were located where the good fishing was. Due to the hot springs that flow into the lake, the springs kept the northwest part of the lake warm, so the fish went there. During the cold winter months, this group of people had their livelihoods thrive (succeeding even in the worst weather).
- The job of a fisherman is very similar day after day, but every day is different.
- Today, God is looking for people who will get up every day and do their divine assignment, no matter how successful (or not) they were the day before.

And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

- Are you ready to be changed?
- Are you ready to think differently?
- Are you ready to act differently?
- Are you ready to become a renewed person?

Jesus' associates in this mission would not be merely supporters but would themselves become fishers of men. These verses show the complete commitment which their involvement with Jesus would demand. – New Bible Commentary

How are we changed when we follow Jesus?

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

When you follow Jesus, you recognize who God originally made you to be, but you now have a new emphasis, direction, objective.

- The disciples' task was to become "fishermen" for the kingdom. The long hours, the carefully practiced skills, and the various techniques and nets used in catching specific kinds of fish all must have passed through their minds. Seeking people to follow Jesus would take the same care, dedication, and skill used in fishing.
- The disciples learned that they must seek all kinds of people to follow Jesus, though some would eventually turn away.
- The fishing motif apparent in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom was so strong that the Greek word for fish (ichthus 'Ικθῆς) came to represent Jesus' name. The first letters of the Greek words meaning "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior" spell ichthus. The fish itself became a symbol for Jesus.



Calling and Promise

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”

Matthew 4:19

- Calling = Follow Me
- Promise = I will make you fishers of men

The One who calls you also makes you a promise

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

How can you be an effective fisherman?

- Go where the fish are
- Let the fish know you are there
- Interact with the fish regularly
- Learn what the fish are looking for
- Make an honest offer to the fish
- Understand that some fish will ignore you
- Go back and fish some more

Young people can fish



Old people can fish



Families can fish together



Immediately they (Simon Peter and Andrew) left their nets and followed Him. Matthew 4:20

ἀκολουθέω *akolutheo*

Literal meaning is “walking the same road”

- What in your past or present needs to be left behind?
- Is there anything in your life that would compete with your devotion to Messiah Jesus?

Going on from there He (Jesus) saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

Matthew 4:21

- Even new fishers of men (Simon Peter and Andrew) can fish
- Jesus wants to use YOU and can use YOU
- You know some people and then Jesus calls those people

Following Involves Leaving

Immediately they (James and John) left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Matthew 4:22

Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him. Mark 1:20

Jesus issues the **SAME** call to **DIFFERENT** people

- Leaving nets behind costs money (Simon Peter and Andrew)
- Leaving a boat behind costs more money (James and John)
- Leaving a business behind costs more money (James and John)
- Leaving family behind is really costly (James and John)

Reminders for fishers of men

- When you follow Jesus, He makes you into something new
- Following Jesus is transformation not tune-up
- Following Jesus is lifestyle, not hobby
- You have stopped being an admirer of Jesus
- You have started being a follower of Jesus
- Be willing to get up early or stay up late
- Learn to fish near your home and across the world
- Rods and reels change, fish don't
- It is more rewarding to fish with a friend
- Fishing requires patience and persistence

When fishing is your lifestyle, it is all-consuming



How do fishers of men think?

When you commit to follow Jesus, you are pledging to love what He loves and hate what He hates.

- What does God love?
- What does God hate?

What does God **love**?

“For God so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

*If we **love** God, we must **love** the fish He **loves**

What does God **hate**?

There are six things which the Lord **hates**, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19

*If we **love** God, we must **hate** the things He **hates**

What does God **hate**?

- haughty eyes
- lying tongue
- hands that shed innocent blood (murder)
- a heart that devises (plots) wicked plans
- feet that run rapidly to evil
- a false witness who utters lies (in court)
- one who spreads strife among brothers

Proverbs 6:16-19

Pray as you fish

When you commit to follow Jesus,
you are pledging to love what He
loves and hate what He hates

Pray as you vote



When you commit to follow Jesus,
you are pledging to love what He
loves and hate what He hates

When fishing is your lifestyle, it is all-consuming

