

Isaiah 42:5-9; Mark 1:14-20

Gone Fishing
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In this story from Mark we see a great example of using something contemporary to bring the message home. Of course, the people in that time were quite familiar with the Sea of Galilee and the fisherman who were out all day with their nets trying to make a living.

I laughed to myself, as I thought of the fishermen I'd seen lately in our current day. People out on the ice with their little ice huts. What made me laugh was the idea of those ice fishermen trying to catch fish in nets. Cramming the net down through the hole in the ice ... well you get the picture. I think it wouldn't work!

But Mark paints the picture in the minds of the people – a familiar picture of the seaside. Jesus is beginning his ministry in Galilee and he walks along the shore and comes across two fishermen casting their nets – Andrew and Simon (who would later be called Peter).

Jesus asked them to follow him and said he would make them fishers of people. And immediately they left their boat and followed Jesus. And then, before long, they came across James and John who were in a boat with their father, Zebedee. Jesus immediately asked them to follow and James and John climbed out of their boat, left dad sitting there with the nets, and followed Jesus.

Why? Why would they leave everything they knew to follow Jesus, whom they either didn't know at all, or had surely not known for long? I asked this question in my first blog this week, and the comments were that there must have been something about Jesus that made them just know – a light in his eyes, something in his face, a feeling deep inside of just knowing he was the one.

So then I asked a group of people on Facebook if they knew of anything in our contemporary lives – a movie clip or a quote from a book that they thought related to this text. The most intriguing one is from the movie, *Divergent*.

In the movie, which takes place sometime in the future, the whole society (which is really the city of Chicago) is divided into factions based on a value:

Abnegation (selflessness), Dauntless (bravery), Erudite (knowledge/intelligence), Amity (peace), Candor (honesty).

When members of the society turn 16 they must choose which faction to follow and belong to. When they do this they must ... immediately ... leave the lives they know ... their families, their homes, everything ... to become immersed in their new faction.

They must undergo training, follow the rules of whichever faction they have chosen: the behavior, dress, appearance, morals, and social structure.

This clip is of the "Choosing Ceremony." Each person who is now at the age to choose their place in life is called to come up. They make a cut on their hand and allow a drop of blood to drip into whichever bowl represents the faction they've chosen.

Our clip begins with one of the faction leaders talking to the main character, Beatrice, and her brother Caleb, about the choosing and factions. These young adults must choose where they want to belong for the rest of their lives, without really knowing the inner workings of the faction they've chosen.

They choose with no expectations, but have to have faith that they are making the right decision and, they literally choose with their blood.

VIDEO of the Choosing Ceremony of the Movie, *Divergent*

So, this movie is more than contemporary, isn't it? It's futuristic. And it's certainly fiction. But, what if? What if you had to choose a way of life immediately? What if you were in a new society and those were the rules and you had no idea what it would end up looking like, how things would turn out in the end?

Could you trust your intuition? Could you be happy with eeny, meeny, miney, moe? Is that the same thing Andrew and Simon, James and John did?

They certainly did have to make a choice – immediately. Jesus was on the move. The time is now. And they couldn't have known what the future held for them as they chose to follow this man.

Like Beatrice in the choosing ceremony, they took one last look at what and who they were leaving behind, and they made the choice and followed.

In the movie, for Beatrice and her brother, Caleb, their choosing had to have been a trust in intuition because they didn't know much about any of the factors, except what they stood for.

Perhaps for the disciples it was similar. They had to trust a feeling deep inside. They had to have some intuition that this was the right choice. After all, what Jesus stood for, at least what they were hearing, was something new and different and meaningful.

He was preaching about God's kingdom that is now near. He was inviting them to join him and make a change. Would they rather be fishers of fish ... or fishers of people?

Would they rather do the same thing day after day ... or perhaps make a difference in the lives of others for the sake of God's kingdom, **even at the risk of losing their lives?**

So, then, we come to you. We aren't living in the past, in the days when Jesus was walking on earth. And we are not in that future society, either. We are here today, in the 21st century, in a time when it's said to be a post-Christian era.

That is – Christianity is on the decline. And by the things we see on the news and the decline of the Church we are apt to believe that. Many people have chosen a different faction for their lives. Society offers a long menu of things to choose from. **Different religions, sports, leisure activities, shopping ... just sleeping in.**

So why do you choose to follow Jesus? What is it that caused you to rise up and leave those other choices behind, and follow? Was it intuition ... was it a strong, deep feeling? Were you compelled to follow?

I believe those who commented on my blog could be right. I think when those men saw Jesus, maybe they saw something different, something very special – a love light in his eyes; a warmth in this voice – and they could not resist.

Wouldn't it be something if we started sharing what it was that compelled us to follow Jesus – to choose a life that is different – a life that follows in the way Jesus taught? And if we shared our experiences with one another, then we might begin to be bold enough to share them with people outside our congregation.

And if we shared with people outside this congregation, we just might open up a pathway for those people to see Jesus as we do, and they just might choose to follow, as well.

And maybe THAT is what Jesus was talking about when he said, "I will make you fishers of people." There is no better time than now -- immediately -- to put out our sign that says: Gone Fishing!