

## A Fishing Trip - Mark 1:14-20

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The title of our sermon for this morning is: “**A Fishing Trip**”, based on the Gospel reading from Mark 1:14-20. Listen to two of those verses again: “**Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed Him.**” (v. 16, 17).

The following advertisement was in a local newspaper some time ago. Here is how it read: “**For sale: One Hot Tub, complete with plumbing. I’ll trade for a pickup truck or for some fishing gear. Call Steve after 6 pm.**” Now it doesn’t take a PhD in psychology to know that behind those words is a life in transition . . . a life that is changing. Away with the hot tub, the gold chains, the sports car, the wine coolers . . . and in with the baseball cap, the flannel shirts, Old Spice, Labatt’s Blue, and fishing gear.

You also do not need a degree in sociology or psychology to realize that we are in a culture that is filled with transition and changes. People all around us are seeking lifestyle changes. And so they are doing things like taking the latest exercise class, changing careers, leaving spouses, getting into therapy, entering into midlife crisis or into retirement, making any number of changes in the direction of their lives. Now some life changes can be symbolic of our sinful human condition, that is, a deep restlessness within our hearts . . . within our souls.

The ancient Church Father, St. Augustine, put it this way: “**The heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee, O God.**” Now however silly or shallow they seem to be on the surface, lifestyle changes are often a sign . . . a sign of a crucial, desperate, heartfelt search. What’s the search for? Often, the search is to discover **who I am** and **what I am worth**. We see this in Arthur Miller’s powerful little book, “**Death of a Salesman.**” In this book a salesman by the name Willy Loman desperately yearns for the love of his family and the admiration of his fellow salesmen. But he fails, and he ends up taking his own life. And at the funeral at which the expected crowds never show up, his wife wails, “**Why, Willy, why!!**” And his son Biff sums it all up when he says, “**He never knew who he really was.**”

But then there are other changes in life that people make, because they say they are bored with their lives. The changes that they look for are not so much a planned trip to a new destination as they really are buying tickets on the first bus out of town. What I mean by that is it is often an attempt to try anything for a little excitement. Making changes without thinking of the long term effects they could have on one’s own life and the life of others around them.

Sadly though, a person discovers such running away for the newest form of excitement only takes them to a new place where the old boredom and the old restlessness soon follow. This points us now to the deepest reasons for the changes we seek in our lives. Life changes are not made just to relieve boredom. They are made so we can find a place of deeper meaning and purpose in our lives. Remember what St. Augustine said? “**The heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee, O God.**” You see, the truth is sinful people are not complete within themselves. We’ve all got this inside us - everyone one of us here this morning – a yearning, a desire for peace, for wholeness, for self-worth, for a purpose in living. We have a desire to find ourselves. But the problem is, when we sinners go to find ourselves, we find ourselves alone.

Eager to go deep within ourselves, we lose sight of others and we lose sight of God. In a deeper sense **we all long to be called by another**. We long to be wanted and loved by another. We long to be given a **purpose**, to be given **an invitation**, to make a real difference in this life. Like children on a playground, we desperately want to be chosen, to play in the game, not to be the last one chosen or to be completely overlooked. So we are willing to do anything to make changes, to find ourselves, like, selling our hot tub or trading for a pickup truck or fishing gear.

Now, as you recall, today's sermon is called "**A Fishing Trip**". This brings us now to a fishing trip and to our Gospel reading again from Mark 1. Listen to these words: "**Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'**" And immediately they left their nets and followed Him." (v. 16, 17)

In a moment of wonder and grace, our Lord Jesus Christ came to these blue collared men, right on their job site where they were. We aren't told of the inner life of these men. We don't know if they were restless or bored or looking for a change in their lives. What is important is **not** what was going on **WITHIN** them. What is important is what happened **TO** them. They were called by Jesus, the very Son of God. They were not called because they had made themselves desirable or competent. They were called because it is Jesus' nature to call and welcome them and others to Himself.

