



## ***Theme: Good, Good News!*** ***“Good News and Big Fish”***

**Weekly Memory Verse:** *17 Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” 18 And they left their nets at once and followed him.* –Mark 1:17-18

**Family Activity for the Week:** Have you ever done a puzzle only to find out that pieces are missing? Isn't it infuriating?! Each of us is a unique piece formed by Jesus. Our jigsaw piece has been shaped from our life experiences, interactions with others, places we've been, and lessons we've learned. We are unlike any other, only fitting together in a certain way, with a few other pieces. However, without us, the picture cannot be made whole! God is asking us to participate in His love for yourself and for others. Step up, take hold, and begin connecting with our puzzle of a world! Get out a puzzle this week and do it together with your family, friends, roommate, etc. Think about how each piece comes together for the whole. How is Jesus calling you to be a part of His good work?

**Monday, January 25** – Read John 4:4-15. In Jesus' day, Jews looked down on Samaritans, even hated them. Though the shortest route from Jerusalem to Galilee was through Samaria, most Jews going north or south would travel through Perea, east of the Jordan River, to avoid the Samaritans. Jesus did not physically have to go through Samaria. He purposely made a spiritual choice to go through Samaria. In going through Samaria, stopping, and drinking from Jacob's well, he was directly defying the tension and division between Jews and Samaritans. Jesus was challenging an injustice of his day.

- ▲ Today's reading is full of lessons. At its heart, it is about two important matters—1) bearing witness to God's undeniable longing for peace among God's children, and 2) water, the life-giving, soul-cleansing, peace-making, world-changing water that bubbles out from the one who made us, the inner thirst-quenching spiritual water that produces eternal life. Both ideas are good, Good News. Where in your daily living do you see tension that leads to division? What are you doing to bear witness to God's work by deliberately going out of your way to bridge the division you see?
- ▲ Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that quenches thirst forever. The woman likely confused the living water Jesus offered with a natural spring of flowing water that would keep her from coming to the well so often. She at first wanted to escape the labor; Jesus wanted her to embrace the water within. Do you just want Jesus' living water to make your life easier or simpler? Or do you want living water to make you whole so that the world might see Jesus in you?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, keep me from chasing convenience and an easier life. Guide me to your work, no matter how hard, that I may bear witness to your love for humanity. Make me willing to go out of my way for the sake of the world. Amen.*

**Tuesday, January 26** – Read Mark 1:14-20. Each gospels account of the calling of the disciples seem to suggest that for a time Jesus intrigued Andrew and Peter, but they hadn't yet decided to follow him all the time. Jesus' call, (Message Notes and Meditation Moments for January 23-24, 2020 – For more, go to [www.summitdurango.org](http://www.summitdurango.org))

couched in language that related to their everyday work, pointed to a larger, more demanding call. Fish may be difficult to catch, but often nowhere near as challenging to understand and draw in as people. Their bait was to be the Good News, which meant they needed to follow Jesus so that they could catch that Good News themselves.

- ▲ In the ancient world, people who fished for a living were peasants. Why might Jesus have walked along the shores of Galilee as he sought followers, instead of seeking out the day's most eminent religious experts? One outcome: by going beyond the religious system of his day, Jesus found people who were more open to his radical ideas about what it meant to be the Messiah. In what ways has Jesus called you beyond the systems in which you grew up and studied? Do you see it as Good News, to look beyond your background and past, and see what God might have in store for you?
- ▲ Jesus' disciples changed their lives entirely to follow him. In addition to leaving their nets, going to "fish for people," was a big change. From the outset, the calling of the disciples suggests missionary activity. In what way(s) is Jesus calling you now? What spiritual practices help you keep your heart and life open to hear and answer Jesus' call so you might experience that Good News, and then be able to share it with others?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, whether I think I've got my life all figured out, or whether I'm searching for direction, keep me open to hear your calling. Even more, keep me open to making changes when responding to your call requires them. Amen.*

**Wednesday, January 27** – Read Jonah 4:1-11. What did Jonah think was "utterly wrong"? He hoped to see Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, leveled! But Jonah 3:10 said, "God stopped planning to destroy [the people of Nineveh], and he didn't do it." The Hebrew Scriptures included this story, not to endorse Jonah's attitude, but through God's challenge to the angry prophet to show that God's caring and love truly extends to the whole world.

