

Dear Pastors,

The theme for the 2015–2016 season is “Hooked on Christ,” which was put together by a couple of counselors who are avid fishermen. The theme for this season and this sermon is based on the words of Christ in Matthew 4:19, “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

The September/October issue of Cadet Quest follows the theme of “Hooked on Christ.” It is also full of good questions and illustrations. I’ve pulled some into the sermon notes but there are a lot more in the magazine.

The theme, “Hooked on Christ,” actually has a double meaning. In one sense, it means that we bring others to Christ, which is the main thrust of the text. But in another sense, it means that we ourselves are connected (“hooked”) to Christ, as his followers. We see this in the call of Christ to follow him. There is also a third element of Christ’s work in us. Jesus is doing the work. He is the one who makes us fishers of men. And so the sermon theme: Christ will make us fishers of men if we follow him. Or, like Jesus said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

All four Gospels have the story of Jesus calling his first disciples- Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11, and John 1:35-42. However, John’s account is different in that it covers calling the first disciples but doesn’t mention fishing for men.

There is a lot of information here in the sermon notes, a lot of facets that you can develop for your specific congregation and context.

Song Suggestions

Living For Jesus

In Christ Alone

Jesus Calls Us; O’er The Tumult

I Will Make you Fishers of Men

Take My Life and Let it Be

Questions to Consider

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?

What does it mean to be hooked on Christ?

Is Jesus calling you to be his follower?

What is the reassuring promise of this passage?

What would you tell someone who asks you who Christ is and why you should be hooked on him?

Think of this as just getting the ball rolling. Take these notes and make them your own.

It is my prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be declared as we faithfully point our Cadets to Christ, teaching and encouraging them to live for Jesus.

In Christ,

Rev. Jon Bushnell

Cadet Sunday Sermon 2015-2016

Matthew 4:18-22

Hooked On Christ

What is the biggest fish you have ever caught? This past summer I caught the biggest walleye of my life. We were trolling along the edge of the lake just between the weeds and deeper water when all a sudden my line snagged something. "I think I'm stuck", I told the other guys in the boat. In my mind I thought I had hooked a log or branch under the water. But then it started moving and my heart started racing. "What is it?" they asked. "I don't know!" I reeled in while the others looked deep into the water. When we caught our first glimpse some said, "It looks like a northern!" And it did. From the top its long dark body looked like a northern pike. But when the fish turned and flashed the white tips of his fins and tail, everyone shouted with excitement, "It's a walleye!" We were on a small lake known for its bluegills. That's what we were fishing for and so to pull in a walleye that we first thought was a northern was amazing. I kept on reeling and my pole kept on bending. My heart was racing as the fish was getting closer to the surface. My friend took the net and with one skillful swoop scooped the fish right out of the water and into the boat.

Many of us probably have exciting stories like this one. Exciting fishing stories- maybe about the one that got away, or maybe the big fish we caught just keeps on growing each time we tell the story.

Jesus Christ has an exciting and an amazing story, much better than any fishing story we could ever share. It's the story of how he came to save us from our sins, how he came to give up his life on the cross so that we could have eternal life through him.

It's easy to tell our friends our fishing stories. But what about telling our friends about Jesus? How he loves us and gave his life for us.

Being hooked on Christ means following Christ ourselves, letting him work through us and bringing others to Jesus.

Theme: Christ will make us fishers of men if we follow him. Or, like Jesus said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

What does being hooked on Christ involve? It involves a serious call, "Come, follow me," a reassuring promise, "I will make you," and an amazing catch, "fishers of men."

I. **A Serious Call- "Come follow me"**

- A. I was on a lake in Minnesota when I caught my walleye. Jesus is walking along the biggest fresh water lake in Israel, the Sea of Galilee.
 1. What was he doing as he walked along the Sea of Galilee? Jesus was choosing some men to be his followers. As Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee he saw Peter and Andrew and little bit later he saw James and John. His call to them is, "Come, follow me."

