

CHANGING PROFESSIONS

Mark 1:9-15 Text vs. 17 Jesus said to them, *“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”*

Our lesson today contains great wisdom. It’s a timeless lesson that happened near Capernaum where Jesus spent a lot of time teaching, healing, and performing miracles. Bethsaida, a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was the hometown of Peter and his brother Andrew. One day, Jesus met those two brothers who were fishermen as He walked along the seashore. The lives of Simon, and his brother Andrew, were about to change forever when Jesus spoke eleven simple, yet powerful words to them. *“Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Let’s dig into that a little deeper and see if we can discover what it could mean for *you*. Jesus deliberately chose ordinary men as His disciples. Every day those two fishermen worked casting nets, mending nets, hauling fish into boats. Just like the fishermen do right here in our own Gulf waters. Jesus saw potential in those two men. He didn’t wait for them to become scholars or religious leaders. He met them right where they were. He could transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. And then tap into what they could become.

Simon became one of Jesus’ closest disciples and Jesus would later name him Peter, meaning “rock.” Leaving behind his career and his home to follow Jesus, Peter had a unique blend of strength and weakness. Yet, despite lacking formal education or training, God called Peter to a higher purpose to become a *“fisher of men.”* (Matthew 4:19) Peter was excited about that. In his relationship with Jesus, He learned firsthand as he witnessed miracles. His commitment to Jesus was unwavering. Peter was outspoken and headstrong. Often speaking before thinking, he tended to blurt out his thoughts and emotions which made him take fearless actions, like when he stepped out of the boat to walk on water. (Matthew 14:28–29)

Those qualities were both an asset and a liability. They made Peter a natural leader among the disciples. And his time with Jesus transformed him from an uneducated, sometimes fearful man, into a courageous apostle. As Peter developed a more Godly, Christlike character, his thinking became more effective. By sharpening his reasoning skills, he was able to make better decisions. Even when faced with uncertainty, he added leadership. Last week, we learned Peter witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus up on the mountaintop. Then, Peter’s sermon in Jerusalem at Pentecost was a pivotal moment in the early Christian church. It marked the proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers. The effect of his sermon was enormous. It led to three thousand conversions in one day. (Acts 2:14–41) And Peter played a crucial role in establishing the early church. He reached out to both Jews and Gentiles. And when Jesus told Peter, *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 16:19) it symbolized the authority given to Peter in the early church.

For fifteen years He was the most prominent figure in the Jerusalem church up to the time of his departure from Jerusalem. His leadership was crucial during the early years of the Christian community. Peter’s commitment, excitement, outspokenness, and courage, together with his weaknesses and impulsive speech and an occasional lack of judgment were his strengths. Yet, with all his flaws, Peter became a vessel for God’s grace. A key figure in spreading the Gospel. By calling Peter to join Him, Jesus changed Peter’s *secular life* into a *sacred mission*. He didn’t blend the two. He separated them. Just as a follower of Jesus today. You are called to be *in* the world, but not *part* of it. Your daily work—whether in an office, a workshop, or your home—your life becomes sacred when you dedicate it to God’s purposes. You can fish for people right where you are.

Jesus promised to make those men *fishers of men* not by teaching them new fishing techniques. He transformed their hearts. It was a miraculous transformation. As they followed Him, they witnessed healings, miracles, His Resurrection. Their nets were no longer for catching fish. They had developed ways to draw souls to God. Their ordinary lives became extraordinary vessels of grace. Remember, your life doesn’t need to be ordinary. Your life can be filled with extraordinary moments by having a remarkable purpose being an instrument of God’s grace. But to have it, you must surrender yourself to the Will of God. You must have a deep, open relationship with Jesus, allowing Him to guide your actions and your decisions.

Now, let’s explore that a little further. Surrendering to God means, letting go of your own desires. Your own ambitions. You acknowledge you can’t do it alone! You can’t live your life by yourself! You’re dependent on God’s grace. Surrendering allows you to rearrange yourself to make space for God in your life. Which means developing a closer relationship with Jesus. Spending more time in prayer with Him. Studying His Word. Seeking His presence. And when you draw nearer to Him, He will transform you from the inside out. Your heart will be ready to receive His power and to pour out His love. When you surrender and stay connected to Jesus, your actions will follow His Will. You will become an instrument of His love. His forgiveness. His compassion. Your words and your deeds will reflect *Him*. And you will make a strong impression on those around you. God’s grace will begin to flow through you when you allow Him to work in you,

and through you. It's not about *your* efforts. It's about *His* power. And you will receive it abundantly. It will help you be a blessing to those around you. Accept that you are God's instrument, not the source, and that you have become a vessel of God's grace—a channel through which His love, mercy, and grace can flow. A vessel that brings light to a world in need. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."* (Ephesians 2:8)

In this journey, when you admit your weaknesses, and know His strength has made you strong in your weakness, humility will keep you open to God's leading. In your human weakness, you often seek strength—physical, emotional, intellectual. Yet, it's in your weakness where you find a different kind of strength. Weakness is the soil where courage grows. Did you notice in our lesson Jesus called those men while they were working? He may be calling you during your daily routines. Are you open to hearing His voice? Hearing God's voice means having a sense of God. It doesn't necessarily involve clear sounds. It means the many ways in which you may sense a message from God.

When you talk about hearing God's voice, you're not referring to a physical hearing sensation. It's about sensing. Having words or phrases enter your consciousness during prayer or quiet reflection. Words or phrases that may happen unexpectedly and startle you with their meaning. God can be blunt. He can be direct with you. Sometimes God's words are straightforward. Much like Jesus' teachings in the Gospels they can be swift and immediate. Catching you off guard. But not every thought or phrase that pops into your mind during prayer is from God. You have to decide. Is it your imagination? Does it line up with God's Truth? You hear God's voice when you listen for Him. And your desire for answers can sometimes lead you astray.

Non-verbal communication can be powerful and expressive and go beyond words. Jesus' disciples heard His actual voice when He called them to follow Him. Not as perfect vessels. He perfects imperfect ones. Your weaknesses become opportunities for His grace. Your work, whether as a teacher, an engineer, a parent, or just as a friend can have an impact on other lives for eternity. It's when you invite others to follow Him, that you're following Him. Will you leave your own self-reliance and embrace His calling?

As you reflect on our text today, Mark 1:17, remember, Jesus still calls ordinary people just like you, for extraordinary purposes. He invites you to fish for people. He wants you to cast wide the net of His love, drawing souls into His kingdom. Listen for His call, knowing that in your daily life, you can make an eternal difference. *"Come, follow Me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

Remember how I challenged you a couple of weeks ago to fill this church by Easter? I said, *"Let's fill the church by Easter!"* Say it again with me: **"Let's fill the church by Easter!"** Let that inspire you to respond to your calling, so that you will go *fishing* and cast your nets wide, drawing many people to the Savior. AMEN