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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA
FEBRUARY 20, 2005
PASTOR MARK FRY

1 PASTOR MARK FRY: It is great to be with you today.
2 One of my loves is fishing.

3 It's a love and it's a passion, it's a hobby, it's
4 something that I spend a lot of time wishing I was doing and
5 less time doing than actually wishing.

6 But for the next few weeks we are going to talk
7 about some of the great fish stories of the Bible.

8 And one thing, fishermen tend to exaggerate, so
9 hopefully I'll keep it reasonable today and give you some
10 bite size chunks that will help you in your fishing and in
11 your life.

12 This week the title is "The Fish Locator" and one
13 of the rights of passage of the spring is when you receive
14 your Cabela's s catalog in the mail.

15 Steve is giving me the thumbs up. You have that
16 thing, too, Steve?

17 Have you bought anything yet in it? You're a
18 better man than me, although your wife might disagree.

19 It is amazing. Bob, one of our ushers today, he
20 saw the fishing stuff, he said, "It's that time of year.
21 You start getting the itch."

22 I said, "Yes, you do."

23 He said, "I finally bought a fish locator."

24 "How much did you pay?"

25 I think he said two hundred dollars. You can get

1 one for seventeen ninety-nine on sale. \$1,799 on sale.

2 Hopefully the ones I will share with you today are
3 a lot more reasonable than that.

4 But they've got everything in this catalog for the
5 fisherman and the want-to-be.

6 It's an incredible resource of junk, that is great
7 junk, and I have a weakness for it.

8 Any time I go to Colorado or anywhere else you have
9 to stop at every Cabela's between here and there.

10 It's just something that some of us do, but that's
11 kind of the deal today.

12 I want to talk a little bit about the fish locators
13 and that's the task before us today.

14 So if you have your Bible, I want to come back to
15 Matthew 4.

16 It is interesting for me, right away after Jesus
17 has been baptized, some would say he's wet and wild, he's
18 after it right away.

19 He's dried off from the forty days of temptation,
20 don't get me wrong, but the first thing he does is he finds
21 out that his mentor, that's John the Baptist, is in prison.

22 He's the guy who baptized Jesus and he learns that
23 right away in that 4th Chapter up in the 12th verse.

24 He had heard that John had been arrested, so he
25 goes to Galilee and he's going along there and right away

1 his first sermon is Matthew 4:17, "Repent, for the kingdom
2 of heaven has come near."

3 And not everybody really understood what that
4 meant, and not a lot of people today really understand what
5 that means.

6 But what that means when it says the kingdom of
7 heaven is near is that God is here and he wants to do really
8 cool stuff in your life.

9 God is here. He wants to do really cool stuff in
10 your life.

11 He has called each of us, we believe theologically,
12 through the water of baptism, to do really cool stuff in our
13 lives, in the lives of those people around us.

14 And I think it's incredibly ironic and also highly
15 significant that the first four he calls are fishermen.

16 The first four he calls are fishermen. What do we
17 make of that?

18 Well, Jesus does not call the qualified; he
19 qualifies the called.

20 And if you are a fishermen you can admit that you
21 probably aren't the sharpest knife in the drawer.

22 Some of the things fishermen do are stupid and
23 ridiculous to try and catch fish.

24 We are not the brightest bulbs on the Christmas
25 tree, and you can feel that way as a fishermen, but there's

1 irony and there's also power in the fact that Jesus doesn't
2 call the qualified, he qualifies the called.

3 And, again, we are all called, and what we are
4 called is we are called children of God.

5 We are given this new name through the water of
6 baptism, but he also then wants us to stay connected to the
7 water.

8 Fishermen don't always have great intelligence, but
9 they do have a common sense and they are usually fairly
10 ingenious of thinking out new methods and coloring outside
11 the box.

12 That's one of the reasons I think Jesus called
13 fishermen.

14 I have a thing that a buddy of mine on our church
15 council gave me.

16 It's a like a master angler kind of a calendar
17 thing that has all kinds of fishing sayings and stuff in it
18 and I usually avoid it during November, December, January,
19 February because it makes me want to go fishing and I have a
20 paranoia about ice fishing.

21 If I'm not in Minnesota I'm not getting out on that
22 ice, but I avoid it because it makes we want to fish so bad.

23 But there's a guy who writes in that, his name
24 Sparse Grayhackle, and I don't know if that's his real name
25 or not, but I love the name.

1 He says, "If fishing interferes with your business,
2 give up your business."

3 What Jesus would say is, "Since you are called,
4 fishing is your business."

5 You are involved in the catch and release program
6 that God has.

7 I'm a guy who believes that even the worst day of
8 fishing is better than the best day of working most of the
9 time.

10 It's just great to go fishing if you are a
11 fisherman and what Jesus says is all of us are fisherpeople.

12 You follow me and I will teach you to fish for
13 people.

14 This Sparse Grayhackle, again he says, "The trout
15 do not rise in the cemetery, so you better do your fishing
16 while you are still able."

