

Catching Fish / Jesus's Special Fishermen

Carol: Hi there. Welcome to *Women of Hope*. I'm Carol and it's so nice to be with you again.

Tammy: I'm Tammy and I've got so much to talk with you about.

Carol: What do you want to tell us Tammy?

Tammy: Well...my neighbors went fishing over the weekend and brought me this huge fish. They apparently had a good catch.

Carol: And have you cooked it yet?

Tammy: Oh yes. My husband and I love fish. We baked it in the oven with some herbs and it was delicious. There was enough for the whole family.

Carol: Mmmm...we love fish too – sometimes I even make curry out of it.

Tammy: That sounds good...any way you cook it, it tastes yummy! And it's so good for you!

Carol: On *Women of Hope* today we're talking about fish...going fishing...and eating fish!

Tammy: Do you ever go fishing Carol?

Carol: Oh Tammy, when I was young I loved to fish! Unlike a lot of girls I was not afraid to bait my own hook and even handle the fish that I caught. My parents have a great picture of me lifting my rod out of the water with a fish hanging on the end. It brings back great memories!

Tammy: Our family enjoys fishing also. My children know that when my husband leaves the house early in the morning and comes home with orange soda, that it's time get the fishing poles and head to the lake. My youngest has only fished in a lake, but my two older children have fished in the ocean and in the bay. When my oldest was very little, my husband would take her fishing off a bridge. He would tie a rope around her waist just in case she fell into the water. They had such a wonderful time and were so happy when they had fish to bring home to Mommy.

Carol: Many people live in places where they can catch fish – in the sea, in rivers, in lakes. And there are so many different kinds of fish aren't there? They all taste different but most of them are very good for you.

Tammy: How often do you eat fish each week? If you are already eating at least two fish meals each week, you're doing something good for your health. If you're not eating much fish, here are some good reasons why you should.

Carol: It helps prevent heart disease and stroke. This is because fish and shellfish contain a special type of oil called omega-3, which helps keep your arteries healthy.

Tammy: Your arteries take the blood pumped by your heart, right around your body. Heart attacks and strokes can both be caused when an artery becomes blocked by a blood clot. But the good thing about omega-3 is that it can stop these clots from forming.

Carol: *It also helps to lower blood pressure.* This is why people who eat fish regularly tend to have fewer heart attacks and strokes. All fish is good, but some types are especially high in omega 3 - these include salmon, tuna, herrings, trout, cod, mackerel and mullet.

Tammy: Here's another reason to eat fish... although it contains this special oil, *it's low in fat...* the kind that is often in other meats. So this makes fish a good food for maintaining a healthy weight.

Carol: The healthiest way to cook fish is to steam it, grill it over a fire or bake it in an oven. It's also okay to cook fish in a pan in a small amount of oil such as olive, canola or peanut oil. But fish that is covered in batter and deep-fried is very high in fat - the same goes for fish served with rich creamy sauces.

Tammy: Another good reason to eat fish... *It's good food for people with diabetes.* This is because people with diabetes have a higher risk of problems like heart disease and stroke. Eating fish and other low fat foods can help *prevent* diabetes. It can also help people with diabetes *control* the disease. .

Carol: *And fish is also good for your bones.* One way to help keep bones healthy and strong is to eat foods containing plenty of calcium. This is especially important if you're a woman - after menopause, women are at risk of developing the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis. Some canned fish such as sardines and salmon, as well as small fresh fish such as whitebait, contain soft bones, which are easy to eat. Along with dairy products, these bones are a good way of adding more calcium to your diet.

Tammy: And here's another interesting one... *fish may help reduce the risk of asthma.* There's some evidence that children who eat fish, especially oily fish, more than once a week are not so likely to develop asthma as children who eat fish less often.

Carol: That *is* interesting, I hadn't heard that before.

Tammy: Now if you can't catch your own fish, you may feel that fish is too expensive... Although some fresh fish is expensive, there are also cheaper varieties available. And unlike meat and poultry, you don't have to trim the fat from fish, so there's less waste.

Carol: I really enjoy canned fish...it's not usually expensive and can be used in salads and sandwiches. Canned tuna and salmon can also be cooked with vegetables to make sauces for rice, noodles or pasta. But look for fish that is canned in brine or spring water rather than in oil.

Tammy: Hey – I'm getting hungry...!!

Carol: Fishing is fun isn't it...well it *can* be fun! It can also be very relaxing as you sit and wait for a

fish to bite. There is really nothing else to do except think about things while you wait. Then you might be someone who catches fish in a net – you may have to paddle out on a lake, or the sea to check the nets and see if you've caught anything.

Tammy: And fishing is one of the oldest professions. During the time when God's son, Jesus, lived on the earth...over two thousand years ago, and I'm sure long before that too, people caught and ate fish...and were probably very healthy.

