

*Barley*

*W. N. June 15, 73 1.00 WKRL  
Grove Park Oct 21, 90 P.M. ✓  
Lake Drummond Feb 23, 97 A.M. ✓*

*"Gone Fishing"*  
THE NIGHT OF FRUITLESS TOIL

John 21:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

*V. 3*

From our night scenes in the Bible, Peter and his group agree to go fishing.  
And they went forth and entered into a ship and immediately that night, they caught nothing.

Fishing is something that is often mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the book of Lev. 11:9 and Deut. 14:9 - we <sup>*20 (List)*</sup> read that whatsoever has fins and scales in the water is declared clean by law. That as that which has not fins is forbidden.

We also note that there are (no fish) that can live in the Dead Sea. Or they perish, even though the swift currents of Jordan would move many of them down stream - they perish because of the high content of (salt).

The fish industry was flourishing on the Sea of Galilee and even today there are still fishermen in business.

*wisdom of God like a net - gathered from every race  
Matt →*

In the New Testament, we read in Chapter 13 - Verse 47, about a (drag net) - casting a net that was several feet long with weights on the bottom of it and they would pull the ropes and cast the net in the form of a circle.

Fishing is very (relaxing work) and yet very strenuous work, for those who make their livelihood at it. For often they toil for hours without success. And yet there are others who are ready always to go back once more and try their hand at fishing.

Fish were used for (food) Hab. 1:16. An abundance of fish meant a general

abundance of food. These fishermen wore special garments when they went fishing.

(Today) as in the (ancient days) there are men who (amuse) themselves by fishing in (private) fishing ponds. Or pools where they have placed fish - just for the fun of catching them.

Anyone reading the book of (Neh. 13:16) will find a description of the (fish gate) - one of the gates on the (wall of Jerusalem) was known as the fish gate. Therefore fishing must have been an (important part) in the life of the children of Israel as it furnished food.

You remember one of the (miracles) of Jesus was that he took (five loaves) and fish - (two fishes), and fed a great multitude of people. Matt. 14:17.

It had such an impact upon the people that Jesus used the term to his Disciples - (if) you will follow me, I will make you to become fishers of men.

On another occasion, (Matt. 13:47) - he 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.

*Talked to Howard Holbrook in hospital about*  
We find all kinds of stories as we think about this night scene from the Bible. Of fishing, all night, and there are all kinds of stories about men who fish and fish tales. We hear them about the weight, size of fish, etc. I remember a story I read about (two Irishmen) who went fishing. They happened to hit a real hot spot and they hauled in a bunch of whoppers. And Mike and Pat had a tremendous time fishing at that spot. Mike said we had better (mark this hole) and come back tomorrow. And so (Pat) pulled up the anchor and as they moved ashore, Mike said Pat, did you mark the place. You bet I marked it - I (put a cross mark) on that (side) of the boat. And (Mike)

snorted you have a loose screw - how do you know that we'll get the same boat tomorrow when we come to rent a boat to go fishing.

I suppose there has been no other sport that has been given to such far fetched stories as that of fishing. And men today are little different from those of years gone by when it comes to exaggeration about the size of the fish and the catch.

Let us organize our sermon thought tonight under three thoughts.

I. THE FISHING TRADE

II. THE FRUITLESS TOIL

III. THE FANTASTIC TECHNIQUE

*Food for Thought in the Plain Prayer  
Known As the Fisherman's Prayer  
God grant that I may live to fish  
until my dying day.  
And when it comes to my last east,  
I then most humbly pray,  
When in the Lord's safe landing net  
I'm peacefully asleep,  
That in His mercy I be judged  
As big enough to keep.*

I. THE FISHING TRADE

We want to <sup>note</sup> see the night on the Sea of Galilee - it is a beautiful night. It is quiet and peaceful. And there is no strong breeze - not a ripple to break on the white sands of the silent shore. The lake lies as clear and calm as the lofty mountains that reach the heavens. The stars and the mountains mirror in the glassy sea. What a picture. The lights on the light towers on the distant hills reflect from beneath the surface of the sea. From the pasture lands where the flocks of sheep are in the fold, there is heard the occasional call of a shepherd. To answer the watchdog who breaks the silence of night. But here is a boat that has gone out on this sea. The Roman horseman pass along the patrol on the road - close to the waters edge. But the shore is silent.

