

Several methods of securing fish are resorted to at the present day along the seashore of Galilee. In some parts of the old world, they use dynamiting or poisoning the fish with some type of juice, taken from plants.

With a hook, some fishing is done with hooks and lines, here on poles when fishing from the shore, or from the back of boat, or when trowling in the deep sea. Matthew 17:27

The spear fishing as mentioned in Job 41:7, perhaps refers to an instrument like a barbed spear, still used along the Cyprian coast. It is used at night by torchlight, that is they spear the fish in shallow water.

The fishing with nets is a most familiar Bible story of fishermen. Today most of the fishing is done in the same way. These nets were homemade, and the families took part in mending and repairing the old ones during the stormy days. The nets, as I have mentioned before, were used in three ways. There was first of all a circular net, with small mesh and lead around the edge. It was cast from the shore into shallow water in this manner. The cone like shape is formed, which encloses such fish

## GOING FISHING

John 21:1-13

### Introduction

We find that it is often mentioned in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament and that particular kinds of fish are named. In Leviticus 11:9-12, Deuteronomy 14:9, we read, "Whatsoever has fins and scales in the water, is declared clean by law that has not fins and scales are forbidden." This excludes not only reptiles, and amphibians, but also among fishes, eels, sharks, rays and so forth.

No fish can live in the (dead sea) and many perish through being carried down by the swift currents of the Jordan and other streams. There are however, several kinds of small fish which live in salt springs in the borders of the Dead Sea. Springs which are as salt as the Dead Sea, but which according to one scholar lacks the magnesium chloride which is a constituent of the Dead Sea water and is fatal to fish. This is surprising in view of the fact that the Dead Sea seems to form an effective barrier between the fishes of the different streams flowing into it.

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The present inhabitants of Moab and \_\_\_\_\_ made no use of fish that swarm in the Arnon, and other streams. But fishing is an important industry in Galilee. As formerly, they used spear hooks and nets to catch the fish. The fish spear is mentioned in Job 41:7, is little used. Most of the Old Testament references to nets, have to do with the taking of birds and beasts, and not of fishes. Habakkuk 1:15

However, in the New Testament, Matthew 13:47, we read clearly that this is a dragnet, Matthew 4:18, "casting a net." The word often used is to throw or to cast. Luke 5:4 It suggests that a dragnet is meant. The dragnet may be several hundred feet long. The upper edge is buoyed, and the lower edge is weighted. It is let down from a boat in a line parallel to the shore. And is then pulled in by ropes attached to the two ends. Several men and boys usually pull at each end. The use of the casting net requires more skill. It forms a circle of from ten to twenty feet in diameter, with numerous small lead weights at the circumference. It goes to some distance, at the same time spreading out into a wide circle. A cord may be attached to the center.

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Fishermen are often referred to and mentioned as a distinct class. They are noted for their strenuous work, and this rules out weaker workmen. For the fisherman was exposed to all kinds of weather, this made him hardy, and fearless. They were accustomed to bear with patience, many trying circumstances. They often toiled for hours without success, and yet were always ready to try once more. Such men, when impelled by the same spirit as filled their Master, became indeed, fishers of men.

Fish were largely used as food, Habakkuk 1:16. An abundance of fish, meant a general abundance of food.

Special garments were worn by these fishermen. It is described in John 21:7, as a coat or garment.

In the Bible also, we have fish hooks mentioned, in Job 41:1, and in Amos 4:2. In other passages the word hook or angle may be applied to a fishing instrument.

The ancient Egyptian noblemen used to amuse themselves by fishing from their private fish pools with hooks and lines. We read that in the Egyptian monument, there have been carved hooks, or pictures of fish. The hook is still used in Bible land although not as commonly as nets.

family to go fishing. A man in Idaho left his wife who was expecting an addition any time to go fishing in Lake trout. He caught a big Northern Pike, Biggest he had ever landed - He was brags with joy - He telegraphed his wife: I've got one, wife 7 lbs & it is a beauty. - She sent him an answer - Do have it, weighs 10 pounds. Not a beauty - looks like you. Love her.

