

Video: Fishers of men from Sermon Central

In our Gospel lesson from Matthew, Jesus is traveling on the northern shore of Lake Galilee, where the local **economy relied heavily on fishing.**

So when Jesus invites Simon/Peter and Andrew and later James and John to be his disciples, to be part of his new **“family,”** he uses an image that they would understand. Jesus tells them *“I will make you fishers of people”*

It’s also a good image for those of us who live in Wisconsin.

How many fishermen/women do we have here?

Have you been to a fishery?!

- Next week: the Party on Poygan.
- Feb 4: Lake Poygan sportsman’s Club Winter Fishery.
- Feb. 24 &25 : Winter Battle on Bago,
 - expect 4000, raffle prizes and a gun raffle
 - heated tent for food, beer and dancing
 - \$275,000 in prizes in a variety of categories including 2 ford trucks and 2 Lund boats with mercury motors.
 - Don’t keep the catch, it’s fried up and shared with all the people at the event
 - Spend a lot of money on gear and the big winner might be just a kid with a pink jig.
 - Finally the prizes are not necessarily dependent on the success of the fisherman. At the Battle on Bago

first prize might be a 75 gallon cooler and the 200th prize might be a car.

- Fun is guaranteed.

Well what Jesus is doing in today’s lesson is sort of like inviting the disciples to a fishery, **The Galilee Fishery**

Now I know that this isn’t a perfect analogy but as Christians we are called to “fish” for other followers and we are certainly called to attract others to the faith. That is our job, our ministry.

You see, **when we are part of Jesus’ family,** just like when we are part of our family at home, **everyone is given a job to do.**

We are invited into Jesus’ ministry—to be fishers of people, The word *“minister”* means *“to serve, to act as an agent or to give help.”*

You do not have to be ordained to be a minister.

Each and every one of us has a ministry in daily life.

In the Baptism (today/last night) **Sabrina Juliette Shea was welcomed** into the Christian family and announced that she was a fellow worker with us. Even at her young age she is now a minister and a fisher of people.

Elton Trueblood, a Quaker writer, once wrote that to say **“Christian minister” is redundant** because, by its very nature, to be a Christian is to be in ministry, or in service to others

Unlike the disciples, most of us are not necessarily called to leave our homes, jobs and family behind.

However, we might find that we need to leave something behind; there may be activities or people who get in the way of our life with Jesus.

And if so, we may find ourselves making some changes.

God expects to be our #1 priority.

Are we placing something above our relationship with God? If we are, then it is going to be hard to be a faithful disciple.

You see, Jesus wants to use our words and actions, our service and treasures and our compassion to extend the good news and to invite others into the family.

God uses us to make His grace, healing and justice known in the world. And He uses us to grow the family.

That, by the way, is called evangelism.

If we use the fishing analogy, we could spend a lot of money and time figuring out how to “fish” for people, how to tell someone about the good news of Jesus Christ. Maybe we go to seminary or take a year-long evangelism course, read lots of how-to books or maybe as a church spend \$50,000/ year on a great praise band and all of that is good but it still may be a kid with a metaphorical pink jig that gets results.

All kinds of faith can be shared at slumber parties, across the lunch table or on a lazy Saturday afternoon.

That doesn't mean it's not our job too but I'm saying if they can do it so can we.

And as at the Battle on Bago, when we are successful in sharing the good news with someone, the benefit is for the whole community. And any “prize” or glory or thank you we might get, won't necessarily be proportion to our success.

Having said all of this, you still need to know something about a hook and line if you are fishing and so it helps to think a little about what it means to fish for people.

1. Live like you believe it! You can't tell people about the importance of God or your faith or your church if you aren't demonstrating your faith in how you live and worship. It is pretty hard to take Christianity seriously when so many Christians opt out of worship or haven't picked up a bible in years. Our Mission Statement is Gathered and sent Living faith. Only a lived faith is a living faith. We need to live out our faith in all that we do. People are drawn to passion. Do you have passion for God? For Jesus? For Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

2. Think ahead about what you would say if someone asked you why you are Christian or why you go to church or what difference it all makes.

It is like the idea of having an elevator speech ready. Remember what God has done for you or think about why you pray? Why you read your Bible? Why you give to your church. Think about it and be ready to tell someone when the opportunity comes up...And God will provide an opportunity, I promise.

3. Finally, in Christ's name, **love and serve others**. They will know us by our loving deeds. That's why we reach out to Christine Anne Center, Father Carr's, Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Mission trips, Neenah Animal shelter, and LWR and on and on. In fishing you use a lure. Our lure is love.

There are so many opportunities to support and extend God's ministry among us. In the next few weeks you will receive a Time and Talent Card, Please fill it out and return it to church. **In a way it is like signing up for this year's fishery.**

So now I am going to ask you again, *How many of you are fishermen/women?* All hands up!

Jesus said, I will make you fishers of people.

This is the good news of the gospel.