✓ 13

In the midst of the deep calm there are seven men who come slowly and thoughtfully down to the narrow beach. And they enter a stranded boat - push it out a little way from the land. They are clad in their coarse garb of fishermen. Their faces have been bronzed by their exposure to the wind and the sun. Their hands have been swollen with dragging the dripping net. And hardened with pulling the laboring ore.

But these men are destined to hold the highest rank among the great masters and teachers of mankind. They are to bear their lives and spend their lives carrying a torch, about the Heavenly truth. Offering the remedy for all human woes. Peter is in this group. There is also John who leaned upon Jesus' bosom, in the upper chamber. There is Thomas the honest but doubtful man. There is Nathaniel from the hill town of Canaan. There is James.

And these men are at their fishing trade. They are working hard and honestly at it. They are now a sufficient distance from the land. And they cast their net into the deep sea. And draw it up. Time and time again, they work at their fishing trade.

They changed their ground they pass up and down the coast. They row out into deeper water. They come nearer to the shore. And everywhere they let down the net, they always draw it up - taking nothing.

The fishing trade made such an impact upon the Disciple's minds that they used an emblem - the outline of a fish. When a Christian used this as a sign of recognition. They would draw the picture of a fish - in those days of persecution when a Christian wanted to know whether the one whom he met was a Christian, he would trace with a reed or with his finger the outline of a fish. If the other recognized the sign, and answered back by tracing one on the ground - a similar outline, both were known to be

Christians. And they might speak of Christ in safety.

Therefore these fishermen and their trade furnish for us a great background of all Christianity. That emblem means something even today. As we impress it upon men's hearts. Matt. 4:19 - Jesus said, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

*On a fishing trip we never face famine we always take along a can of salmon!*

II. FRUITLESS TOIL

*Fishing (Manta) me day - one gentleman suggested we go to fish market on way home. Fishermen suppose to bring meat home.*

Now all fishing is not successful. And everytime a man goes out fishing, he will not always bring back a string of fish. These Disciples caught nothing. They spent long hours. Fruitless toil - thinking and talking about the absent Lord. And toiling at their occupation.

3 B

*I smiled at this little boy "I'm not taking little sister fishing with me anymore. She eats up all the bait!"*

Now they had seen him twice since the resurrection and they were trying to live over the past. And they were trying to get their lives in line for a plan and some hope for the future. And on this little lake, they hoped that they would get things

*ice* fixed in their minds through this night of fishing. You will remember this was the place where they saw him walk on the wildest storm - just like people walk on the solid earth. And here he said peace to the winds and the winds hushed. It was close by on the grassy bank where he fed the five thousand. And it was nearby in Capernaum where he so often healed the sick, raised the dead, and spoke the words of eternal life. And it was not too far hence where the transfiguration took place. Just a little way over the ridge where the sun went down is Canaan. That is where he attended the wedding and he changed the water into wine. And just a little way was Nazareth - nestled among the hills. That was his home. Now these fishermen no doubt were thinking about all of these things. They are sad. While the long hours of the weary night are spent in

Tell about the Big one that got away - Did he put up fight?

(Yes) Fisherman related efforts at catching a 25 lb Bass - 10 lb grasshopper & caught it with.

"yes But not half as much as he - Here is another young man who starts out - he means to take it easy. He never strains himself. He meets the demands before him. He never sets his standards very high. And self-indulgence is his first law. He has little patience to listen to duty.

He goes eagerly after (pleasure). He is ready for anything that will divert a vacant mind. He means to enjoy himself.