- ▲ The writer of Jonah had a superb ironic touch. The book described what would have been an astounding preaching success—a whole city repenting and turning to God. The preacher's reaction? Jonah thought this was utterly wrong, and he became angry in Jonah 4:1! What made Jonah so angry? Is it possible for God to care about (120,000) people without approving violent or destructive actions like Assyria's cruelty toward Israel (and all other nations)?
- ▲ The story of Jonah ended with a question, not a statement. God asked Jonah, "Can't I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than one hundred twenty thousand people who can't tell their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" Is there any person or group of people you'd rather see God "zap" than to see them repent? Is it right for God to extend heaven's offer of mercy to all people? How do you see the Good News in God's attitude towards the people of Nineveh?

*Prayer: Lord God, sometimes, like Jonah, I wish you'd hate people I hate. But you call me to change my attitude, not yours. Guide and lead me as I wrestle with that change of spirit. Amen.*

**Thursday, January 28** – Read Luke 24:44-48. Jesus, with his disciples after the crucifixion and resurrection, taught them to reflect on Israel's history to find their ongoing mission. They were to preach to all nations the life found in his resurrection. Jesus charged the disciples to preach the story of repentance and forgiveness of sins. He opened the disciples' minds to see the big picture: that their history as a people, from Moses to the Psalms, said that in the Christ there is salvation and justice.

- ▲ Your personal story of a changed heart and life is powerful to people with whom you interact wherever you live, work or play that are far away from God. You, like the disciples, are a witness to God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ. In what ways can you share your personal story of a changed heart and life with those around you?
- ▲ Jesus did not give the disciples an optional task. Rather, he commissioned them—gave them a mandate or command to be witnesses of God's work in the world. What do you need to do in your life to more fully take on Jesus' mission to share his hope and forgiveness with the people around you?

*Prayer: God, keep me alert for chances to faithfully share the story of your son's life, death, burial and resurrection. Give me courage when afraid, confidence when unsure, passion when indifferent. May I make you proud as I share my personal story of a changed heart and life. Amen.*

**Friday, January 29** – Read Luke 5:1-11. Luke made it clear that Jesus and Simon knew each other before this story (cf. Luke 4:38-39). Jesus did much of his ministry around the Sea of Galilee's shoreline, and most of his first followers came from that area. But his vision always reached farther than any one location. He asked the first disciples to "push into the deep water," hinting at the ultimate task he had for them. "Fishing for people" would push them into the deep waters of a whole world filled with suffering and spiritual hunger.

- ▲ Jesus was a rabbi, a teacher. Peter and his partners caught fish for a living. Why should "pros" like them listen when Jesus said, "Row out farther, into the deep water, and drop your nets for a catch" (verse 4)? They agreed "because you say so." Have you ever had a sense that Jesus was calling you to something that was more than "usual" or "logical"? Were you open to saying, "Because you say so, Lord"? Are you open to that today?
- ▲ "When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!'" (verse 8) When did you most vividly realize, "God is god—and I'm not"? Did you feel any fear, as Peter seems to have in this passage? Did you take in Jesus' reassurance: "Don't be afraid" (verse 10)? How has realizing who God is, who you are, and who God wants to be in your life changed things for you?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are my heavenly friend and brother—but you are also Lord of the universe. As I love and trust you, help me to also hold you in awe and respect. Amen*

**Saturday, January 30** – Read Matthew 28:16-20. The disciples made their way to the rendezvous point in Galilee. Understanding more fully who Jesus was after his resurrection, the eleven disciples probably worshiped him with more depth than ever before. "Some doubted" likely means some were still stunned, even dumbfounded that they found themselves with Jesus—a once-dead, now alive, risen Savior. He told his disciples to "go," which is probably better translated as, "you are going." As you go about the daily rhythms in your daily life, the Savior said, prioritize the mission of disciple making. And as you do, realize the comforting presence of Jesus is with you every day. This is the heart of the Good News.

- ▲ To "make disciples" is to guide people to accept the claims of Christ. "Baptizing" and "teaching" are important aspects of being a disciple, but not necessarily the means to make disciples. People become disciples by coming into the community of believers and submitting to Christ as the Lord of their life. Teaching disciples means leading them toward a life of obedience to Jesus, not just intellectually teaching doctrine. Jesus said "go." How's your "going," anyway? Would you say that Christ is the Lord of your life? In what ways is your Lord leading you to make disciple-making a priority?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to glorify you with my faithful commitment to make disciples. Help me remember that you are always present with me as I live out your commission. Amen.*