I. Disallusions

In these simple words of the Bible, it reveals to us that here was one person who was somewhat confused. The fishing that he was going to do was not the kind that he had been accustomed to doing. In other words, before Jesus called him, he had been accustomed to fishing for a living, for a livelihood, and a day's work. But now he is a little bit confused, and if you will recount very briefly trying days in Jerusalem, Jesus' death and crucifixion this little group had been left alone, seemingly. The one person that they had trusted and looked to had suddenly been taken up away from them through death.

Coldridge once said that he knew that the Bible was true, because it found him. In other words, when he read about Simon Peter, he said, "I know that the Bible is true, because this is so much like my own life." He was human, he was generous, he was impulsive. He was a man both of faith and of doubt, at the same time. He was a man who could stand up and proclaim his faith and yet, in a few moments he was to go in and deny his Lord, and yet go out and weep bitterly. And so in the midst of this great confusion, we come to the place of our story today.

as cannot escape the quick throw of the fishermen. Second, a long net or seine of one hundred or two hundred yards, leaded on one edge. It is played out from boats in such a way as to surround a school of fish, Long ropes fastened to the two ends are carried ashore, many yards apart and from five to ten men on each rope, gradually draw in the net. Then the last way is that of deep water fishing, with a net in a similar fashion, a circle is formed, the men dive down and bring one portion of the weightage into shallow water before drawing. This is towed to shallow water before drawing

Therefore the fishermen usually usually worked in loose outer garments of which could quickly be removed by pulling it over the head, when occasion required the fisherman to jump into the sea.

And of course when we think about going fishing we could not overlook to mention the fact of the great fish, as described in the book of Jonah, which contained the prophet for three days, before he was released and put upon land to go and fulfill his mission. Jonah 1:17 says, "the Lord prepared this fish."

The Bible is rich concerning fishing, we read in the book of Exodus 7:21, that during one of the plagues the fish died in the sea.

We read in the Bible also of ponds and pools where men fished. Isaiah 19:10, Song of Solomon 7:14

We read of fish being used as (food) Nehemiah 13:16 And in connection with this scripture, we read in Nehemiah 3:3, 12:39 concerning the (fish gates). One of the gates, on the wall in Jerusalem was known as the fish gate.

Therefore, fishing had an important part in the life of the children of Israel, and furnished much of the food for them.

We read that Jesus performed one of these great miracles, when he used (five loaves) and two fishes to feed a great multitude of people. Matthew 14:17, Matthew 17:27.

And also in the Bible we find that Jesus uses fishing as (figuratively) when He speaks of His disciples, as becoming "fishers of men." That is that they would lend their interests to fish for men. They had been fishing for fish, but in Matthew 4:19, He describes them as being

fishers of men.

In Matthew 13:47 He also likens the kingdom of heaven to a net that has been cast into the sea, and every kind of fish has been drawn out upon the beach. Then he says for the good ones to be gathered into the vessel. The bad ones will be cast away. And so fishermen go through their nets and throw out into the sea, those that are small, and not large enough to send to the market.

We read that the sign of the spreading of the net marked the desolation of Ezekiel 26:5.

Story is told of two fishermen who went fishing - They happened to hit a real spot. They hauled in a bunch of whoppers. Call them Peter & James - Jim said we better mark this hole & come back tomorrow - So John pulled the anchor & as they moved the shore Jim said John slip your mark the place - you hit - it put a cross mark on that side of the boat - Jim snorted you have a loose screw, I suppose there has been no other sport that has

been given over to such far-fetched stories as has fishing.

I well might spend much time just relating some that I have heard which were a little difficult to believe that such things could live in the water, and be taken out by man on a pole. But I must get on with our story. Peter said, "I go fishing." He literally said, "I'm going a fishing." I'm going fishing. Some fellows forsake the

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not been perfected, and now in the meantime, rather than do nothing, they would go 'a fishing. Not for recreation, but for business. While they were waiting they would not be idle. Another thing, that they might help to maintain themselves, and not be burdensome in any way. While their Master was with them, those who ministered to Him, were kind to them.