Carol: When Jesus grew to be a man, he picked twelve men to be his disciples – his friends and followers. Four of them were fishermen.

Let's hear what happened that day from the word of God, in the book of Matthew (4:18-22): "As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him."

Now we'll just stop here and think about these men for a moment...

Tammy: Do you find it strange that Jesus chose ordinary men like those fishermen to be his friends and disciples? Why did he choose such common people? He could have chosen anybody – intellectuals or those with special skills. But other than the four fishermen we heard about just now, the others were all common people who had little wealth or possessions. They had ordinary jobs...no social standing or special education...and no special wisdom or power.

Carol: Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take a job and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men, not for what they *were*, but for what they would *become* as he taught them and showed them his wisdom and power.

What did Jesus want from the disciples? As we read God's word, the Bible, we find out that the twelve disciples that Jesus chose had many weaknesses. But 'Jesus gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness' (Matthew 10:1). In this way, he turned their weakness into strength. He turned their uselessness into greatness. He appointed them for the important task of sharing the good news about forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

I want to tell you another story from God's word that happened about three years later. Their dear friend Jesus had died on the cross and been buried. But three days later he came alive again, and had been seen by a few people.

Here is the story:

(John 21: 1-14) 'One day, Simon Peter said to his friends, "I'm going fishing."

"We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat at sunset. All night they worked, throwing in their nets, but they didn't catch a thing. Then just as the sun began to appear over the hills, they

saw a man on the beach. They couldn't see who it was but they heard him call, "Friends, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

Then he said, "Throw out your net on the other side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was their Lord – Jesus – he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were not very far from the shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them – fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

"Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

"Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said... Then he served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead...

Tammy: What a great breakfast that would have been...fresh fish and bread, prepared for them by their special friend. But I wonder what they thought when they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. How would you feel? Disappointed I'm sure...

Carol: And tired and hungry!

Tammy: And when someone called to you and told you to put your nets on the other side of the boat, what would *you* think?

Carol: Well – I know I would have wanted to say, "But what difference would that make? ...We've been fishing *all night* and the fish just *aren't* there!"

Tammy: I think, even though they couldn't quite see who it was, maybe they thought it just *might* be their friend Jesus, and they should at least try what he told them to do.

Carol: And look what happened when they did what he told them to do! Within moments, their nets were full of fish!

There's something we need to understand here... We do not have to be perfect to do God's work. So if you think...that you are a nobody, that you are not anyone special, that you are quite ordinary and that God cannot use someone like you, then think again. Our God is an extraordinary God who uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for him in this world.

Aren't you encouraged by this thought? We need to praise God, that he uses ordinary people like you and me. Jesus didn't choose the wealthiest, noblest, smartest, most religious, nicest, prettiest, or most athletic to be his disciples. He chose from the bottom of the barrel. The ordinary people like you and me. They were sinners and they had faults like you and like me.

Therefore when the Lord calls us to work for him, we must not hold back because we think that we have little or nothing to offer. The Lord takes what ordinary people, like us can offer and uses it for greatness in his kingdom where there will be no death, sorrow, crying or pain.

Tammy: Welcome back. This is *Women of Hope* and we are talking about how God can use ordinary people like us to do extraordinary things in *his* power.

(Matthew 4:18-20) Peter, one of the fishermen we heard about whom Jesus called to be a disciple, left everything and followed him. God used him to do some amazing things, and to bring healing to people, as he was willing to do what Jesus instructed him to do.

Carol: If God can use a fisherman and make him a disciple, he can use you. We are no different from the people who lived during the time of Jesus.

God has a plan for each of us. And we can do our part...read His Word, spend time in prayer, and get to know him. Then we must be obedient and be willing to be used by God.

Shall we pray together that God will use us like he used the disciples?

Father God, we thank you for all your mercies. We thank you for our lives here on earth. Help us to be kind, good, faithful and humble. Help us to be worthy of your love. In everything that we do, help us to show your love. We pray that you give us your peace and that you will use us to do special things for you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

So how can we serve God? ...By living the way God wants us to live. How can we do that? By reading his word, or hearing it...and asking God to help us obey it. Then we can show other people God's love...by taking care of them.

Tammy: Remember those good reasons to eat fish?

Carol: It helps prevent heart disease and stroke and helps to lower blood pressure.

Tammy: It's low in fat – and is good for your bones.

Carol: It can help control or even prevent diabetes...and may help people with asthma.

Tammy: So enjoy those two fish meals each week. But most of all remember that God can use ordinary people like you and me to do extraordinary things...for him!

If you would like to write to us, our email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. You can also visit our website, TWRWomenofHope.org. Or visit our Facebook page.

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