



Fishing on the Mekong River at sunrise, Laos on opposite shore.

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men”

Greetings In The Name Of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Fishing is a great pastime. It's one that I am quite familiar with, having grown up in the scenic Finger Lakes Region of Central New York. I say familiar with, because, although I've fished a number of times over the years, I don't really fit into the *“bona fide fisherman”* category.

However, in the case of Jesus' calling of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew (Matthew 4:19), fishing was not just a pastime or activity for them, but a professional livelihood. As professionals, their skills as fishermen were in the realm of natural experience and abilities. Even so, as Jesus' disciples, they would need to learn a completely new type of fishing, that of *fishing for men* in the realm of the spiritual.

We all have our various professions or forms of livelihood, often more than one. These skills remain when we give our hearts and lives to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, we often say, *“Lord, please use me in Your service.”* Be assured, the Lord *will* use your abilities in your service for Him, often in support of missionaries, or even going to serve in faraway places yourself, as I do. Whatever areas you are proficient in, the Lord will use you and your skills to the very maximum, as your hearts are in the right place, and as the need arises.

This, I know from personal experience. I have often heard sincere believers say as I once said: *“I can't lead people to the Lord, or teach, or... but I can certainly”* (insert your favorite answer). Thinking in natural terms of what we can do for God is all good and necessary, but God's real work is accomplished in the realm of the supernatural—something mere flesh and blood effort can never hope to accomplish.

That's the very reason that God endows each of us, as believers, with the operational or ministerial gifts of His Holy Spirit (various gifts as He determines), so that we, as Believers, will all be fully equipped to do the work of the ministry; not as clergy or laymen, but as servants of the *most high God*.

Why am I emphasizing all this? ...Because, we are not unlike those in the Scriptures who had interaction with Jesus. When he spoke of spiritual things, people often thought He was speaking of natural things. For instance, when Jesus informed the Jewish leader Nicodemus that he must be born again if he wanted to see the Kingdom of God (*Spiritual rebirth*), Nicodemus automatically thought in the realm of the natural: *“can [a person] enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”* (John 3:4)

In similar fashion, when Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well that he had living water to give her that would satisfy her thirst forever, she questioned: *“Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from [where then will you get] that living water?”*

Concerning learning to fish for people, and the difference between serving God with our natural abilities and the spiritual, there is a fundamental concept that we *must* learn well. I have come to identify with the Apostle Paul's statement: *“For when I am weak, then I am strong.”* (2 Corinthians 12:10) This compliments Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 3:5; ***“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also [has qualified] us as able ministers of the New Testament...”*** (NOTE: *What Paul is saying here is that God's mighty power is more than adequate; He does not need to rely on our natural abilities as He uses us to accomplish his Divine purposes. However, we need to be constantly relying on His strength, and not our own, as we serve Him.*)

I have experienced this personally in my own ministry. If when I feel confident in myself (*preparation and speaking ability*), little seems to happen. However, when I sense my own insufficiency, and realize that I am not up to the task to accomplish the spiritual, amazing things occur. People are enlightened and respond: some to receive Christ, while others remark on how they now understood a passage much more clearly. (That's the Holy Spirit at work!) I finally began to internalize this spiritual principle. I'm not implying here that God honors sloughfulness. He blesses dedication and hard work. Even so, that which is truly accomplished is: *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”* (Zechariah 4:6)

Peter and Andrew were accomplished, professional fishermen, and likely very proud and self-sufficient men. However, Jesus told them that, if they were going to follow Him, they needed to set that totally aside and learn a new kind of fishing; that of fishing for the souls of lost men and women, operating under the power and unction of God's indwelling Holy Spirit.

You've likely heard the worn-out old adage: *“Let go and let God.”* Well, there's some truth to that. It doesn't always mean we just sit back and watch God magically do it all, but at times it may—as in *“be still and know that I am God.”* (Psalms 46:10) However, it typically means that we must learn to practice full reliance on the Lord of Hosts as we serve Him, and that in every single circumstance. We must remember, this is spiritual warfare, and we are doing battle against the powers of darkness for the souls of the lost and dying who are without hope and need to hear the Gospel. Bottom line, we need to be *“fishing”* at every opportunity, not just when it's convenient.

Thank you for your continued prayer and support. I'll soon be heading back to Thailand to continue the pre-printing review process on the now-completed Isan New Testament. We covet your prayers and help. It gets increasingly difficult to obtain the necessary funding, enough to successfully finish the task—travel and living, operating expenses, materials, payment for my Isan review committee members, etc. Yet, God is able!

By God's Enabling Grace and For His Eternal Glory,

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