### III. Disappointments 3

Now we come to their disappointment in their fishing that night. They caught nothing, though it is probable that they toiled all night, as Luke 5:5 says. "Though man has dominion over the fish of the sea, he cannot always get them to come at his beck and call." However, God knows the paths of the sea." And the morning had come and Jesus stood on the shore."

### II. Decisions 3

This little band of disciples, seven of them, were together and Peter was the man who said, "I am going fishing." He was back again by the Sea of Galilee, for the sake of his Lord and Master, who had once come there and called him, he had left his father, and the boats, and the nets to follow that Master. He followed him as the days passed into weeks, and the weeks into months, and perhaps the months into a couple of years or so. We do not know how long or over what period of time he followed Jesus, but we know that now he had followed him until the point that he was bewildered, and in a kind of blind trust. He followed Jesus up to Jerusalem, to be with him when the kingdom should come, and to sit by him on His throne, when it should be fulfilled.

Then things went wrong. Jesus gathered the twelve around and talked to them of His dying, rather than of his reigning. He was betrayed by one of the group. He

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was tried and condemned, and was crucified and put on a cross. Most of them fled before the end. They made their way back to Galilee. It is there that we find them in this lovely story in John the Gospel. A story which is like a thin veil between two worlds.

One sees this little band of disappointed, disillusioned men, back by the lakeside once more. They were silent and motionless waiting for someone to speak. Waiting for the one most likely man of all, to say something and finally he said it. He simply said, "I'm going fishing." And they responded and they said, "We are going with you."

These four words of Peter carry with them an almost frightening situation of bitterness and sorrow, of regret. How could things, which had promised so much, have gone so wrong? How could one who had always seemed so sure of Himself, have been so mistaken about Himself? Could they ever trust another man again? Could they ever trust themselves again?

Probably they thought of themselves as being foolish. Ever leaving the one thing they knew how to do and do well and that was fishing on the Sea of Galilee. They ought

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to have known better than to have followed a fanatic. They should have turned a deaf ear. If Peter had in him a streak of idealism, he had also some iron in his veins. We may charge the man with inconsistency, with sentimentalism. He would go back to the world he knew well, to the world in which he could handle himself and his affairs. He would now take up his life where he had dropped it, and try to forget all that had happened in the meantime, simply by saying, "I am going fishing." And they said, "We are going with you."

The story goes on, we read that they went forth and entered a ship immediately. That night they caught nothing, they wondered had they lost their knack of fishing? Had they forgotten how to fish? Plainly they thought it was going to be easy for them, and that they would solve all their problems by going back to their fishing.

They knew not well what to do with themselves, they knew however of the trade and that they could go back to this. Some one has said that it was rather commendable in them, for they regained the time, they were not idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection of Christ. Their commission was in the drawing, and had

the sight of God, a man might be ever so familiar of its dangers and miseries, but if he knows of no way to help then he is helpless indeed. We must believe and know that there is a way and to know that grace is as real as sin. We must believe it and we must know that beyond the blood of Christ, there is no help for any individual. No one, not one is beyond His reach. There is no remedy, save Christ alone that can reach the needs of man. We must

We must come to realize that there is not only the consciousness of a power outside of ourselves, to apply this remedy and help the souls of men in this rescue and fishing work. We remember that James, John, and Andrew toiled with him at the nets. They fished, they worked, and as Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." we must come to recognize that we must be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit if we are to have power. For many reasons we must not fail to go out and rescue this dying world. We have sufficient motives, then all that is left of necessity is for us to go. Who can look at a suffering dying world and not be moved by pity? Who can look upon it and know the remedy and withhold that remedy from lost

How disappointed. Peter had said, "I am going fishing.", and this had seemed to be the answer to their needs. But it had not met their needs. Dear friends, today we have to but think of two or three things about us. If you will think back to World War I, we read of the history and how everyone thought that everything was going to work out. The president of one of the great colleges of our country, said that he was a moral and spiritual tradgy of World War I. That he fought through that war only to be a failure. It failed to achieve what it had promised. It embittered his whole life. He had gone on doing his work, but had never really dared to give himself to the cause of Christ.

