

## "THE RIGHT BAIT"

Pastor Mike Corwin

**TEXT:** LUKE 5:1-11**GOD'S WORD:** 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11**I – THE RIGHT BAIT:**

My favorite pass time for relaxation and enjoyment is fishing. I could spend hours sitting on the bank of a pond throwing out a baited hook and waiting for the bobber to go under. Or if I'm feeling energetic I can stand on the bank casting out various lures to entice a fish to bite it and let me reel it in and see it face to face as I take out the hook and release it back. To have full ecstasy I put on my waders and stand in the middle of a river with nobody around and listen to the hawks screech and the water gurgle over the rocks and enjoy God's Creation as I try to catch one of his creatures.

This hobby is one that a novice can try easily with nothing more than a stick with some fishing line and a hook tied on it to get the worm out to the water. Or it can be really involved as you decide between a spinning reel and a bait casting reel. Do you want a fiberglass rod or one of the new carbon graphite rods? Or perhaps you want to try fly fishing and go big as you buy a split bamboo rod to put your fancy reel on. Let's not forget you have to choose what kind of line you'll use, choose between all the fancy tackle boxes, right down to clothes and shoes meant to help you stay safe and protect you from the sun's rays.

But the most important thing you need to be a successful fisherman or woman is the right bait. You have decide what it is you will put on your hook that the fish will find irresistible. You can use worms or leeches. You can use mice and frogs. You can use dough balls or rotten liver. You can use plastic worms or minnows. You can use spinners, spoons, rooster tails, and artificial swim baits. And the list could go on and on. The secret is to find the right bait for the fish you are trying to catch. Everything else is secondary to that. You must have the right bait!

**II – FISHERS - TEXT:**

So you say...what's that got to do with me? I don't like fish. I'll never touch a worm or a fish so I don't need a lesson on choosing the right bait. But you are all fishermen and women. You may never fish for fish with fins and gills, but you are called to fish for those with two legs who walk around. You are called to fish for people. That's one of the messages we find in this morning's text.

**Luke 5:1-11 (CEB)**

<sup>1</sup> One day Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret when the crowd pressed in around him to hear God's word. <sup>2</sup> Jesus saw two boats sitting by the lake. The fishermen had gone ashore and were washing

their nets. <sup>3</sup> Jesus boarded one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, then asked him to row out a little distance from the shore. Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he finished speaking to the crowds, he said to Simon, “Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup> Simon replied, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because you say so, I’ll drop the nets.” <sup>6</sup> So they dropped the nets and their catch was so huge that their nets were splitting. <sup>7</sup> They signaled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They filled both boats so full that they were about to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Leave me, Lord, for I’m a sinner!” <sup>9</sup> Peter and those with him were overcome with amazement because of the number of fish they caught. <sup>10</sup> James and John, Zebedee’s sons, were Simon’s partners and they were amazed too. Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you will be fishing for people.” <sup>11</sup> As soon as they brought the boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus is out for a walk along the shores of the lake and Luke lets us know he is being pressured by the crowds to hear God’s Word spoken by him. His reputation as a teacher and preacher has preceded him and they want to hear a lesson from him on God’s Word. The shoreline makes a perfect natural amphitheater where he can talk to many people all at once. He sees two boats sitting there and he steps into one, owned by Simon, who later became Peter, and asked him to take him out a short ways from the shore so he could speak to all the people who had assembled. It’s good to take note here that he is already making Peter the first among his disciples and choosing him over others.

When Jesus finished the sermon he told Peter to row out a ways and drop his nets. At this point Peter probably had doubts about doing this. He’s the professional fisherman – not Jesus. Peter even calls it to his attention that he and his helpers had fished all night and caught nothing. He expects the results of putting his nets back in the water will have the same results – nothing. But he does as Jesus said.

But they had to have a bad night or they wouldn’t recognize what happened next as the miracle it was. The amount of fish they had caught was enormous and started to split the nets open. Peter had to call for help to get the fish in the boats.

