

8. Creativity, Chaplains, and Coaches – Part 2

In our last topic, we talked about the difference between chaplains and coaches. A chaplain can be very creative as he ministers to people in their times of crisis. However, if he is only a chaplain, the focus will always be on the past. As a result, he will only develop his own creativity. In contrast, a coach helps people focus on God-given goals and then trains the whole team to become creative in reaching the goals. This produces at least two results. First, the team is able to lead people toward God-given goals. Second, the whole team is able to develop their creativity, and the full potential that God has placed in their lives, because their focus will be on bringing glory to God, instead of satisfying self.

Today, we will be looking at some more of the ways Christ coached His disciples and equipped them to become fishers of men. After Christ chose the twelve to become His leadership team, in Mark 3:13-15, we see that the crowds following Christ became very large. Mark 3:20-21 says, “Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’” The friends of Christ thought Christ had lost His mind because there were so many people following Him. However, in spite of the crowds, Christ focused on the development of His team.

First, Christ helped the team understand that they had a new relationship to Him. The mother and brothers of Christ came to Him and wanted to talk to Him. Christ used that opportunity to tell the team that they had a new relationship with Him. Mark 3:33-35 says, “But He answered them, saying, ‘Who is My mother, or My brothers?’ And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.’” Christ let this team of twelve men know that they now had the same relationship with Him that He had with His physical family.

Since Christ had told His disciples that He would train them and equip them to become fishers of men, we see that Christ did many things to equip them to reach others. In Mark 4, we see that there was a huge crowd gathered around Christ, so He began to teach them in parables. Mark 4:1-2 says, “And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching.” These parables were just stories to the crowd. However, to the twelve, Christ was going to use these parables to explain to them how to become fishers of men.

After the crowd left, the twelve asked Jesus why He spoke to the crowd in parables. In Luke 8:9-10, Christ gave a summary of why He spoke in parables. “And He said, ‘To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that “Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.”’” Then, Christ explained the meaning of the parable to them.

In the parable recorded in Mark 4:3-8, Christ had spoken about a man planting seed in a field. This probably just sounded like an interesting story to the crowd. However, Christ had promised to

help the disciples become fishers of men. For them, that story had a much greater meaning. Christ explained the meaning to the disciples as a part of coaching His disciples and preparing them to share the Word of God. He helped them understand that “the seed” was the Word of God.

Christ coached the disciples to show them that, as they shared the Word of God in the future, there would be at least four different responses by different people. Mark 4:14-20 tells us that some would hear the Word, and then, immediately forget it. Some would hear the Word of God, get all excited, but then draw back and not believe in Christ when they saw that responding to Christ would bring suffering. Some would hear the Word of God, but would be so involved with their problems, or their desire for riches and the things of this world, that they would not believe in Christ either. Those who would believe in Christ, and follow Him, are described in Mark 4:20. There, we read, “But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

Christ coached the disciples so they would learn at least three things about fishing for men from this parable. First, they would only become fishers of men if they shared the Word of God, not their own opinions, with people. They needed to understand that the Word of God is living and powerful. Second, because of things that were going on in their own lives, many of those who heard the Word of God would not respond to the Gospel. They needed to be prepared for people to reject the Word of God, so they would not get discouraged. Third, those who responded to the Word of God, and placed their trust in Christ, would have their lives changed, and they would become fruitful. The disciples needed to understand that true faith produces changed lives.

Christ immediately followed the explanation of that parable with another parable. Mark 4:21-22 says, “Also He said to them, ‘Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.’” Later on, the disciples would learn that the price Christ would pay for their salvation was shedding His blood for them on the cross. Christ was coaching the disciples to help them understand that He was not purchasing their salvation for it to be hidden. He was purchasing their salvation to set them free, so they could have the privilege of serving the Lord by providing light for others to receive forgiveness of sins.

Then, Christ gave a third parable to show how the seed (the Word of God) grows in the lives of those who hear it. Mark 4:26-29 says, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” A person will only become a fisher of men by being like a lamp and sharing the Word of God so people can hear how to put their trust in Christ.

However, the disciples also needed to understand how the Father would cause the Word of God to work in the lives of those who heard it to draw them to Christ. In John 6:44, Christ said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” This parable, about how the seed grows, was to help the disciples understand the process of growth

that would happen as they shared the Word of God. In order to become fishers of men, the first responsibility of the disciples was to scatter the seed (share the Word of God with people). We are not effective fishers of men just because we live a godly life for people to watch. Christ coached the disciples and helped them realize that an effective fisher of men is one who is continually sharing the Word of God with people that are not yet Christians.

Second, an effective fisher of men needs to know that the Word of God will take root and grow in the lives of some of those who hear it. In Isaiah 55:11, God said, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” God says that His Word will accomplish its purpose when it is shared. God will accomplish what He pleases through that Word as it is shared. As fishers of men, we do not always know, at first, what God is accomplishing as we share His Word. Christ was coaching the disciples to keep on sharing the Word of God, even though they did not see immediate results.

Third, the disciples had to be coached in the fact that leading a person to Christ is a process that usually takes a period of time. It is not just a one-time event. There will be times when a person will respond to the Gospel immediately, but it will be because others have been faithful in sowing and watering the seed of the Word of God. However, in most cases an effective fisher of men will have to share the Word with people many times over a period of time before that person even begins to show a real interest. This is illustrated in Acts 17:11-12. “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.” These verses show us that faithful sharing of the Word of God produced a great harvest.

Fourth, the disciples had to be coached so they would recognize that there is an orderly process that happens before there is a harvest. Mark 4:28 says, “For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.” A person who tries to get a decision before there is a full understanding of the Gospel is like a person who tries to harvest the crop before the fruit has developed. An effective fisher of men will make sure that the person understands the Gospel clearly. People need to clearly understand the meaning of repentance and faith.

Fifth, the disciples had to be coached so they would recognize when a person was ready to place his or her trust in Christ. Christ says that it is harvest time and it is time to gather the harvest. We need to help a person understand so clearly what they need to do to become a Christian that they can even become a Christian on their own in the middle of the night if that is the time the Father draws them to Christ.

Just as Christ invited some men to follow Him, and promised them that He would teach them how to become fishers of men, we need to invite other Christians to go along with us, so we can show them how to become fishers of men. Then, it is our privilege to coach them and show them how to become effective fishers of men in the future. May the Lord richly bless you as you invite

people to follow you so you can show them how to become fishers of men.