*Frank Haupt - Prof - Mr. Nic Shappel Hill - Story fishing coast N.C. An old fisherman out good time - Day got drunk - Managed get home feeling uncommonly sick convinced young die - Summoned wife - made her pray for him - object obvious condition - married. Just the same by God "I'll show some mercy on my poor drunk head" & spoke up as plainly "Don't tell him I'm drunk. Tell him I'm sick."*

And yet this poor creature is never happy either. He has no solid peace. He lives to enjoy himself. He toils all night and takes nothing. If he lives to old age, he

will only be poor and a disappointed man.

*Failure to keep a child quiet - Father pushing Baby Carriage - Store "Easy Albert" in control yourself "Keep calm" another child rang out. Now Albert, now Albert, mamma! The Parent, now keep your temper" - a young mother smiling, you would have talk to Baby early & gently, she patted the baby on the head & cooed. Now what's bothering you Albert? "No! No! Cried the father, Al's Name is Harold, I'm Albert."*

Now if a young man would enjoy life, he must look to something higher and nobler than this. He must be bound to God and I might also state any young lady who is

*Father trying stay sweet in side!* fascinated with a fashionable life, who turns away from the Saviour and dismisses

him for a gay life, talks of trifles, and chases society, loves light literature and light conversation, light amusements, will toil all night and take nothing. It will

bring darkness and disappointment upon her soul. She makes the great mistake of supposing that worldliness is happiness. Multitudes of the young throw away their

best years. And then find that their hearts are empty and unsatisfied. It has made them waste their young affections. You let every young woman put forth her purest

and give herself to Christ - and then she will discover that Christ will show himself as he did to Mary. Failure to catch a man: A man tried to catch another man.

*The pursuer failed to catch the man pursued, Bystander said; why don't you catch that man? "Because the closer I got to him the farther he was away, & the last time I saw him he was clean out of sight."*

Time fails us - for there are so many illustrations that I could take and bring

to you of people who have put the world first. Who have spent a whole lifetime in fruitless toil. There are those who have pushed the Sunday School out of their

lives. They have become ashamed to study the laws of God. They go away to toil for long dark years to find something more interesting than the blessed book. But

when they come to the end of life beyond the river of death, they die. They hope for Heaven - but they'll miss it.

So the fishing trade may be compared with the fruitless toil that these fishermen had without fish. To lives that are lived in fruitlessness - floundering around in

folley, frustrated, and futile. / Old Tom / Bank Finn - Pole - Season net in  
Some Warden come up watch - unruffled, old man moved back about 4  
ft out of water - pointed to a minnow wiggling on the end of the line,  
he said "just teaching him to swim".

III. FANTASTIC TECHNIQUE

I want to speak now of the fantastic technique as the Lord offered to these

Disciples at this time. As Jesus stood on the shore, in V. 4 - he spoke to his

Disciples. V. 5 - He says children have ye any meat. And they answered him "no".

V. 6 - Jesus said cast the net on the right side of the ship. A fantastic technique  
that Jesus came to them with. You'll find some. Were cast their net and they were  
unable to haul it for such a big catch - or mass and quantity of fish.

As we look at these Disciples after the night of fruitless toil, we find the scene greatly changed. It is morning, on the sea. And the pale shadows of light are coming up on the Eastern sky. And the bright star has moved over the hills. And the mountain tops are beginning to redden with the fires of a coming new day. And the mist along the shoreline brightens up. And the weary Disciples now cease from their fruitful toil. For the time of success had passed with the night. And still they had taken nothing.

But they see this familiar form standing on the beach. And they hear a voice They had often heard before. And they are numbed - he tells them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. And success which follows their obedience to his words - reveals that this was the voice of the risen Lord.

Immediately they forgot the long night / The fruitless toil. In the joy of seeing Jesus - they had learned a great lesson. The highest skill and the hardest work are vain

without the presence of Jesus. And that the success of life is obedient to him.

