

CASTING OUR NETS

“He said, ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.” —JOHN 21:6

Just when we think we’ve got it all figured out we have to shake our heads in awe. What is there about Jesus that will surprise us almost every time?

In Luke, Chapter 5, Jesus tells Peter to go out into the deep and let down his nets for a catch. It’d been a long night. They hadn’t caught anything, and Peter was reluctant, but followed Christ’s instructions. Then in John, Chapter 21, Jesus stood by the Sea of Tiberias, and called out to His disciples, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they replied, and He said to them, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”

On both occasions, the disciples were hesitant and sceptical, but after obeying Jesus’ instructions, they were left in awe of the massive amount of fish they had caught. Why do we think the disciples were fishing out of one side of the boat? Because that’s what they always did. In the process of fishing for people, we like to work in the same way; reduce it to a predictable pattern, because that’s how we’ve learned to do it; however, it does not require the initiative of God. We often diminish the work of God by doing what we’ve done before, and then wonder why we’re not catching any fish.

We have to allow the Lord Jesus, Himself, to be the origin of how we are going to reach out to people. We can’t tie Him down to familiar methods

or programs that have met with success before. We simply will not be fruitful operating in automatic mode. Jesus is original every time, and it's when our relationship with Him is alive and fresh that He initiates, directs and enables. We should not be looking at patterns, but at the principle that lies behind them. The patterns we bury, but the principle remains the same. And that is in our obedience and dependence on Christ, we give Him freedom to operate through us in His way and His time.

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me." That means we keep in step with Him. Then He says, "And where I am, my servant also will be" (John 12:26). The fixed point is always Jesus, and keeping in step with Him will sometimes take us to unexpected places in unexpected ways. In relationship with Jesus, we learn to discern His will, reading into it all the circumstances of divine providence and divine initiative that works out His purpose. That often means casting our nets in different ways and in different places. It's when we wait for His direction and follow His leading, that again and again, Jesus will astound us.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, You amaze me again and again, and I pray, Lord, that I will always be able to discern your voice and follow your leading. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How has Jesus led me in an unexpected way?