

## Isaiah 6:1-8

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### *Fishin’ With Burnin’ Lips*

A sermon preached by  
James F. McIntire

#### **Texts:**

Isaiah 6: 1-8  
1 Corinthians 15: 1-11  
Luke 5: 1-11

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**Trinity Sunday**

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## 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand,<sup>2</sup> through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. **3** For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, **4** and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. **7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.<sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the

contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. **II** Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

### 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, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>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.” <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.



- I’m not much of a fisherman
- When my son was little, I would take him fishing whenever we visited his grandfather in Missouri -- I’d make my ceremonial fishing expedition to the catfish pond
- My fishing attitude frustrates most dedicated fisherman

- A successful fishing trip for me involves:
- An afternoon at the edge of a pond
- Sitting in the shade of a tree
- My line in the water
- A book in my hands
- Dozing off now and again
- No bait, of course – otherwise a fish might nibble and ruin the whole experience for me
  
- The truly dedicated fisherman just doesn’t understand that attitude
- Peter and James and John would have given up on me long ago
- And no doubt they were bothered by Jesus fishing attitude as well
- These were professional fishermen – no dozing under the shade of a tree for them
- They were used to hard days in the sun repairing nets and selling their catch, long nights and early mornings in the moon light casting nets, dragging in whatever they snagged
- They had been out all night long and were on the shore making the necessary repairs when Jesus approached
- They were exhausted – time to head home – dog tired – preparing explanations to their families and customers
- “Honey, I’m home. Sorry, no fish for dinner tonight. Guess you’ll have to open a can of beef stew or something.”
- This was their livelihood and it was a bad day at the market – no fish, no money, no money, no food on the table, no food, lots of hungry bellies
  
- But here comes this rabbi
- He knows nothing about fishing – like most preachers
- He tells them to go back out into the deep and toss the nets in again
- “You’ve got to be kidding. We’re done for the day. We just got cleaned up. Our butts are draggin’. Fo-get-about-it. No way.”

- After hesitating and with skeptical glances at each other they decide to do it
- They followed the lead of this Nazareth rabbi
- And they're nets were so full the boat almost sank
- The professional fishermen learned a lesson from the non-professional
- We're supposed to learn from this story not how to catch fish but how to catch people
- This is the primary task of the Church – the primary task of each individual follower of Jesus
- We are to fish for people
- We are to catch people and bring them into the boat – until the boat is so full that it feels like it's overloaded and needs to be expanded
- I received a letter in the mail inviting me to join the auto club
- It listed the advantages to joining
  - Free towing
  - 24 hour service
  - discount repairs
  - car rental discounts
  - travel discounts
  - free maps
  - etc, etc
- Lots of reasons to join, right?
- The letter is about recruiting new members
- The bottom line for the company is that it increases the fiscal bottom line – it makes more money for the company if new members join – that's the strategy of businesses in this world – marketing leads to recruiting leads to more money
- Nice stuff for the new member, sure, but the bottom line is more money for the recruiter – the auto club

- Is that what Christian fishing is about?
- Are we to cast our nets out into the deep waters of the world – into the sea of people – so we can increase our own profit? – simply increase our numbers? – our dollars? – our prestige?
- Is it for the church's advantage that we are to recruit? Is it all for the purpose of increasing numbers?
- The church is not an auto club – or a health club – or a private country club – or a social activity organization
- The church is open to anyone and everyone
- Then church is open to believers and seekers and doubters
- We don't pick and chose who's in and who's out
- There's no enrollment form – no contract to sign – no doctrinaire checklist to agree to
- Any and all of God's children are welcome when it comes to catching people for this boat
- When Jesus stepped into Simon Peter's boat, he stepped into Peter's life and neither life was the same again
- That's what Jesus invites us to do – not to just drag people into the boat, but to step into the lives of those around us and to create changes in their lives and our lives
- "From now on you will be catching people" – he might as well have said "From now on you'll be stepping into people's lives – radically and dramatically changing people's lives."
- That's what we are about
- When we are about the business of catching people, we're not doing it to increase numbers or dollars or any bottom line of this organization
- ***we are to catch people – to invite people – because there is more advantage for those invited than there is any advantage to the church having them here***

- the danger in any fishing expedition is when the fisher-people believe that catching more fish is a means to a profitable end
- it is not
- our goal as a Church is to simply offer what we are – be who we are – to allow others to see what God has given us in this community
- evangelism -- is a bad word
  - white shirts, black ties, name tags
  - knocking on doors
  - in an elevator – are you saved?
- But that’s not evangelism
- Evangelism is spreading the Good News
- It’s about an invitation to receive the Good New of what God is about in the world
- Evangelism is our job – Jesus came to fish – but he was a lousy fisherman
- He was here to spread news – to invite – t offer – to welcome – not just to recruit to some new club in the way that we understand that kind of membership
- Isaiah 6:1-8  
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- We need to have something so powerfully compelling and inviting that it burns our lips and we just have to tell it to others
- Convince others that it’s here for them
- That it is to their advantage to be here to get it as well
- Do we have it? – we do – it’s the Good News that God has shared with us through the message of Jesus
- Paul was a man of burning lips
- Corinthians – “I handed on to you that which was given to me” – his lips burned with God’s message so that he *had* to share it
- God has altered his life – the Great Fisherman has “caught” him and stepped into his nicely balanced, buoyant boat – his life – so that it was never the same again
- And he couldn’t shut up about it
- Do you have burning lips?
- It’s what I need you to have
- It’s what this Church needs you to have
- It’s what God needs you to have
- There is something going on in this community of believers and seekers and doubters on this corner in Havertown and we need to let others know about it
- We need burning lips, we need to cast our nets, we need to make a difference for those who we would bring into this boat
- It has to do with our welcoming of 10 new members this Spring
- It has to do with last week’s Growing Hope conversation

- It has to do with the excitement and vitality that continues to build in our Children's Sunday School program
- It has to do with our visibility in the community – with letting everyone know we're alive and vibrant
  
- Later this year we will be exploring what vision needs our focus
- We'll be wondering aloud just who it is in our community that needs an invitation
- We'll be working together to cast nets and fill the boat until it's dangerously full – and then we'll have to figure out how to grow the boat
- Whatever we do together to grow as followers and to invite others, is all about sharing the Good News that burns on our lips, that compels us to fish
  
- Let's do it together

Amen