

¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵“Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—¹⁶the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

¹⁸As he 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. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.

²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Is there something that I could say in this sermon that would make a difference in your life? Is there a word that I could speak today that would give a quiet one courage to speak about Jesus? Is there a story I could tell that would lift the burden off of the back of a weary one? Is there a question that would open the hands of a close-fisted one to generosity? Or a saying that would break chains of anger and bitterness, freeing the one bound by yesterday's hurts? . Think about the time when not even Jesus' love and Jesus' words could free a man in love with his wealth. Jesus had invited him to be a follower of Jesus: “Go sell all that you have and give it to the poor and come follow me,” Jesus said to him. But that man went away sad for he had great wealth.

Or think about the parable of the sower. The seed is sown along the path and on rocky ground and among weeds and thorns and in the good soil. The same seed sown in each place but only the seed sown on good soil produces an abundant harvest. Are you good soil today, waiting to receive the word? Will the cares of the world and

the delight in riches starve the word in you? Will opposition you encounter at home or at work or at school be like thorns choking off the word growing in you? Or will the word sown today be fed and watered in you and produce an abundant harvest?

On the day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee – he saw two brothers Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea - fishermen at work. “Follow me and I will make you fish for people” was the word Jesus sowed. And the word found good soil and they left nets and boat and followed.

A little further along the shore he saw James and John - called them and they left their father and the nets and the boat and followed.

All four of them good soil that day.

Maybe you and I would be good soil, too, if Jesus himself, in the flesh was the one who was preaching here today - or the one asking you to give to support the ministries of this congregation - or the one inviting you to visit those in prison or to feed those who are hungry or to tell those who are in darkness about the Light.

Or even if it was Peter and James and John and Andrew who were preaching and teaching and asking – then it might be easier for you and me to be good soil. They were with Jesus – saw the miracles – ate with the five thousand – sat at the table with him in the upper room – even shared bread and fish with Jesus after he was raised from the dead.

But sometimes you are good soil. The word comes into your ears and enters your mind and your heart and the miracle of faith happens in you. And you are the love of God in human flesh – you share your time, you listen, you speak, you give – you leave old ways of acting and thinking and dress in the clothing of faith. You believe in the life that is in Jesus more than you believe in the power of death in this world. You believe that God’s power to make all things new will be greater than all the old ways of violence and revenge and hoarding. A loved one dies and you live in the hope that death is not the last word but that the life that is in Christ is the last word, an eternal word.

You love, not just family and friend but love the stranger and the outcast and the unlovely. Like your Father in heaven who makes the sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sends rain upon the just and the unjust you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Yes, sometimes you are good soil.

And sometimes you are not. Some weeks you are all rocks and thorns and thistles. And the word withers within you.

The way Peter and Andrew and James and John lost faith during a storm at sea, and tried to chase away the children one day when the children wanted to come to Jesus. Sometimes you act like you do not know Jesus just like Peter when he swore he never knew Jesus. But each week the word is sown once more – each week you can be good soil once again.

A final thought his morning, Jesus came to Peter and Andrew and James and John right in the middle of their daily life. In your home, at work, at school, at the store you never know when Jesus will be calling you. God uses people just like you to sow the seed – to bring light when we are walking in darkness, to bring hope when we are filled with sorrow or despair, to give love when we are feeling most unlovely. Fishermen Jesus used then, today he calls accountants and seventh graders and nurses and retired folk to join him in fishing for people.

He calls you.