

**Message: “Are You Fishin’?”****Have you ever seen this sign: “Gone Fishin’”?**

It’s one of my favorite signs. It’s a clear way of telling people you aren’t going to be found in your regular place, doing the same ol’ thing. You’re out somewhere, enjoying your time fishing, hoping you’ll catch something. It can also tell others you’re stepping away from the stress, strain and urgency of today to do something that brings you joy and gives you a sense of purpose and peace.

**Jesus talked about fishing.** Our Scripture reading for today, Matthew 4:17-25, records the moment when Jesus called his first followers. They were regular, ordinary people just like you and me. In fact, they were fishermen. This wasn’t just a hobby or retirement past time. They were professionals, following in the family business

**Jesus used language they were familiar with saying,**

*“Come, follow me and I’ll show you how to fish for people”* (v19).

**Clearly, Jesus is inviting them into a special relationship.** He’s inviting them to follow him exactly as they are and who they are.

Jesus’ invitation is commonly referred to as a call.

**Jesus spoke to people in the way they needed to hear.** He called fishermen using the language of fishing. Jesus spoke to tax collectors about money. He spoke to soldiers about service. Jesus spoke to church leaders about teaching, preaching and caring for people. He spoke to adults about being more like children.

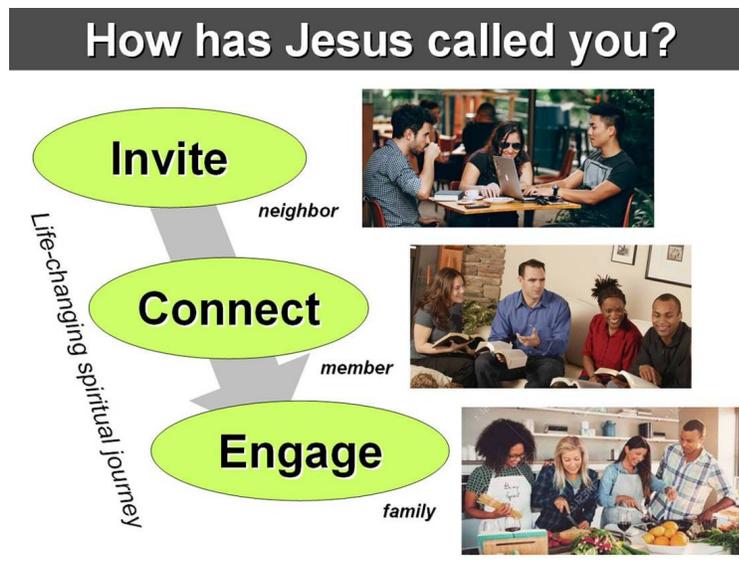
**Jesus used the language of the day, speaking to people where they were.** It’s the same way today. Jesus calls us to follow and invite others to do the same, being authentic to who and what we are. Jesus calls ...

- ... bakers to bake for people.
- ... car salespeople to sell for people.
- ... physicians, nurses and caregivers to heal people for Jesus.
- ... those who work for a living to show others how to work for Jesus.
- ... those in information technology to use technology to help people be connected to Jesus.

**How can you use your gifts, skills, experience and personality to invite others to know Jesus in a way that gives life?**

**Where does the path lead?** Jesus wants all of us to hear his call, respond and find true life. That means following him on the path he showed us. It means being in a relationship with him and with others who join us on the journey. We aren't made to be alone, left to suffer or be in pain without hope. Jesus came to give us life. Through him, every aspect of our lives is made better.

**How do we call other people?** We invite, connect and engage others to be in relationship (*see figure*).



We invite people to be in relationship with us. Our friends, family, neighbors and others are invited to come and be part of our lives and activities, inside and outside church.

Connection happens when we make friends and when we share our experience of God with them. People want to know how Jesus makes lives better. This is our chance to share our experience with them.

We are all called to engage. We get involved. We volunteer. We pray. We give. We help with ministries. Most of all, we show others how to invite people and connect with them. That's what it means to be a disciple, a person who truly follows Jesus.

**I don't know about you, but I believe that's a life worth living and a gift worth sharing.**

*Let us pray ...*

*Jesus, we thank you for calling us to follow you. You, who gave everything out of love for us, show us love, mercy and grace before knowing whether we will hear your call and answer. Forgive us when we don't listen, when we go our own way, forgetting that life with you is to be shared, not hoarded or lived in isolation. Give us the boldness to invite others and then to love them without care. Touch the hearts of our friends, family and neighbors. Open doors for new relationships for it's only when we are connected to others that your message of love and hope is shared. Bless us as we share our blessings with others  
We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Matthew 4:17-25 (CEB)**

From that time Jesus began to announce, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!"

As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," he said, "and I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him. Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets. Jesus called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. He announced the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread throughout Syria. People brought to him all those who had various kinds of diseases, those in pain, those possessed by demons, those with epilepsy, and those who were paralyzed, and he healed them. Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from the areas beyond the Jordan River.