If we will think back to World War II, we will discover that people today are depressed and fed up for the first time in our lives we come to realize that there is depression all around the world. The world news fails to bring to us the peace that men have shed their blood to make secure. Well was it worthwhile? Was it worth the sake of the future? There is no doubt at this, that it is disappointing. We Americans are in material things and

we are far better off than the people around us. Whether or not we are better off spiritually and morally is another thing. But when we think of the disappointments, and the delay, and the decay in this world, we cannot help but feel with these disciples, who said, "We are going fishing." and they fished all night and caught nothing, the great disappointment that was theirs.

I might pause here to insert that our attempt to go fishing is (not the simple solution) of our personal problems. We may think that it is. We may remember that those fishermen of long ago, fished all night and caught nothing. We think the waters of bitterness about us, that no civilization can succeed in the way that civilizations are traveling today. We need something to inspire us, to recall us, to redeem us. We need something more than just a fishing trip, but we need something that will prove the answer.

*Kind of Fishing Should have been Doing!*  
 I should like to insert here just a word concerning what Jesus said "If we would follow Him, He would make us fishers of men." And we should get the (fundamental) of the type of fishing that Jesus would have us to do.

We must first come to realize the conception of human needs, that God's people are at ease in Zion, because they have not stopped to think how needy mankind is. We are content with the ordinary routine of church life, and we do not realize what it means in this world and the next, to be without God. What a hungary, helpless thing it is. The soul of man, from the cradle to the grave, struggling for survival. All of this world would leave us unsatisfied. Actual presence, and power and the work of sin in the souls of man in this world is tremendous. It will take more than a theory. It is an actual living, present, working fact of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. Less than five blocks of this church, there are those without hope, and some hearts will be turned into ashes of despair and will be destroyed. There are homes that are unhappy, where sin is, there are people who are torn of thunder, there are those who have sinned like the prodigal son, and have been robbed of happy home life, as David and Absalom. Sin has divided. It has divided churches. Until he comes to understand the fundamentals concerning man's condition, the actual presence of sin, of seeing the sinner's needs in



ature and through tracts, and through benevolent means. Aiding all, who are helping in the spread of the gospel.

IV. Discovery

When we think about all that we have said before of their plans, Peter said, "I am going fishing." They decided to go, and it was a fruitless mission, but now we come to one of the appearances of Jesus as He came to speak to them. And as he approaches them, Jesus simply said, "Boys, have you caught anything to eat with bread? You do not have any meat or fish do you?" And what did they answer, they answered, "No."

Following this he said to them, "Cast your nets on the right side of the ship and you will find some." So they cast their nets and they were unable to haul it in for such a big catch, or mass, or quantity of fish was in it. The disciples discovered in verse 7, that this

humanity? Who can know and have this motive and balk at no difficulty? It is the love of our Lord that urges us on. There is no obstacle that should stop us from fishing for men.

We know that many times on the beautiful lake of Galilee, on that sea which is more than 600 feet below sea level, the warm air from its surface rises quickly. Cold air from the snow covered heights of Mount Herman, which overshadows the lake, is funneled down the narrow gullies. The effect on the water is similar to the results of blowing on a basin of water. In an incredibly short time, the rough sea is produced, and in the same length of time peace is restored again. We remember how Jesus calmed that sea, with just a word. And He has challenged us to be fishers of men, and we must take life's noblest risk and go, because faith is the evidence of things not seen.

When Jesus says, "I will make you fishers of men." it calls to our mind the emblem of the outline of a fish. When we think how we read of medieval Christianity, when Christians used the fish as the sign for recognizing one another, that they would draw the picture of a fish. In

those days of persecution, when a Christian wanted to know if the one whom he met was a Christian, he would trace with a reed or with his finger the outline of a fish, they tell us. If the other recognized the sign and answered back by tracing on the ground a similar outline, both were known to be Christians, and they might speak of Christ with safety.