Simple, but this lesson is hard for some of you to learn. And hard for the heart to learn, tonight. You may work as hard as you possibly can to draw up riches and pleasures in this world. And the deep sea of life. But there will be disappointment. You may pursue the most common occupation. In obedience to him, and the results will become success and joy.

The real joy in this life is following the directions of Jesus.

Are you not weary of toiling unsuccessfully - seeking for rest without finding it.

Jesus calls us tonight from the eternal shore - his voice is sweeter than that of an angel. He says to each of you tonight - follow me. And the first step of obedience is faith.

And I will assure you the dark night of toiling will be over. When you see Jesus. It is the Lord, one of them said, standing on the lakeside. On every hand we take our short cuts, our sad moments, our frustrated terms in the world. We see misery, famine, battles, murders, and all of these taking place. That Jesus comes, and he said, my children - have you caught any fish. Have you landed any in the net.

Jesus looks into every home tonight. Into every place, and he is searching to discover whether there is meat to eat. And he is saying, cast your net on the other side of the ship.

It was a great day when Jesus stood that morning on the beach. And made that



beach a pulpit and the shore his auditorium for that congregation to listen from their pews in that boat. And the practical application he made - launch out into the deep. Let down your nets as told in Luke 5:4.

Now this is the application Master we have toiled all night and taken nothing. Some were suspicious. Some were reluctant. And there are many Christians today who work in the same way. They get excited at a conference, at a meeting, or over some book. They get a little enthusiasm.

*Apply to your church - find no success - hand is empty - try again - tried this etc*

But the practical command - launch out and let down. Now this is a wonderful thing. There is no cost (involved) in launching out. But you say, that is not so good. Well, it is delightful. But letting down - that is a problem for us.

Our Lord told his early Disciples follow me. And I will make you fishers of men. Matt. 4:19, Now it is his responsibility to make you, and to make them fishers of men. Are you a fisher of men tonight? Have you launched out and let down. Or are you in the boat firmly anchored to the church pew. Jesus said, I'll make you fishers of men. Not a fisher - if you are not a fisher of men, you are not following.

*You are not true. Many LWCA, Oak Hills Ch San Antonio Tex - His father, Campers Max + Fred fishing trip - false - rain wind - no prob - monopoly, Reader's Digest, 2nd night - Ice storm cooped up - Trenches - Food Bad - colder - going home! learned when those who are called to fish don't fish, they fight. Swagazine intended for outside is used inside - Ch, Sermons split churches - like soldiers inside barracks with no time on front line - invent trench*

And if there is no fishing, there is no following.

*trenches hard food all stale - trenches dogs few bullets - barrels in heaven*

*When those who are called to fish, fish. The Followish. Jesus knew that!*

Now these Disciples understood the terms of Jesus. Now men are darting hither and there. In the shadows of aimlessness, busy doing nothing, and getting no where. They swim in the shallow because they lack the moral character to go out in the deep. They jump into the smallest puddle and there is emptiness.

There are countless fish drifting and floating in the tides of moral bankruptcy. The Master says, launch out, let down.

Now the church is a net and the world is on the outside here, and is the fishing ground. And we are to launch out and that means we are to go where the fish are. The boat that never goes fishing will never make a profit for the owner.

Launch out even if it is uncomfortable. Or damp at times. It is worthwhile to let down your nets.

Now in thinking about this, suppose we in the church have 100 members. Say if there was a church or a city of <sup>independant</sup> a half a million people. Now that would be very small you would say. But the early church and fishers of men launched out and let down. But the present church today, our members sit down and sit tight. Think about it - if you had a 100 members and every member was a fisher of men. If 100 members of one church caught one fish each year. In 15 years, the one and a half million population of the city could be in Christ's net - plus 100,000 visitors who happened to be in that city during that period. Now this is a staggering thought. And yet it is just a question of math. I do not know of any fisherman who would be satisfied to catch one fish per year. But I do know that the Master would be delighted in these days if every fisher of men could manage to catch one fish per year.

