

Simon's Fish Story

If I know anything it is fishing. So, when Jesus the teacher told me to cast out my nets in the middle of the day, I was sure it would accomplish nothing. But instead it produced a boatful of fish! It also convinced me that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

It was not the first time I had met Jesus. Andrew and I and our business partners, James and John, may be blue collar tradesmen, but we were aware of what was happening in the world. You might say that there was a sort of Messiah-mania going on in the whole region and we wanted to know what was real. Andrew had agreed to go hear what John the Baptizer was saying. He was with him when that rough-hewn wilderness preacher said, "Look, the Lamb of God."

So, Andrew followed Jesus of Nazareth to where he was staying and spent the day with him – what normal Rabbi spends a day with a fisherman? Then Andrew came to me and said, "We have found the Messiah." He brought me to Jesus, who seemed to know me. He said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Peter."

Then Philip and Nathanael met Jesus and they were also impressed and began to follow Him to Cana, Jerusalem, Sychar in Samaria then back to Cana. Andrew came back to me and the fishing business in Capernaum. That was where Jesus later appeared, teaching by the seaside. As the crowd pressed in, Jesus asked to speak from our boat, which we granted. Then he made the strange request. "Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch."

What I complained about was that we had worked all night and gotten nothing, but on my mind were the reports we had heard over several weeks. John the Baptizer had been imprisoned. Jesus had returned to Galilee through Samaria -- which is just not the thing good Jews do. There were reports of healings, but he had gotten in trouble at the synagogue of Cana to the point that the people wanted to push him off a cliff. Was this really the one or just another flashy fraud?

When we pulled in the biggest catch of fish I had ever seen or even heard of, I knew He was the Messiah. When James and John had joined us to unload the boats and Jesus said, "Come, follow me," we had no hesitation.

John was the thinker among us. We had been discussing all these things and he remembered the Rabbis' teachings from way back when he prepared for Bar Mitzvah – I wish I had paid better attention. He said the problem in Cana was just as the prophet Isaiah said, that Messiah would be despised and rejected.

It was a wild ride from then on, teaching in the synagogue, healings of all kinds including my wife's mother, who, as soon as she stood up, completely well, began waiting on Him and all of us – she was back to normal, all right. And besides the healings there was the casting out of demons, who screamed when they saw Jesus, "You are the Son of God!" If they knew Him, certainly we should! But many of the people seemed to be only interested in the benefits. They did not want to know Him for Who He was. Perhaps it was the excitement or novelty?

Jesus did not heal everybody and often took time to go apart for prayer. John told me he thought it was because Jesus' real mission was the Good News, available to all. His real purpose was to be "The Lamb of God!" John also said, we are living in interesting times. We were to find out exactly how interesting over the next three years.