2. How did each man react when Jesus said, "Follow me."
 - a. Matthew 4:20 - at once they left their nets and followed him
 - b. Matthew 4:22 - immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.
- B. At first, this might seem abrupt, like Jesus is just walking along the lake and tells these total strangers to follow him.
 1. Peter, Andrew, James and John seem just as abrupt as they leave everything to follow Jesus.
 2. But they knew Jesus –
 - a. John the Baptist had told his disciple that one greater than he was coming (Matt. 3:11, John 1:29-34).
 - b. John the Baptist also encouraged his disciples to follow Jesus. Andrew was one of them and he introduced Peter to Jesus (John 1:35-42).
 - c. Luke tells us how Jesus led Peter and others to a great catch of fish before calling them (Luke 5:1-11).
 3. So these men knew Jesus. How did they respond to this serious call? They left their nets and followed him. They left the boat and their father and followed him.
 - a. This was an act of faith. As Daniel Doriani explains, "the disciples' commitment to follow is an act of faith, but it is an informed faith, not a blind faith."¹
 - b. They knew Jesus and left everything to follow him.
- C. Is Jesus calling you to be his follower? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus Christ? What does it mean to be hooked on Christ?
 1. It means following Christ ourselves.
 2. Does it mean leaving everything behind? These disciples left their nets and boats and even family behind. Do I have to leave everything in order to follow Christ?
 - a. The emphasis here isn't on leaving the stuff, but rather on the change from their old lifestyle to the new life of following Christ.
 - The men stopped what they were doing, left their old lifestyle and changed the way they were living. A change from being fishermen to following Christ.
 - b. If there is stuff getting in your way, keeping you from answering Christ's call to follow him, then get rid of it.
 - Think about the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:21. The one thing keeping him from following Jesus was his stuff. Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. "

¹ Daniel M. Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary*, Matthew, p.102.

- c. Being hooked on Christ means that by faith I am his follower and that my life will change from what it was before I started following Christ.
- d. This may involve leaving everything we physically have behind, nets and boats, but it will definitely involve leaving our old lifestyle behind as we answer the serious call, "Follow me."

II. A Reassuring Promise- "I will make you"

- A. When Jesus calls us to follow him that call comes with a promise of what he will do. "I will make you fishers of men" he tells these disciples.
 - 1. When Luke tells this story in Luke 5:1-11 he says that Peter had been fishing all night. Jesus was teaching and when he was finished he told Peter to "put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."
 - a. Now, Peter was a fisherman, he knew when and where to catch fish, but last night he didn't catch a thing. "We've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything" he said, "But because you say so, I will let down the nets."
 - b. These men had been fishing all night, even more than that they had been fishing their entire lives. This is what they did, this is what they knew. But Jesus changes everything.
 - c. When Peter obeys and listens to Jesus he catches so many fish that their nets began to break. They have to call over another boat to help haul in all the fish.
 - 2. Jesus has shown Peter what he is able to do, and then tells him, "Don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men."
 - a. These are Jesus' words to us as his followers today. "Do not be afraid, I will make you fishers of men."
 - b. We do not do this fishing all alone or on our own. It is God making us fishers of men.
- B. Do you remember the first fish you ever caught? I do, I think I was probably 5 or 6. A lady was fly-fishing in a mountain stream. She had a fish on the line and let me reel it in. I guess technically I didn't "catch" this fish, but I will always remember the first trout that I caught or reeled in. (alternative illustration - James in the Cadet Quest magazine is fishing with his grandpa)
 - 1. This is a good example of how we never fish alone. Jesus, the master fisher of men, is at work through us. He is the one who makes us fishers of men.
 - 2. He tells us that he is going to make us fishers of men if we follow him.
 - 3. So what does that mean?
 - 4. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus in this way? What does it mean to be hooked on Christ and made into a fisher of men?
 - a. It means letting Jesus work in us and through us, letting him make us and mold us with his Word.

III. An Amazing Catch - "Fishers of men"

- A. These men have gone through a change, leaving everything to follow Christ. No longer fishermen, but “fishers of men.”
 - 1. Instead of catching fish in a lake, they are reeling in people, followers of Christ.
 - 2. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? What does it mean to be hooked on Christ?
 - a. It means telling others about Jesus.
 - b. What would you tell someone who asks you who Christ is and why you should be hooked on him? John 3:16
- B. Christ gives us an example of what it means to fish for people. How did he catch Peter, Andrew, James and John? - He called them to be his followers.
 - 1. In Matthew 4:23 it says, “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom.”
 - 2. That’s what it means to be a fisher of men, telling people about Jesus.
 - a. The disciples saw Jesus’ power at work when Jesus told them to put down the nets on the other side. They could barely pull in the catch.
 - b. Later these same disciples switch from fishing for fish to fishing for people by telling others what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.
 - c. In Acts 2, as Peter was preaching and telling people about Jesus, three thousand people joined the church that day. They were hooked for Christ.

Conclusion:

Jesus said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

What does it mean to be hooked on Christ?

Being hooked on Christ means following Christ ourselves, letting him work through us and bringing others to Jesus.