

April 20, 2020

Signs of His Love - Part 8

Matt. 28:16-20, “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I AM with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This passage, known as the Great Commission, is the foundation for the Church. Every believer should know this and practice this. I heard an elderly pastor one day say, “it is not the Great Suggestion, it’s the Great Commission.” Jesus had completed everything that He came to do. He had poured His life into this world. He had made the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. He had continued to meet with people after His resurrection to encourage them. But now, as He is preparing to leave for a while, He makes this all important command to the ones He has disciples. Therefore go! For some reason, I believe we’ve changed this into: therefore stay. "If people want to find out about God, they should come to us." That is not what Jesus said. "They should see it in our works and deeds." That is not what Jesus said. He said to go; and that takes much more effort and commitment on our part. I want to share a story that I heard many years ago that is a little lengthy but worth the read:

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. Further they said, “The fishing industry exists by fishing as fire exists by burning.” They loved slogans such as “Fishing is the task of every fisherman,” and “Every fisherman is a fisher,” and “A fisherman’s outpost for every fisherman’s club.” They sponsored special meetings called “Fishermen’s Campaigns” and “The Month for Fishermen to Fish.” They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing such as the new fishing equipment, fish calls, and whether any new bait was discovered.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called “Fishing Headquarters.” The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn’t do, however – they didn’t fish. In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. All the fishermen seemed to agree that what is needed is a board which could challenge fishermen to be faithful in fishing. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

After one stirring meeting on “The Necessity for Fishing,” one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fishermen’s General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it’s true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen’s clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?”

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who didn’t catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if, year after year, he never catches a fish? *(copied)

Dear Father, help us to carry out the most important command that Jesus gave us; to go and make disciples. We are to go and tell, not sit and wait. Build that fire in our hearts to be Your witnesses. As Isaiah said when He saw Your glory, “Here I am Lord, send me.” In Jesus Name, Amen