

Calling Four Disciples

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christ-directed work and the Gospel method of using men to catch men for salvation.

Scripture: Matthew 4:17

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Repentance And Service"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the significance of the Gospel of the kingdom, emphasizing the call to repentance and the offer of the kingdom by Jesus. He delves into the lesson of service, highlighting the importance of being directed by the Word of God in our work. The sermon explores the natural human response to divine power, where conviction of sin can lead to fear and a sense of judgment. Finally, the focus shifts to the heart of the lesson, discussing the various methods of 'fishing for men' for salvation as illustrated in Scripture.

Transcript

(Luke v:1-11.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The Preaching from Simon's Boat (verses 1-3).--Our Lord had returned from Nazareth to Capernaum, and was preaching in Galilee. We know from Matthew and Mark the burden of His preaching. It was the Gospel of the kingdom, not the Gospel of God's grace (Matt, iv:17): "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" {cf. Matt, x:5-7). The King had come and was offering the kingdom (2 Sam. vii:12-16; Isa. i:1-3; Jer. xxiii:3-8; Ezk. xxxvii:21, 25; Luke i:31-33), not the church.

2. The Difference Between Self-Directed and Christ-Directed Work (verses 4-7).--Here is a beautiful lesson in service. Mark the contrast: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing"--"and when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes." If there was anything these men knew all about it was fishing. It was their trade. And, moreover, they knew all about that lake, and all about the habits of the fish in that lake. Like a highly trained ministry who have added, besides, experience to training, and who still catch no souls; and who, like Simon, James and John, must learn that all their training and experience is nothing unless directed by the Word of God. "At thy word I will let down the net."

3. The Strange Prayer of Peter (verse 8).--Why should a convicted sinner run away from God? Because every revelation of divine power brings with it the thought of judgment. It is impossible for the natural man who is thoroughly convicted of sin to think of God as merciful. Self-satisfied, self-righteous man, thinks with complacency of

God. He is sure that God approves him. But let a due sense of quiet come to him, and fear comes with it.

4. The New Fishing (verses 10, 11).--Mark renders (i:17) "Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men." The Lord said both things: "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Obviously we are to find the heart of this lesson in that circumstance toward which the lesson tends, and in which it terminates: the Gospel method of using men to catch men for salvation. If we press the terms of our Lord's call we shall find them full of precious instruction in soul winning. Three kinds of fishing are mentioned in Scripture--the drag net (Matt, xiii:47), the casting or hand net, and the angle. The first suggests great revival meetings where, indeed, after results often prove that the net "gathered of every kind," good and bad. The sifting at the end of the age will reject very many whose names, in time of religious excitement, are put upon church membership rolls. Still, we should thank God that many "good" fish also get into the drag net.

The casting or hand net suggests the work of preaching the Gospel in a quieter way, and to few rather than to great crowds. The great majority of Christian preachers have not the gifts for gathering multitudes, though they may stand by the great sea of humanity and faithfully make repeated casts. Such work was done by a poor Wesleyan preacher the day that Charles Spurgeon was saved. That was a great catch out of a small audience. Let no fisher of men despise the opportunity of preaching to a mere handful. Many such may read these words who are disheartened by scant success. Courage, brother! there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Then there is the angle, which catches but one fish at a time. Those who cannot use the great drag net, nor even the hand net, may at least patiently angle for one fish. But this, too, requires skill and care. Be sure the bait is the true Gospel. Be willing to take infinite pains, and to have long patience. Remember, too, the word of the little country lad to the unsuccessful city angler: "You show yourself too much, sir."

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