



## First Things First Week 3: Evangelism

September 24, 2023

Evangelism is a lot like a game of Hide and Seek.

*Luke 15:4-7 — “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”*

Jesus talks about God and the human race in “hide-and-seek” language. On the surface, this story Jesus tells is a story about a shepherd and his sheep, but it really is a story about God and human beings.

*Ezekiel 34:11 — “For thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.’”*

God is a seeking God. He searches for lost sheep, and then He enlists those found sheep to help Him find other lost sheep.

**You are on this earth to save lives.** Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, and then He told us that just as the Father sent Him, so He sends us.

How you would finish this thought?: “If I become a devoted follower of Jesus that means I will become....”

*Mark 1:17 — “And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’”*

Most likely, none of us decided to follow Jesus because we wanted to become fishers of people. Most of us would admit that we decided to follow Jesus as our Savior and Lord for what He could give us, not what He could make us. We wanted His forgiveness and eternal life, and hope, healing, purpose, and meaning. And He does give us all that, and much more.

But when we become His followers, He has a plan for our lives. He wants to make us fishers.

There are a few things that can keep a follower from fishing:

### 1. They don’t have the desire to go fishing.

Some people don’t like fishing because they don’t like the experience very much. Some just imagine what it might be like and decide they will pass.

*Acts 1:8 — “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

The Holy Spirit not only gives us the power to be fishers, but He also gives us the desire to be fishers of men. But understand that this is a daily decision to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is possible to walk in His power one day and then shrink back in fear or self-centered living the next.

*Act 4:31 — “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”*

It is the filling of the Holy Spirit that makes all the difference in the world. Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life on a daily basis.

### 2. They forgot that they were fish once.

There is a need for perspective. We tend to think that most people don’t want to get caught, so that makes us not want to fish for them. Don’t ever forget that you were a fish once too and you are thankful you got caught. That perspective should cause us to look at the people we are fishing for quite differently.

### 3. They forgot why fishing matters.

The politically correct view around the world is to just let everyone believe what they want to believe and be tolerant of everyone.

*Act 4:1 — “As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to*

*them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening."*

*Act 4:20 – "for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

Notice that Christianity is not just a belief system or religion that we are pushing, but it is the result of real events that were witnessed by hundreds of people. We fish because something happened and we need to talk about it. People witnessed it and even died for refusing to stop talking about it. They didn't die for refusing to stop talking about what they believed. They were killed for refusing to stop talking about what they saw.

*Act 4:12 – "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*

### **If there were other ways to heaven, Jesus wouldn't have had to go to the cross.**

We should be passionate about fishing because eternal destinies are at stake. There is a day of reckoning and those without Christ will face an eternity apart from God.

### **4. They don't know how to fish.**

A simple way to share the Gospel is to use these four verses:

1. *Romans 3:23 – "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*
2. *Romans 6:23 – "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
3. *Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*
4. *Mark 1:15 – "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

When you share the Gospel, you are planting a seed. God is the one who waters the seed and causes it to grow.

If you have been hiding from God and have been waiting to be found, come home to Him today!