

Have you no Fish?



Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:4-7)

The future of the American church hangs in the balance, as does the destiny of the world. Jesus teaches us to cast our nets. It's time for you to fish.

1. It's no secret: Christianity _____.

- Like Peter, many Christians have simply returned to the ordinary.
 - Since 1968, more than _____ Methodist churches have gone out of business.
 - In the last fifteen years, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has lost 30% of its membership. Almost 765,000 members have left the PCUSA since 2000.
 - More than _____ have left the Episcopal Church in the last five years; over 300 parishes have closed. In the last ten years, the Episcopal Church lost over 20% of its members.
 - Since the 1960s, the United Church of Christ has lost 44% of its members.
 - The American churches of Christ lose _____ members every week, and every single week a church of Christ closes its doors forever.
 - About _____ churches go under in the U.S. every year; that's one church every three hours.
 - Most churches are either plateaued or in decline, and most Christians will never baptize a single person in their entire life.¹
- People who do not accept Christ are lost, but Churches that do not evangelize are _____.

2. It doesn't have to be this way. Let's recover the mission of Jesus.

- In every Gospel, Jesus' final command gives us _____.

"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:21-22)

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. (Matthew 28:19-20)

¹ See Young, *A New Day: Restoring the Revolutionary Mission of Christ's Church*, p. 39.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:15-16)

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)

3. Let's take the Gospel to the whole world!

- Peter had almost quit. But less than two months later, he preached the sermon _____.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ...." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (Acts 2:14, 36, 41)

- Will you make this your year to make disciples?

What Now?

I'm going to ask you to join me in making two commitments today.

1. That you will bring one person to Christ in 2019.
2. That you would disciple a member from Central for six weeks. Meaning you would enter into someone's life in a relationship for 6 weeks with the purpose of helping them become more like Jesus.

Signature _____

Date: 2/24/2019

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153 of them. (John 21:10-11)