Now fishermen never go fishing in a swimming pool. For they know perfectly well they will never catch any fish there. Now God cannot save all the fish just with our church services. And we may pray that God will send them to us, but the command is that we go out and catch them. Fishermen know that fish do not give themselves up. But they have to be caught. The Lord Jesus always looks for fish and his Disciples must do the same. We get the impression that many churches today are more dedicated to raising funds than catching fish. And many churches are equipped to deal with a large catch. And what the church needs is a matter of fishing. They need this

fantastic technique, that Jesus talked about here. Small boys, old men, business people, office clerks. All of these can go fishing. Just like they do all across this world. Now you go down to the fishing pier sometime and see what kind of people are there. All sorts of folks, are there. The fur wrapped Eskimo goes fishing. And some use all sorts of equipment to fish with and some of it costs vast amounts of money. But they all enjoy fishing.

Now the Bible speaks about this special gift - but we remain silent on the gifts of fishermen. Because there is no special gift required or provided for - every Christian is a fisher of men. This is Christ's ideal.

Now if you protest against this - Jesus promises to make you a fisherman. I am not eloquent - I am not slow of speech. I am of a slow tongue. Ex. 4:10. When he was commissioned to fish for men. Moses discovered that he could be used to lead thousands. If you can talk about the weather, you can talk about Christ.

I am a man of unclean lips. Isa. 6:5. But the Lord dealt with that problem. Isaiah said, here am I, send me.

You feel you are not worthy to fish - you may be right, but he can equip you.

Lord, I cannot speak, for I am as a child. Jer. 1:6. This was a statement of a man who could not speak. But he is wrong. If you have a tongue, it can be used.

The woman of Samaria caught a net full of fish. John 4:39. Samaritans of the city believed.

Mark 5:19 - The man of Gadara, who was liberated from the Devil's dominion, was instructed to go home and tell thy friends of the great things the Lord hath

done for thee. How he had compassion upon thee. Everyone and anyone can do this.

There is - God has arranged for us the things to fish with. Here is an ocean, a boat -- a big boat or a small boat. He has given us the equipment to fish with.

The Lord Jesus is more interested in seeking souls than Christians will ever be. He knows where the fish are. He knows the right time and the right place. He knows the habit of getting them together.

Cornelius was seeking and he contacted Peter and Peter caught a big fish. They had open hearts - and there was Philip. God put right in the middle of the desert and he caught that fish.

And it doesn't matter whether it is a whale or not. God knows how to put you in a proper place to fish.

The fantastic technique which he said to these men - launch out, lower your nets.

✓ First, fish must be found. You will find fish in the natural places where fish live. The unregenerated fish is more inclined to visit the evil places than a church. He will have a home, he will have a profession, he will have a hobby. And he will have problems. But we need to go to his territory if necessary. Peter found his fish - he lived in a Gentile home. He went to that home and the whole household was gloriously converted.

~~Peter~~ - or Philip went to Samaria - he traveled in the desert and he was rewarded.

The vast majority of people will not be found in church now-a-days. Most of them will be outside the church. It is unrealistic for us to assume that because we

advertise or make announcements - that the fish will swim into the net. Into the heart. It simply will not take place.

The net must be let down. If we are going to be in contact with fish, as our Lord Jesus said, there is no short cut. It is imperative that we go about this process.

V. 8, 9 The catch must be landed. And the fishermen do not influence fish - they catch them. You must be able not only to explain the Gospel, to the fish, but you must be able to land him - (lead him to Christ) Pray with him when he is ready and bring him to the point of assurance and thankfulness, for all that he has in Christ.

When Peter saw the tangible results of the Lord's working, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying depart from me, oh Lord, I am a sinful man / Luke 5:8-9. He was convicted, of his faithlessness and he was amazed. And here was a net full of fishes. They had launched out - they had let down.

V. 11 They were - 153 fish, great fish - V. 11. The Bible tells us when they pulled this net to land. In thinking about this, I found that some people have given some study to the matter of these 153 fish.