Peter realized it was a miracle and knew that Jesus wasn’t an ordinary teacher or preacher. He is overcome with his own inferiority and his sinfulness. His reaction to being in Jesus’ presence and seeing his miracle was to do what all of humankind is supposed to do. When we are confronted by Jesus our human sinfulness becomes apparent to us and when that happens we must repent of our sins so we can receive his saving grace.

And here it comes...Jesus said they should not be afraid – in other words trust him – and from now on they’d be fishing for people. Jesus knows as we now do that he’s speaking of all the peoples of the world, not just the Jews, but Gentiles too.

And we also see the true path of discipleship. How a real disciple reacts to the call to go fishing. They must be ready to lay aside all they think they have and follow Jesus wherever he leads them.

You have to put aside your personal agenda and pick up Jesus'.

### III – PEOPLE BAIT:

You are called to be fishers of people. You are all called to catch people for Jesus and in doing so the lesson I taught you at the beginning of this message is still true. You have to have the right bait. You have to know what to put on your hook to lead people to faith. The answer is very simple and you heard the Apostle Paul tell us what it is in this morning's reading from 1 Corinthians. You don't have to make all kinds of decisions or get the most recent shiny object that everyone tells you will work. All you need is the story of Jesus. You need the Good News.

People need to hear the Gospel. Paul said it all in one verse. He said that what he had preached to the people when he was with them, the message they had believed was simply what verses 3-4 says:

*<sup>3</sup>I passed on to you as most important what I also received: Christ died for our sins in line with the scriptures, <sup>4</sup>he was buried, and he rose on the third day in line with the scriptures.*

People need to know that their heavenly Father loved them so much that he sent his one and only Son to bring them back to him. His Son who was arrested for no reason, tried by humans who had no compassion or understanding, who took him out into the courtyard at the Roman barracks and beat him nearly to death, then prodded him up a hill, nailed him to a cross and hung him in the sun to die a cruel and public death. He became the Lamb of God as he died on that cross and defeated sin and death for all of humanity if they came to know him and accept him. People just need to hear that message in whatever way you tell them, that Jesus lived, Jesus died, Jesus was buried, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day he rose from the dead and came out of his tomb.

That's the only bait you need. The only message you need to offer. Getting the Gospel isn't just getting one more good thing in your possessions. It's discovering erring and how he affects their life now and forever. Jesus provides us with

- A new center of existence
- A new power for living
- A new perspective from which to view all things

Jesus changes their life!

#### **IV – TACKLE:**

Just like you can use different rods, reels, and tackle to go fishing for fish, you can do the same thing when you're fishing for people. Sometimes we get really hung up on what tackle we use.

- What kind of building do we need?
- Pews or Chairs?
- Organ or a band?
- Times of Worship?
- How to dress for church?
- Audio Visual or paper?
- Hymns or Praise songs?
- What Bible translation should we use?
- How should we baptize?
- How should we take communion?

The best thing I can tell you this morning is that none of that really matters. That's all people made and human feelings and opinions. Just like you change tackle depending on the fish you're going after you may need to change your tackle depending on the people you're going after. You can change your tackle as you try to catch different demographics of people, or different generations.

The one thing you can never change...the one thing that has to stay constant is the bait. No matter how you present it or where you present it the bait must stay the same. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who lived – who died – who was resurrected – and who is coming back again. And he is the only one who can save you from your sins, who can make sure you get in to heaven, and who will love you no matter what you've done in your past. He is the one who can share God's grace with you and change your life. That's the only bait you will ever need to be fishers of people.

#### **V – LET'S GO FISHING:**

Jesus is calling us today just as he did Peter on that lakeshore so many years ago. Jesus calls us to quit worrying about the things in our lives. To quit worrying about petty gripes and long held grudges. Jesus calls us to quit worrying about the things in his Church that have no bearing on the Salvation of people. He calls us to lay down our earthly worries and cares, and make him the center of our lives.

He calls us to step out of the boat and follow him completely as we build the Kingdom of God.

Jesus calls us to go fishing. Let's wet a line shall we?

AMEN