

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Launch Out Into the Deep

If we really want to be more effective at evangelism, we can derive a great deal of inspiration from an old fishing story from the life of Jesus.

“When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking” (Lk. 5:4-6).

This incident may have demonstrated the advantage of having Jesus along on a fishing trip, but that was not the purpose of the miracle catch. Rather, Jesus was giving Simon Peter and the other disciples a preview of their future work as “fishers of men” (v. 10). With Jesus’ help, they would eventually turn the world upside down.

A closer study of this object lesson provides us some helpful fishing tips for use in our own evangelism efforts.

First, notice that Simon Peter initially protested Jesus’ instruction to cast his net again. “We have toiled all night and caught nothing” is another way of saying, “What’s the use? It won’t work.” How many times have we heard that lan-

guage when the subject of evangelism comes up? We tried that once before, and nothing came of it . . . Nobody is interested in the gospel anymore . . . We’re not any good at this, so why try? And on and on. Whatever our problems may have been in the past, we convince ourselves that there’s no point in trying again, we’re doomed to failure. With an attitude like that, it’s no wonder our feeble evangelism efforts fall flat.

But Simon Peter didn’t give up. He responded to Jesus, “nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” After a long and frustrating night of fruitless work, Peter must have been exhausted; but he was willing to go out one more time. Why? *Because Jesus told him to.* Peter had his faults, but stubborn loyalty was not one of them. If Jesus told him to do something, he would roll up his sleeves and do it, no matter how tired he was. If our past experience with evangelism has been one long bust, we ought not give up, but go out one more time “at Your word.” At some point it will all come together and the results will be worth the extra effort.

Notice also that Peter did not just go through the motions of complying with Jesus’ request. Jesus ordered him to “launch out into the deep” to cast his net. Sometimes the reason we are not successful at evangelism is because we are too timid in our efforts. We need to be bold, fearless, go for broke—“launch out into the deep.” It’s more work, yes, but the payoff can be enormous.

Which brings us to the final lesson in this story. The huge catch that Peter and his companions hauled in was clearly the work of the Lord, not their own fishing expertise. In fact, the catch was so overwhelming that they genuinely feared what they were dealing with (v. 8-10). But dealing with a single load of fish was nothing compared to the enormous harvest of souls they would encounter a few years later. But by that time they were ready for it. Jesus had trained them to expect the unexpected.

Evangelism, like fishing, can be terribly frustrating. But it can also be exhilarating, if we refuse to give up and follow our Savior’s instruction to “launch out into the deep” to cast our nets.

– David King