17 In other words, if you keep putting it off for
18 another day that other day might never come. You better go
19 fishing now.

20 There is an urgency to the call of God and it is
21 your business.

22 I have my paddle pad here, this is the best
23 investment I think we ever made, Pastor Wenda and I went to
24 the new Scheels and we were in there because we are canoeing
25 enthusiasts and this is like a little portable floatable

1 butt cushion.

2 See, a lot of people they get real comfortable in
3 the boat cushions of the pew and they don't get out of the
4 boat.

5 We make these seats in here comfortable, but that's
6 just so that while you are here you're comfortable. That
7 doesn't mean you go out from here and then sit.

8 You're fishermen, it's your business, and you don't
9 want to wait too long because there is no day like today to
10 go fishing.

11 This is the perfect fishing day, as I said earlier,
12 so we need to look at that.

13 Who is called? All of us through our water baptism
14 and if you want to look it up it's Isaiah 43, when you go
15 through the waters I will be with you, you are mine, you are
16 precious and beloved, I love you, period.

17 You're mine now. I've got you. You are in my net.
18 You have been hooked. You're it.

19 Let's take a look. There is this really cool
20 thing, there's a guy named Martin Luther, that's kind of our
21 strand of the Christian tree, the Lutheran Christian tree,
22 is from a guy in the 1500s named Martin Luther.

23 And he rediscovered this beautiful thing called the
24 priesthood of all believers, which means it's not just the
25 pastor's job to go fishing; it's everybody's job to do the

1 work of ministry, one of which is to go fishing.

2 If you have your Bible there you can open up
3 Ephesians 4, in some of the Bibles it's on page 185, but not
4 all of them. We've got some new imported Bibles.

5 Ephesians 4, hopefully you can find it, it's one of
6 Paul's letters.

7 He's writing to these great people in the city of
8 Ephesus, that's where Ephesians comes from, the 4th chapter,
9 11th verse.

10 "The gifts he gave were that some would be
11 apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and
12 teachers."

13 Here is the part I want you to understand that it's
14 not my job to go fishing; it's all of our jobs to go
15 fishing.

16 It's my job as your pastor and one of your teachers
17 to equip -- who? The saints, and that's you guys.

18 There is a blessed woman who came to a Bible study
19 class we had last year and I kept throwing out this whole
20 concept that you guys are saints and she's like, "Oh, you
21 don't know me."

22 I said, "I don't have to. God does."

23 We believe theologically that we are forgiven
24 sinners and so therefore we are saints.

25 It's kind of a sinner/saint thing that we just live

1 in all of our lives. That's the pool we swim in.

2 We are saints. You are a saint and don't let
3 anybody tell you you're not.

4 So my job is to "equip the saints for the work of
5 ministry," to teach you some fishing tips, "for building up
6 the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the
7 faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to
8 the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no
9 longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by
10 every wind of doctrine."

11 I love that little expression because it sounds to
12 me like they're in a boat and they are being tossed to and
13 fro by every wind of doctrine.

14 And that's unfortunately what some people do. They
15 just stay in the boat and they are watching this theological
16 ping pong match.

17 That's not what we are supposed to be doing. We
18 are supposed to grow up, grow out, and go out and go
19 fishing.

20 "Every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by
21 their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the
22 truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is
23 the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and
24 knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped,
25 as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth

1 in building itself up in love."

2 That's a mouthful. What that means is we've all
3 got roles to play and it's ridiculous to think that we are
4 just on the receiving end of that, and we just sit in the
5 boat, and kind of that what is in it for me?

6 I will just sit here and watch everybody else do
7 the ministry, and I'll just kind of sit on the dock or sit
8 in the boat, and occasionally complain about stuff, or be
9 tossed to and fro by every wind of change in doctrine and
10 people's trickery, and that's not what it's about.

11 We are supposed to be equipping you. We as your
12 pastors are supposed to be equipping you to do stuff.

13 That's why we use spiritual gifts. We had a really
14 great experience on Thursday.

15 All of our grandparents day out people took a
16 spiritual gifts inventory.

17 There were people in the room that were over 90
18 years old. It was awesome.

19 And so Anna then unwrapped those gifts and taught
20 some people there for the very first time in their lives you
21 have been gifted to do certain things in the building up of
22 God's body.

23 We are not all eyes and ears and noses and elbows.
24 We have different roles we play, and it would be immature to
25 think otherwise, and that's the irony of that.