It is Jesus nature to give the invitation: "**Come follow Me!**" "**Follow Me**", says Jesus, "**that you might know My unconditional love for you!**" "**That you might know your worth and your value in My eyes,**" "**That you might know a meaning and a purpose I have for your life. That you might know who you are.**" "**Come follow Me,**" says Jesus . . . that you might discover who you really are: a **FORGIVEN SINNER and a BELOVED CHILD OF GOD!** Jesus called to these fishermen. And His call to you and me today is a call to a real lifestyle change. He calls us **FROM** living only for ourselves and He calls us **TO** living for others and to God's purposes for our lives. His call is a call to a lifestyle change from only focusing on this life and the here and now and what we can get out of it, to focusing on the life to come, eternal life as a gift from God that we could never earn or deserve.

My friends, one could say that Jesus' call to us today is a call to a deeper restlessness . . . He calls us to a holy restlessness . . . so we might find our rest in Him. He calls you not to a shallow change in your life or in your activities. But He calls you to the realization that **today** you need to be right with God and to live as He wants you to live. He makes you restless so that you can find your real rest in Him. And as you return to your Lord, His Holy Spirit reveals to you who you really are and what you are really worth.

You are drawn to the cross of Jesus our Saviour and there you see who you really are and what you are really worth. You are drawn to that cross where the beloved Son of God gave His life for sinners like me and you to pay for our sins. 1 John 4 puts it this way: "**By this, the love of God was made clear, that God sent His only Son into the world. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the payment for our sins.**"

There at the cross you see who you really are and what you are really worth! **YOU** are His beloved child! **YOU** are worth the precious blood of Jesus shed for you. **Your** sins are forgiven! Almighty God now sees you only through the lens of the cross. And now when He looks at you, all He sees is His beloved, forgiven, precious child! At the cross, God replaces your restlessness with His rest. And now, His call to you was also a call for rebellion . . . rebelling against boredom.

Not a call for something temporary or some fleeting excitement, but a call as a child of God who doesn't ask: "**What's in it for me?**", but asks: "**How might I be used for God's glory and for the welfare of others?**" In verse 17 of our text, listen again carefully: "**And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'**" The word "**and**" is actually quite important. Jesus says: "**Follow Me! I called you! You are Mine!**" You have forgiveness and peace with God. You have an eternal home in heaven **AND** you are to share this invitation to others! Relief from self-centered boredom comes through reaching beyond myself and reaching out to others. Let me ask you: **Are you bored** (hopefully not with this sermon☺) **or tired with your current spiritual life?**

I challenge you to care for, to reach out to someone else with the love of God. There is no greater thrill . . . there is no deeper joy . . . than serving God, by loving God, in the process of loving and caring for others. God's call for **YOU** today is to find a deeper and a greater meaning for your life . . . to find your place in His plans for you . . . to be chosen, to play the game on the playground, and not to be left out . . . to do what the Lord has called you to do with your life.

So Jesus says to you and me today: **“Go ahead. Sell that hot tub! Follow Me! Let’s go on a fishing trip!”** This is His call to each of us. It’s a call to forsake being my own person . . . to forsake looking out only for me, . . . to forsake looking only within to find my true self. It’s a call to find your real self, the person God has made you to be, by following Jesus and answering His call to go fishing . . . to heed His call and to care for others in His name.

The story is told of a small dog that had been hit by a car and lay by the side of the road. A kindly old gentleman found the dog and carried the poor thing to his nearby home. There he took care of the dog, he cleaned its wounds and bandaged a few cuts and gave him some food and water. But as he was carrying the dog from his house out to the garage, the dog suddenly jumped out of his arms and ran away. And the man muttered to himself, **“What an ungrateful little dog!”** Well, he didn’t give it much more thought until the next night, when he heard a scratching at his front door. And when he opened it, there was the little dog he had helped with another little hurt dog.

My friends, this is indeed our call to love others with the love we have received from God. To share with others the healing, the hope, the forgiveness, the eternity that God wants to give others. **This is God’s call!** It’s His answer to our restlessness, to our boredom, to our search for meaning. As He calls you **PLEASE** answer His call. Sell those hot tubs in your life. Go with Jesus on a fishing trip. You will be glad you did!  
In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sermon by Rev. James Scholz