

# **Casting the KBC Net**

## *Fishing for People*



## **Central Truth**

As modern-day disciples of Christ, we should conclude, if we are not fishing for people, then we are not truly following Jesus.

## **MOTIVATION**

A deacon of mine, while I was still pastor of a local church, had his focus on evangelism. He truly had a God-given desire to see other people come to know the Lord as their Savior. If he were away from the church for a week or so, he would always ask after returning, “Did anyone make a profession of faith?”

Our church during that time conducted Tuesday night F.A.I.T.H. visitation. We had made a commitment to share our faith publicly on Tuesday nights, and we did so for fifteen years. I do not remember, although I am sure he did, this deacon ever missing one of those Tuesday nights. He loved to share the gospel.

His favorite comment was always, “If you are not fishing, you are not following.” As Henry Blackaby would masterfully say, “God is on mission,” and His mission is to “seek and save the lost,” (Luke 19:10, CSB). As modern-day disciples, we need to join God on his mission. We need to fish for people.

## EXAMINATION

### LUKE 5:1-3

***As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word, he was standing by Lake Gennesaret.<sup>[a]</sup>  
2 He saw two boats at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat. [CSB]***

The scene described in the text, "Lake Gennesaret", is also referred to as the sea of Galilee, and the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). It is interesting to note the crowd that gathered there, "was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word" (v. 1a). I often tell pastors and churches that I meet with, Church Growth 101 is the preaching and teaching of God's Holy Word. In my study, I have discovered people in the first century were interested in hearing the Word of God and people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are also interested in hearing the Word of God.

Note that in our reading, Jesus found men at the edge of the lake "washing their nets." Nets were the instruments used for fishing in that day. In like manner, if the church of today is going to fish for people (Matthew 4:19), they are going to have to form their net. What would comprise a church's net? Well, one part of the net might be Sunday School, another part might be student ministry, or children's ministry. Another part of the net could be church-wide visitation or the music program. Regardless of the instruments, a church's net is to be cast into a community so that a draw can be made for a catch. The catch is to reach men, women, boys, and girls with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "He (meaning Jesus) got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon." This was not an accident that Jesus entered Simon's boat, but it was providence. Jesus is about to teach Simon not how to take fish from life to death, but how to take people from death to life (see v. 11). He is making Simon into a disciple who fishes for people.

I conclude that Jesus has entered the KBC boat, and His plan is to make Kentucky Baptists into disciples who fish for people. I believe part of the net that will be cast into Kentucky communities this year will be the the Gospel for Every Home project. What a tremendous tool the Lord has placed into the hands of Kentucky Baptists. It is a tool that will aid all KBC churches in reaching Kentucky for Christ.

**Question 1: How is your church currently making disciples who fish for people?**

**Question 2: How do you believe the Gospel for Every Home will make Kentucky Baptists better disciples of Jesus?**

## LUKE 5:4-7

***4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 "Master," Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets." 6 When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets began to tear. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.***

Jesus not only taught the crowd the Word of God, but after He completes His teaching, He offers an invitation. He invites Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (v. 4b). Simon was supposed to be the master fisherman, and any first century master fisherman would have known that fish would not be in deep water at that specific time of day. So, the question emerges, "What is Jesus doing?" The answer is He is making a disciple who will be successful at fishing for people. If disciples are going to be successful at fishing for people, they must have a profound faith in the Lord Jesus. Why? Because it was Jesus who said, "**You can do nothing** without me" (John 15:5b, CSB).

In other words, churches can sing their songs and pray their prayers, they can teach their Sunday School classes, and do their outreach visitation, but if Jesus is not in the boat so to speak, they will never be successful in reaching people. Disciples must learn that success at fishing for people requires obedience to the Word of God. Baptists churches that will be successful at reaching people in the day ahead will be those who live obedient Christian lives.

Some New Testament manuscripts suggest that when Jesus called for "nets" (v. 4), Simon responded by casting a single "net." This would be like some church families saying today, "We have never done it that way before." Simon may have been trying to illustrate that fish cannot be caught in the deep at that hour. Yet, by casting a net in obedience to the Word of the Lord, "They caught a great number of fish" (v. 6).

I believe Jesus is calling for "nets" today. I believe He wants us to pull out all the stops, use every resource available to reach a church's given zip code for the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of Dr. Elmer Towns, explaining saturation evangelism, he writes, "Use every available means, to reach every available person, at every available time" (charismamag.com). I believe the Gospel to Every Home is an available means to reach Kentuckians with the good news about God's unique Son.

Question 3: **Is your church currently casting "nets" or a "net"? Discuss.**

Question 4: **Are there steps of obedience that you need to take in your life?**

## Luke 5:7-11

***<sup>7</sup> So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners. "Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching people." <sup>11</sup> Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him.***

Simon caught so many fish that he had to call for his partners to help him. The Bible says he "filled both boats so full that they began to sink" (v. 7). If churches would just learn this simple truth.

1. When you go fishing, sometimes you will catch them.
2. Sometimes you will not.
3. But you will never catch them unless you are willing to go.

Rick Gage said to me in a private conversation in years past, "You cannot spell God without the word *go*, and you cannot spell gospel without the word *go*." Rick's ministry, not surprisingly, is called Go Tell. I share that to say this, the churches of Jesus Christ must have a "go and tell" ministry. No place in Scripture has the Lord asked His churches to become keepers of the aquarium.

When a church is willing to go, they will reach people for Jesus. They may reach so many people that they will have to call on their partners to help them. They may have to start a new Sunday School class, plant a new work, they may have to call new staff, and they may need to expand their space to make room for additional people. When Peter discovered this simple truth, "He fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord'" (v. 8). As we think about Gospel for Every Home, this is where Kentucky Baptist should be, humbly on their knees before the Lord Jesus confessing any known sin. All Kentucky Baptists need to move into a place of blessing through obedience. Why? Jesus must be the principle partner in their church sharing the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection.

It may be frightening for some as we think about going, but notice what our Lord said to Simon, "Don't be afraid" (v. 10b). Jesus went on to say, "From now on you will be catching people" (v. 10b). As a result, they "left everything, and followed him" (v. 11b). Wow! Fishing for people became the No. 1 priority of those early disciples. I believe it ought to be the No. 1 priority of our Lord's disciples today.

**Question 5: Is your church willing to go? Discuss.**

**Question 6: Are you willing to go? Discuss.**

## APPLICATION

As Kentucky Baptists begin to prayer walk their communities and as they begin to make plans to adopt the homes around their churches, there are three traits that will be absolutely necessary for them to adopt. These traits are as follows:

1. **Conviction**. A conviction that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. A conviction that if people have Jesus, they have life, but if they do not have Jesus, they do not have life.
2. **Consecration**. We need to live separated and obedient lives. God blesses obedience but will not bless disobedience.
3. **Compassion**. Kentucky Baptists need to always remember that we are in the people business. It is true, and has been said often, "People do not care how much we know until we show them how much we care."

**Question 7: Would someone be willing to pray that our KBC churches would become churches of conviction, consecration, and compassion as we approach the Gospel for Every Home initiative?**