For those who fish for men this emblem has somewhat similar meaning today. Impressed upon the hearts of men, we too are Christians, we follow the Lamb, and we seek those who are unsaved, in trying to bring them to Christ. We have that same scripture, "And He said unto them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Matthew 4:19

We have a song as fishermen, "throw out the lifeline across the dark wave, there is a brother whom someone should save, somebody's brother, oh who will dare to throw out the lifeline in peril to share. Throw out the lifeline, throw out the lifeline, someone is drifting away. Throw out the lifeline, throw out the lifeline, someone is sinking today." We have a mission, a message, a covenant, and we should know that a fishing band is

an important group. We have a great field to fish in and to work in. For we are to seek the lost, it should never be forgotten that the service which we are fishing for in the first place is to fish to win men to Christ. We must spend days, and seasons in prayer and private devotion at some regular time each week, we should visit one or more persons who are lost in an effort to win them to surrender themselves definitely to Christ the Saviour. We must be gentle and consistent, when possible to do so. Have an appointment with those you visit, and understanding that you come to talk about becoming Christians. Such business will not be offensive. We must be tactful as one who is fishing for fish, the soul winner is engaged in the most important business on earth, and it is under the positive orders of Jesus Christ. There is great encouragement that needs to be given by those who are fishing for men.

We must visit those who are here regular in their attendance, in the services, in the meetings and in the organizations which we are in charge of. We must also reach out to the sick, and to the needy and there must be the giving out of the message through religious liter-

was Jesus.

Someone said, "It is the Lord." They were witnessing in those words that what we mean in the spiritual realm. Here was Jesus, standing by the lakeside, a guarantee of eternal life to be their experience. Here was the Christ who had called them to join Him. Here was the one who had chosen them. So at all times Christians feel that Christ is drawing us, and they said, "It is the Lord." There is no faith in all the world that we need to explain as this faith. This is the answer to the needs of our hearts. I have only been trying to say, that the religious problems of our day are in humanity's course, able to resolve themselves, then I have been mistaken. We are confronted today, on every hand with shortcuts, mangled lives, saddened, frustrated terms of living all around this world. We see misery, famine and battle and murder and sudden death. It is time for us to say and recognize as these disciples had gone fishing, this is the Lord here. Showing himself and able to take care of us. He came in his bodily presence. We recognized the fact that He showed Himself in the morning following

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a fruitless, all night toil. We will remember that Jesus showed Himself to his disciples in solemn assemblies, in worship, and upon the Lord's day He always worshipped but now He comes to show Himself to these seven disciples. It is good for the disciples and Jesus to meet together, not only for solemn religious meetings and assemblies, but also for work it increases their affection and their testimony. And gives encouragement among the group. Here these seven were together fishing and Jesus comes to them in the morning and he shows himself to them gradually, when they were not expected to see him. He calls to them, and He says, "My children, have you caught any fish, have you landed any yet?" Last, "Have you any meat, have you caught any fish?" The question is very kind and we know that Jesus looks into cottages, and into homes of the poor and He discovers whether or not their is meat. And oh, if they in turn would look unto Him, then what a difference it would make.

He shows Himself to them by an instance of His power. In verse six, He orders them to cast on the other side of

the ship. On the contrary side to which they had been casting, and then they were to go home empty-handed <sup>who</sup> were enriched.

The orders Christ gave them, and the promise they followed to the letter. Their obedience of these orders and the good success of it, revealed to them that this is the Lord standing there.

There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders. Now the catch of fish may be considered a miracle in itself, designed to prove that Christ has been raised from the dead.

1 - Honest Confession -

2 - Rally around Jesus -

3 - Jesus Provides Nourishment -

How did the disciples receive this discovery, which Jesus made to Himself? They were quick, and at first they said, "It is the Lord." Peter was most \_\_\_\_\_, because he wrapped his fishing coat about him and plunged into the water and made his way to the shore.

And here Jesus entertained them with a provision of broiled fish and bread, and with His blessed presence.