

## **A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft**

### **# 10278 – “Fishing for Fish, Fishing for People”**

**Luke 19:5**

June 3, 2026

My Dad worked to make the money for our family, so my Dad decided where we went on vacation—fishing. Now some people would consider that a dream vacation, but the high-energy, ten-year-old me? No, I didn't think so. After just a little while, I was complaining. I was bored, but of course we kept fishing. Did I mention that my Dad made the money? Well, actually, we did have a good catch there and they were good eating. Catching them was fun. Eating them was fun. In between, there was this one step that was less fun - cleaning them. But for that fish to realize its culinary destiny, it had to be cleaned.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“Fishing for Fish, Fishing for People.”**

If you're a fisherman, you're probably Jesus' kind of person. Four of the twelve disciples He called were fishermen by trade. When He summoned them to His service, He said, “Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17) He told Simon Peter, “From now on you will catch men” (Luke 5:10).

So the business of bringing people into a relationship with Jesus Christ apparently has some things in common with fishing. For example, you don't try to attract the fish with what you're interested in, but what they're interested in. Right? Look, I like pizza. I don't like worms. But if I put pizza on my hook, I'm going home with an empty bucket buddy. I've got to offer what will be interesting to the fish I'm trying to attract. And so, that's how it is with reaching people for Jesus Christ.

If all we offer is religious bait, come to our religious meeting to hear a religious speaker talk on a religious subject in a religious place, we probably won't attract many of the lost people who need Christ so desperately. But if we're talking about needs they care about in a place where they feel comfortable, in words they can understand, we have a far better chance of getting them within hearing distance of the gospel.

But there's another very important fishing principle we need to keep in mind as we present Jesus to the people around us. It's a principle it seems many believers have never thought about. You ready? You don't clean fish until you catch them! See, too many times, lost people are judged by us rather than loved by us, because we're attacking the things they do. And they do those because they're lost, and instead we should be leading them to the One who will take them from lost to found!

You catch them, then you clean them! Actually, God catches them and cleans them, through you. You can see Jesus working that way in Luke 19, beginning with verse 5, our word for today from the Word of God. The whole town is shocked, scandalized, when Jesus says to Zacchaeus, of all people—the town crook, “I must stay at your house today.” As stunned as anyone, the Bible says Zacchaeus “welcomed him gladly. The people started muttering, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner’.”

But after meeting Jesus and experiencing His unconditional love, Zacchaeus can’t stand his sin anymore. He announces he’s going to make right the dishonest wrongs he has done, “If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus announced, “Today salvation has come to this house.”

Zacchaeus got clean, but he got caught first! The problem with the lost people you know is not their profanity, not their dishonesty, or not their immorality. They’re lost and they’re living like it! Their real problem is they need a Savior! Yes, they must repent, but that’s part of being rescued by Jesus from their sin! Don’t make their lifestyle the issue. Make Jesus the issue, and say with the great spiritual fisherman, Paul, “When I came to you...I resolved to know nothing...except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

If you want to help people be in heaven with you, stick to Jesus. And stick to His cross!

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