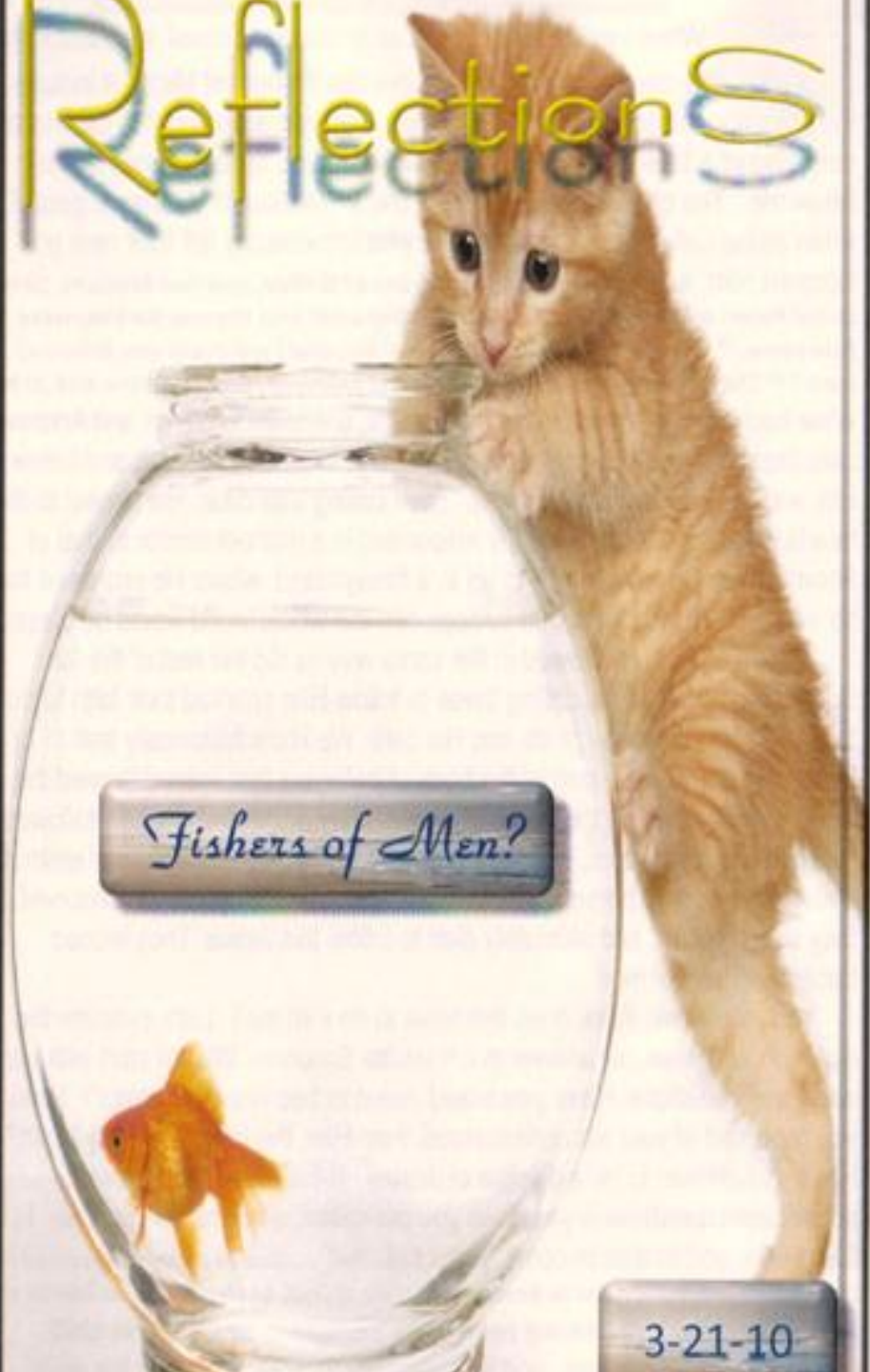


Reflections



Fishers of Men?

3-21-10



Reflections

When I was a kid growing up in Sunday School, we used to sing

a little chorus called, "I Will Make You Fishers of Men". It included the obligatory motions which, in this case, involved acting out the casting and retrieving of a fishing rod and reel. I will make you fishers of men if you'll follow me. The chorus was taken from the 4th chapter of Matthew's gospel when Jesus called Simon and Andrew who immediately left their nets and followed Him. *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ They immediately left their nets and followed Him. (Matthew 4:18-20 NKJ)* What had just happened? This man Jesus, unknown to Simon and Andrew, calls them to leave their old familiar lives and livelihoods behind and follow Him and they immediately comply. Their calling was clear, His appeal to their hearts was compelling, and they responded in a manner similar to that of Abram when God called him to go to a foreign land, where He promised that he would be blessed and that through him the whole world would be blessed.

James and John followed in the same way as did the rest of the 12. Something about Jesus calling these to follow Him sparked their faith to put their trust and their way of life into His care. We know historically that 11 of these original 12 were part of the body of believers that indeed "turned the world upside down" in the name of Jesus. They answered His call, followed Him even to martyrdom, and, as He promised, became inheritors of eternal life. They endured persecution, they were mocked, they were imprisoned, they were beaten, and ultimately died to follow this Jesus. They indeed became fishers of men.

You might ask: What does this have to do with me? Let's examine the question and seek our answer to it from the Scripture. We will start with some additional questions. Have you asked Jesus to become your savior? Have you repented of your sin and received, from Him, the gift of the Holy Spirit? Have you chosen to be a disciple of Jesus? If the answers to these subsequent questions is yes, then you are called, as were the disciples, to follow Him and to also become "fishers of men". *...But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12 NKJ)* Having been given the right to be called His child, carries with it the privilege, and responsibility, to share Him with the world around you as you walk as His faithful disciple.

Jesus has called each of us to bear fruit and to make disciples. He has said... *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. (John 15:16 NKJ)* and *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJ)* All we must do is to accept His call and follow Him. This means to learn His Word, to walk by faith in His finished work of salvation, and to make disciples in His name. Too often, even in the Church, we have neglected to follow His imperatives for obedience to His Word. As a result, many have become merely religious and not His true disciples.

Perhaps at this point in our consideration of His calling of the 12, we need to add to our list of questions as we assess our walk with Jesus. Have we walked with the Lord in such a manner that we now trust Him regardless of our circumstances? Do we walk in confidence knowing by faith that He will be with us no matter what we face? *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. (Hebrews 10:35 NKJ)* Have we given our livelihood over to His control? *"And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:38 NKJ)* Are we truly "fishers of men" as evidenced by our sharing Jesus with those around us? *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... (Matthew 28:19 NKJ)* Do we still walk in fear? *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJ)*

These are good questions for each of us to consider as we evaluate our effectiveness as His disciples. We are cautioned to examine ourselves in the light of His Word, rather than do a comparison with those around us. We might come to the conclusion that we are doing pretty well compared to (name), but how do we compare to the disciples that have gone before us and to the clear call of Jesus on our lives. *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. (Hebrews 11:36-38 NKJ)* The writer of Hebrews calls these a "great cloud of witnesses" that challenge us to run with endurance the race set before us looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Considering all this, the little chorus still echoes in my mind... *I will make you fishers of men if you'll follow me. Lord help us to be your committed disciples and fishers of men. Pastor Doug*