

Faith in the Home: Sermon Notes and Applications

The Third Sunday after Epiphany. Matthew 4:12-25 "Teach Me to Fish"

How did mere fishermen change the world? They didn't! God did it through them. Jesus invited them in. He instructed and taught them. What did they learn from Jesus? To lean on God for everything.

Our passage from Matthew today tells us that the people around what would have been Northern Israel had seen a "great light!" That light was Jesus beginning His ministry on earth. That passage was shared because a prophecy in the Old Testament was fulfilled. The Son of God, the King of Glory, The Christ had arrived. What was one of the first things He did after He began to proclaim the good news? He got to know some fisherman, and when Jesus saw that the time was right, He called them to follow Him. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

I want you to pay attention to something important in that text. Jesus did not say to them I will teach a fool proof program to entice people to come to church. Jesus did not say to them I will show you what worship style is the most attractive to draw people in. What He did say, was "I will make you fishers of men." Notice that Jesus said, "I will make you." Jesus did the work.

We are in an age where the Church in North America and Europe is shrinking (It is growing South of the Equator by the way). And we often wonder what we as the Church must do. Furthermore, we petrified to talk about our faith with people outside the Church. "That's fine if your Christian, my faith is private," or "That's great that you love Jesus, but don't 'force your beliefs onto me.'" As if the people of the world don't force their own beliefs on anyone... However, these are the things that we hear all the time. If people take offense at us, we feel the blame even if we are not trying to offend.

So, what do we do? Just as Jesus told His future disciples that He would make the "fishers of men," we have to understand that we are also His disciples. So, therefore we can safely conclude that if we can get out of our own heads and trust our victorious savior, that He will in turn teach us to fish for and catch men. Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you. If you depend on Him as you grow a heart for His mission, He will show you and our congregation the way that He wants us to go. He will provide us the means to do it as well. Jesus is the King of the Universe He can do all things for us, His Church.

So, how do we teach and model these things to our children?

1. Of course, Jesus with you. Be intentional about receiving Him. By that I mean take time to pray and do devotions. Even if it is just with your kids and their children's Bible stories. That time leaning into Him is important. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 13:12, "For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." Simply put, the more you lean into Jesus the more you will see Him work in you and through you. It's about increasing your relationship with Him.

2. The more you reflect on what Jesus has done for you the more you will desire to be obedient to His will. Part of that is loving your neighbor. Furthermore, leaning in on Jesus will only continue to grow your compassion for the lost. Anecdotally speaking, I didn't personally start to care for the "lost" more until my realization of what Jesus did for me caused me to desire to learn more, and walk closer to God. I was doing daily Bible readings, going to church every Sunday, and praying a lot more. I became more compassionate, and my desire grew to share the Gospel. Jesus changed me.

3. I will say that trial and error will help you become better and sharing your faith. "Fail forward." But also, if I had known then what I know now, prayer for those I was serving should have been even more of centerpiece. I relied too much on my own knowledge and not enough on God. When it comes to sharing your faith, you cannot pray for the lost too much.

4. Being present and showing up for people can have a profound effect on that people around us. Consistently showing up to worship on Sundays could be all the difference in the world for someone else. There are people who are still worshipping every Sunday morning at St. Luke's in Reno, who I saw almost every Sunday of my life growing up. Just seeing them there as much as I did, had a major impact on the man I am now. This can also apply to visiting and helping your acquaintances in life as well. Show up for people. God will show up for them as well.

5. Relationships are key. We go to worship to refresh ourselves with people of the faith, but outside our sanctuary we all have relationships, especially with those outside the faith. Be natural with these relationships and let them know that you are someone who cares and keeps their word. If they know you care, they may start to care about what you know, or more importantly who you know in Jesus.

6. Remember, Jesus will make you the fisher for men. Trust in Him.