

SERMON

¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jesus called his first disciples alongside the Lake of Galilee. Why? Well one researcher is of the opinion that because Jesus' father Joseph was a carpenter, he would have been involved in the making of fishing boats. So his theory is that Jesus must have known the fishermen alongside the Lake and knew that they could be trusted.

But the crux of our reading is Jesus' first words, namely that the Kingdom of God has come near through Jesus Christ. You and I are now already part of God's Kingdom through our faith. And because of this certainty you and I should be able to make fishers of men, which reminds me of a day in my life that I will never forget.

I had to conduct two funerals on the same day. I had never met the deceased so when I visited the first family, I made notes. Later in the afternoon when I met the second family, I made notes too. So at the funeral of the first person, I said that because she was a keen fisherman I picked this specific reading. But then, when I saw the shocked faces of the bereaved family and friends, I realised that I got my notes confused. It was then that I realised that it was actually the other person who was a keen fisherman. This lady might never have handled a fishing rod in her life, or even been sitting on the banks of a river watching others fishing... At first I did not have words but then it struck me like lightning. She was a fisher of people through all the good deeds she did all through her life. I then elaborated on the fact that she was renowned for the fact that she always cared more of others than herself and that people were drawn to her warm and unselfish nature.

It was also then and afterwards that I understood the true meaning of being a fisher of people.

Everyone that has faith, everyone that follows Jesus, lives in the certainty of God's protection, security and hope. It is as if there is a huge fence of grace all around us! And because of this knowledge, you and I should draw others into the safety net of God's forgiving and merciful love. You and I should try

our utmost best to change others lives for the better through our deeds of love, kindness and forgiveness. You and I should always be standing on the shores of life and reaching out to all who are drowning, cold and wet. Yes, you and I should be an anchor of stability and hope amidst the merciless sea of hopelessness and despair. Let us use the example of God's love, and transform lives around us.

On the day that we celebrate the birthday of Robert Burns he wrote several poems of love. He knew that only love could survive time, something that God teaches us in the Bible and something that we are reminded of today at the Lord's table. He also knew the power of interacting with different people and making them feel appreciated and loved.

May we also do the same? Let's not keep God's love for ourselves. Let us be true fishers of people everywhere we go, telling everyone that "The time has come," "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the good news!" And if you think ah well it was easy for the first disciples to leave their jobs and follow Jesus – think again. They made huge sacrifices. This text indicates that none of these [disciples](#) left their business behind because it was going badly; they left behind well-paying jobs. Many Jewish teachers in Jesus' day felt that the greatest commandment was to honour one's parents. To abruptly leave behind one's family and the family business was a great sacrifice that went against everything the culture taught.

To follow Jesus is not an easy option. But to be part of God's kingdom, it is the ONLY option.

Amen

[disciples](#) ***Disciples.** Students of rabbis or philosophers, normally committed to memorizing and living according to their master's teachings.