

# “Do You Fish?”, Week 1 of the Navigating Deep Waters Series

Presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 9/9/18  
At Crossroads United Methodist Church  
Wauaukee, WI

Scripture:

John 21:2-3

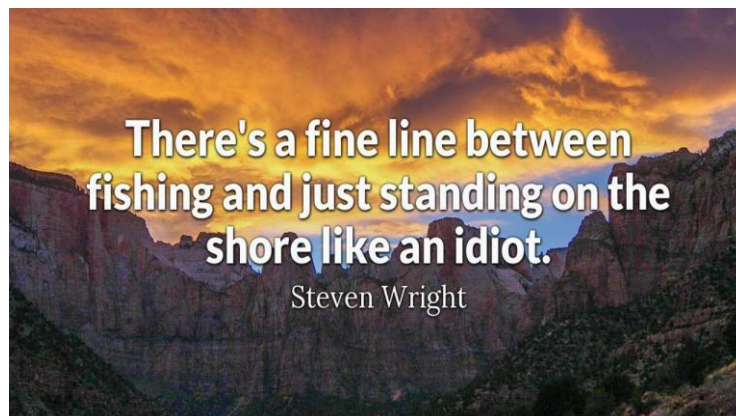
Simon Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

Luke 5:1-11

“Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered, ‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So, they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.”

Isaiah 58:11

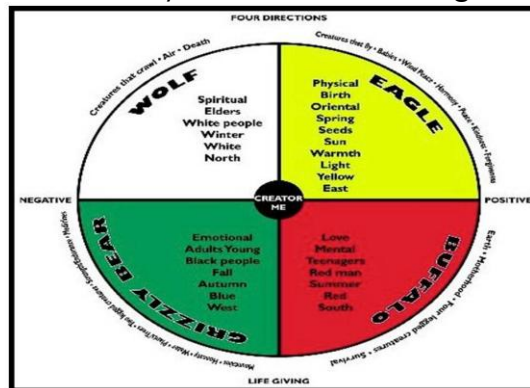
"And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.



Why do you suppose Jesus called *fishermen* to be his disciples?

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I think everything Jesus did was some sort of an illustration to help teach us about life, about God, about salvation... about pretty much everything. Really, if you stop long enough to observe the world around you... God is still doing it.



The Native Americans illustrate this through the medicine wheel. What is it that the great spirit continues to tell us or teach us through – the clouds, the food we eat, each experience, the small field mouse, the way the soil behaves... everything has meaning. Those who travel fast on this earth, scurrying about, not noticing the beauty in the stillness or the subtle nuances around us find themselves unfulfilled and sadly miss too much. It's like the person who passes you in the hall and says, “How are you today?” But before you can answer, they are already gone.



One of the things I've been thinking a lot about lately is the flooding around us. Some of us have been lucky and have not had water issues. Others of us continue to bail water, mourn the loss of our precious belongings and the loss of human life.

Meanwhile, we remember in the summer heat to hydrate! We must drink lots of water, we must bathe regularly, and we rely on water to sustain us. It is both terrible and wonderful – water.

At first we find water in genesis 1:2 what's more; the last entry is found in revelation 22:17. In the middle of those two books water streams directly through the pages of scripture.

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The people who were going to be taking Jesus’ message into the world after him needed to understand what he was teaching. These fishing disciples of his – knew water. Their lives, *probably since they could walk* – has involved fishing. They get what it means to get a catch and what it means to sometimes sacrifice deeply to get the catch.

Jesus tells them that he will teach them how to fish for the souls of men. This makes sense.

One of the places I have found God tangibly is on the water. I picture the scenes from his ministry. I picture him walking across the Sea of Galilee in a storm. I picture him preaching near Genessarate... everything Jesus did – he did for a reason and to make a point.

I find the story hysterical! These guys, these experts of the trade, who have probably worked the water day in and day out, who have been out all night staring at the lines, pulling them back in, rowing and tossing again... for hours... they’re doing the exhausting work of drying out their nets and packing everything away. Then Jesus, who is not a fisherman, has a brilliant suggestion! Can you imagine? But what happens when they follow his suggestion? They understand that Jesus operates outside of the laws of physics.



The disciples were, to say the least, surprised. If they were alive today, the text conversation would have been interesting!

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In our scripture peter says, “I’m going fishing.” His partners say they’ll help him. That is simply providential. Those first disciples teach us all what it means to go fishing. They teach us that when Jesus is in the boat amazing things happen. As I continue to learn to fish, I think about the parallels and how we, as the body of Christ, the church can learn from this illustration. Like the Native American medicine wheel demonstrates – everything around us is a teacher. Lessons come to us in nuances.



I don’t claim to have the answers, but I can observe what God is teaching me...

1. Certain parts of the lake are more fertile than others and fish hang out at various depths. There are a lot of variables. It’s not a “one size fits all” formula.
2. There are a lot of ways to fish. From the pier, from the boat, in a lake, a river or an ocean, angling, casting, trolling...
3. So many ways of approaching the fishing. There are different lures and bait, different poles, line and hooks. The more you fish, the better you become at knowing what works best depending on the situation.
4. Fishing is more an art than a science. Much of it is about feeling. Knowing the difference between snagging a weed and the tap tap of a fish on the line.
5. Lines get snagged and tangled. Don’t panic; simply do your best to work it out.
6. Check once in a while to make sure the bait is still on the hook.
7. Come prepared but be open to possibilities.
8. Patience and perseverance are extremely important.
9. It’s frustrating, as the disciples can attest to, when the fish are not biting.
10. Fishing is wonderful. Landing a catch is ideal.

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Jesus' disciples had no idea he was going to weave their fishing life so deeply into his ministry and that it would continue 2000 years later. Each of us has teachers around us. Even when the experience is unpleasant – remember the disciples caught nothing; God still is able to produce something worth catching.