



Key References:

2 Corinthians 5:17–20a (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. [...]

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Joshua 6:2 (ESV)

² And the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor.

Hebrews 11:30 (ESV)

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

Matthew 4:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

1 – Ambassadors

What is the “ministry of reconciliation”? How has it been entrusted to us?

Reading 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 what is significant about the use of the word “ambassadors”? Do you ever feel like one?

Are you surprised in verse 20 when it says “God is making his appeal through us”? What is significant or challenging to you about that?

If an ambassador is an active position someone has, then what is the physical work this passage is pointing us towards?

2 – Only because of grace

Why does Ephesians 2:8-10, when telling us that we are created to do good works, mention grace immediately before that?

In 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 Paul tells what grace produced in him. What effect has grace had upon your life?

3 – A promise, then work by faith, all because of grace

In Joshua 6 God promises victory over the city of Jericho to Israel in verse 2. In the following 3 verses why does God then proceed to give them instructions to follow? What did God require from Joshua that He also requires from us?

If we are God’s ambassadors what promises should we stepping into like Joshua leading Israel?

4 – The Parable of the Fishless Fisherman

What do you remember most about the parable that Nathan read on Sunday? (found on next page if you have time)

Mike said “Sunday can become ‘an event’, and we can get fulfillment from its community and because of that we can [keep our faith] within its walls”. How does what he said relate to the parable?

Read Matthew 4:18-20. How does following Jesus make us better fishers? How what Jesus said match back up with 2 Cor 5:17-20?

How is God challenging and growing you this week?

The Parable of the Fishless Fisherman

Lo it came to pass that a group existed that called themselves fishermen and lo there were many fish in the waters around them. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. The fish were hungry, year after year those who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about the call to fish, the abundance of fish and how they might go about fishing.

They continually searched for new and better methods of fishing and new and better definitions of fishing the sponsored nationwide and worldwide conferences to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing. These fishermen built large and beautiful buildings called fishing headquarters. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and that every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do however was fish.

They organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. Those who had the great Vision and the courage to speak about fishing to define fishing and to promote the idea of fishing in far away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived formed the board. Also the board hired staff and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing and to decide what new streams should be fished in but the staff and committee members did not fish.

Expensive training centers were build to teach fishermen how to fish, those who taught had doctorates in fishiology but the teachers never fished themselves, they only taught fishing. Year after year graduates were sent to do full time fishing, some to distant waters filled with fish. Further the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. A speaker's beauro was provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing, many who felt the call responded and were sent to fish but like the fishermen back home they never

fished. Some said they wanted to a part of the fishing party but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt that it was their job to relate to the fish in a good way so that the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen.

After one stirring message on the necessity of fishing one young man left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported that he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and was scheduled to visit all the big meetings to tell how he did it. So he gave up fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to all the other fishermen. He was placed on the fisherman's general board as a person having considerable fishing experience.

Now it is true that many of the fishermen sacrificed put up with all kinds of difficulties some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day, they received the ridicule of some who made fun of them, fun of their fisherman's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished.

They wondered about those who felt it was of little value to attend their weekly meetings to talk about fishing after all were they not following the master who said "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" so imagine how hurt some of them were when someone suggested one day that those who do not catch fish are not fishermen and therefore cannot be following the master.

You know it hurt but it did sound correct. Is that person a fisherman if year after year after year he or she never catches any fish?