

- day than it was when they were called?
3. How does their world compare with ours as it relates to racial groups?
4. Did either of these first disciples write a book? If so, name it and outline it or them.
5. Read Chapter I of W. C. Barclay's book, "The World Mission of the Christian Religion." Can you find, "The Training of the Twelve," by A. B. Bruce?

Study II

April 13, 1952

Fishers of Men

Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11

The Goal of Jesus' Training Program

Jesus did not have a more simple symbol for the work which the twelve were to do than this—Fishers of Men. By what other name do you think, their work could have been called? It is a rare event when God uses other means to reach men than man. Can you recall any events where man was not used to fulfill the plans of God? Is there a greater task than the one of catching men for the kingdom of God? Reread Mark 1:16-20, then reread Luke 5:1-11. Do you see any connection between the great catch of fish and the great ingathering of souls on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2? Do you think that the catch in Luke 5:1-11 is a symbol to the catch in Acts 2? Peter is connected with both events.

The end of all training in Christian service is, to bring men into fellowship with God, with man and with himself. Call it regeneration, conversion, reclamation or by any name, the primary goal of all Chris-

tian training is—"prepare man to fish for man." "I will make you to become fishers of men," and "from henceforth thou shalt catch men" are the sole reasons for the call to service. The Department of Defense call men and train them to kill men, to destroy the enemy, to paralyze his country, to demoralize his home front. The Master calls men to train in the art, skills and technique of fishing for men, of catching men, of saving men for usefulness in the Kingdom of God. There is no greater job, no finer task, no more noble achievement than this—Catch Men.

The faith of these fishers of men, at first was faint and weak. At its best it only recognized in Jesus the Divine Prophet, King and an unusual Personality. In their close contact with Him they were to be instructed more from what He did than from what He said. They were to learn from Him by degrees. To start with, they were to believe in him as the Messiah of prophetic predictions. Then they were to become constant attendants on His person.

Finally they were to become the selected twelve who were to ever be with Him and carry on after his death. They were to be the agency of witnessing to what he said and did.

The Fishmen Equipment

These men were to make disciples of others. They were being prepared to do what had never been done—Evangelize the World. Later they would be told to go into all the world and preach, teach and heal. There were certain tools, skills, techniques and equipment they would need.

Fishermen of that day had to have nets and training in the art of handling them. What type of equipment do fishermen need where you live? Most likely all we know is the hook and line, casting reels, fishing pole. In the days of the twelve, boats and nets were essentials. (Make a listing of all the equipment you have seen or heard of and draw a truth applicable to the spiritual fishing the church is doing today.)

These fishers of men are to cast the net of divine truth into the sea of the world. They are out to land a multitude of saved souls on the shores of the kingdom of God. They must be equipped with indestructible convictions about Him, His way of life and what He believed. To be effective fishermen of men, they must possess extraordinary qualifications and rare spiritual endowment. If they are to use the net of universal truth, they must be freed from narrow Jewish exclusiveness and be equipped with views as wide as the world. These spiritual fishermen must antiquate Jewish ceremonialism which would necessitate their emancipation from the yokes of ordinances. The emblem of the cross, formerly an instrument of cruelty and the sign of infamy, must

become the symbol of all that is heroic and noble. These fishers of men must be above conventional notions of human and divine dignity, willing to bear the cross and declare its glory. They had to combine freedom of conscience, bigness of heart and enlightenment of mind as a part of their equipment. The humble fishermen of Galilee had much to learn from Christ, ere they could satisfy these requirements. Perhaps they had the piety and the sincerity of purpose but they were exceedingly ignorant, narrow-minded, superstitious, full of Jewish prejudices, misconceptions and animosities. They had many things to unlearn but much more to learn about their new job as fishers of men. Naturally they would be slow to unlearn and to learn. Their minds were filled with old beliefs which were hostile to the new task. They were poor men, of humble birth, low stations and mean occupation who had never felt the warmth of a liberal education or the energizing touch of social contact with cultural minds. They must now launch out into the deeps and let down for a draft of a new kind of fish-men. Are we any better equipped today for the task of fishing for men? How are our boats and nets? Are we still near the shores of our training and ready to give up? Are not many of us hunters of men instead of fishers of men? What is the difference between a hunter and a fisher? Why did not Jesus use the hunter as the symbol of the new work in the kingdom?

Fishers of men need to be equipped with a strong body, a vigorous mind, sanctified common sense, moral courage, earnest activity, a sympathetic spirit, and a fervent piety. Examine these tools carefully and add others or expand these into a project.