First, Sirus of Alexandria said, that the number 153 is made up of 3 things. First, there is 100 that represent the fullness of the Gentiles. He says this is the fullest number. Like in Matt. 18:12 - a shepherd's full flock is 100. And the seeds full fertility is 100 fold. So the 100 stands for the fullness of the Gentiles who will be gathered in to Christ. Second, is the 50 - he says this stands for the

remnant of Israel who will be gathered in. And third, there is (3) - that stands for the (trinity). To whose glory all things are done. That is at least some interesting explanation.

Augustine, in another explanation of this said, that (10) is the number of the law. There are 10 commandments. (7) is the number of grace for the gifts of the spirit - or seven fold. And so he multiplies this out and the 153 stands for all those who either by law or by grace have been moved to come to Jesus Christ.

Jerome gives a simpler explanation - he says that in the sea there are 153 different kinds of fishes. And that the catch stands for a catch with (every kind) of fish. And therefore the number symbolizes the fact that some day all men of all nations will be gathered together to Jesus Christ. The great catch of fish was gathered into the net. And the net held them all. And the net stands for the church - and the church is wide enough to embrace all nations.

We have a song as fishermen - Throw Out The Lifeline Across the Dark Way,

There is a brother, who 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 message and a mission that we should be fishers  
of men. And we have a great field to fish in and to work in. And let it not be said  
that our night is spent in fruitless toil because Jesus has given us the fantastic  
techniques of dropping down the nets and of taking a full catch.

He succeeds. But in middle life he is rich. And he has everything that money can buy at his command. And at last, money cannot buy that which man needs most. It cannot buy happiness. It cannot buy faith. It cannot buy cheerfulness, pardon of sin, preparation for death, the hope of Heaven.

The capacity to make money is a great and a sacred talent. Which God gives to men to be used in the enrichment of souls and the enlargement of their heart. And their hopes and desires to a better life.

When men use their talents only for self, and the world, it only makes them poorer in the priceless jewels of their heart. The harder they toil, the less they get.

Now this poor, rich, wealthy man feels that he has spent all of his labor for nothing. With all of his success he has not gained the satisfaction of his soul. He has lived only for the world. The world is only waiting for him to die - to get out of the way, for others to fill his place and to enjoy his possessions. And with weary disappointment - this old man has labored and toiled all night, and taken nothing.

If he had given his life to Christ in youth, and made this the great business of life - God would have given him wisdom and talent to make a better world. He would have had eternal riches. And there is no sadder place on earth than the death chamber of a successful man of the world who has secured all that the world can ever give. But is dying and leaving all the good things behind him. And goes to eternity to be poor forever.

fruitless toil.

They let down the net into the dark depths of the sea and it always comes up empty. And so they thought of plunging into the deep and dark mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection. They are hoping for some light on this.

Just as they were before, he said to them, follow me. They were weary, dissatisfied. And they were in the midst of fruitless toil. And they had taken nothing - the Bible says.

At this point, I would like to say that there are (perhaps some of you) and some among us who spend our whole lives, the whole life as these Disciples spent that night on the Sea of Galilee. Toiling in darkness. Taking nothing. The world is full of toilers who never get satisfaction or return from their labor. Because they lose sight of Jesus Christ.

There are a great number of people who put forth a great effort. Pour out all of their strength, and come to the end of life, without ever having found anything worth living for. The world is full of the dissatisfied and the unhappy.

Here is a young man, for illustration who launches out his life boat, upon the troubled sea of toil and competition. In this great city of ours. He has good health. He has a quick mind. He has an eager heart. He has a high estimate of his abilities. And he means to make something out of life. To be proud of it and to enjoy it. He puts a severe restraint upon appetite and passion. He has nothing to do with those that are idol. He is intent upon turning every hour, every acquaintance, every opportunity to some account to advance his own efforts and enlarge his possessions and his position.