1 We have to grow up and we have grow out and we have
2 to go out and do some fishing.

3 And unfortunately a lot of church teaching and
4 thinking has been contrary to that.

5 I often tell the story that there is an old farmer
6 here that loves to come up to me and say, "We sure need
7 rain. Will you please give a good word to the man upstairs
8 so I get some rain out on my place?"

9 And I like to tell him, "I'm not in management; I'm
10 in sales."

11 What Jesus is teaching all of us is we are all in
12 sales.

13 It's all of our opportunity and our privilege to
14 share, to cast, to bring other people into that saving
15 relationship.

16 So some of us, we look at that story from Matthew 4
17 and we have this mental block of this saint thing.

18 "Well, I'm not good enough."

19 Again, he doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies
20 the called.

21 There's St. Andrew, there's St. Peter, there's St.
22 James, there's St. John. What about those guys?

23 Well, what about those guys? The one interesting
24 character of that story that I'm drawn to consistently is
25 the old man Zebedee. We see him in verse 20.

1 "Immediately they left their nets and followed him.
2 As he went from there he saw two other brothers. James, the
3 son of Zebedee and his brother John."

4 So Zebedee has two sons. What happens next, they
5 are mending their nets, this is his family fishing business,
6 Zebedee, and Jesus calls the sons and "Immediately they left
7 the boat," notice it also says, "they left their father and
8 followed him."

9 A couple of things that I would say about that is
10 often times old Zebedee gets a bum rap.

11 A lot of people think what was up with Zebedee?
12 How come he didn't go and have an intergenerational group of
13 disciples?

14 We don't know, but some of us prefer the boat for a
15 little longer than others. That's okay.

16 If you look closely then at the way the story
17 unfolds, James and John aren't exactly the best disciples
18 that ever walked on the planet.

19 In fact, they are the ones that come to that big
20 argument about who is going to sit at your right hand?

21 I want a really good seat when your kingdom comes,
22 Lord, and Jesus is like, oh, man, I probably should have
23 left these two knuckleheads in the boat.

24 Peter, he's no prize either. He's going to go and
25 deny Jesus three different times.

1 But a lot of people think of St. Peter, St. Andrew,
2 St. James, St. John, there's St. Andrew's Church, saint
3 this, saint that.

4 You don't ever hear of St. Zebedee. You never hear
5 about him. He gets a bum rap. He has just lost his two
6 sons.

7 He just lost his meal ticket. His business just
8 walked down the street.

9 And I think, if I know God well enough, and I hope
10 I learn to, that Jesus probably came back and gave him
11 another cast.

12 "How about you now, Zebedee? Are you ready?"

13 Because that's God's nature. He just keeps casting
14 into those pools and I want to think that maybe Zebedee is
15 not such a bad guy either. I believe we are called; not
16 just young people.

17 There is a fishing saying in one of the books I've
18 got.

19 "Anybody can catch fish. Finding them is the hard
20 part."

21 And to prove that point, it's find of fun, when my
22 kids were younger they used to go fishing with me and now
23 they are too cool for that, they're 22 and 18, but when I
24 used to fish with my kids it was really fun for me as the
25 dad because I wished my dad would have done this for me and

1 he never did.

2 So I thought I'm going to over-compensate and I'm
3 going to take my kids and they are going to catch my
4 enthusiasm for fishing.

5 So I took them out and set them up with a can of
6 pop and a cooler full of food and I would get the fish on
7 and then I would hand them the pole and they would reel it
8 in and after about two fish my kids are like, "What do we do
9 next? Can we start throwing rocks now?"

10 And I'm like, "Come on, you guys, this is great."

11 They're like, "Dad, I'm hot. It's kind of stinky
12 out here, smelly, and I don't want to touch the bait. I
13 don't want to touch the fish. This is not my favorite
14 thing. It might be yours."

15 So what I hope to maybe teach a little bit today is
16 it wasn't their time at that time.

17 That's Zebedee. He needed a little more time to
18 percolate on the call.

19 But how to find fish and when is really key, too.
20 Somehow, you see, we need to learn to think like a fish.

21 And some of us that literally do fish, we're kind
22 of insane about this, and we'll watch these early morning TV
23 shows about fishing and method and technique and the latest
24 technology.

25 And some of us are even dumb enough to buy these

1 magazines that have the moon charts in them, this is when
2 they are going to be biting, and this is where you ought to
3 go, and there is a cold front coming, and this is the color
4 of the day, the water color and the temperature, and all
5 that other stuff.

6 We need to learn to think like a fish, but I am
7 going to come back to that.

8 God's word is the map for fishing, but we sometimes
9 don't want to use that as the lure.

10 We need to be aware of seasonal patterns for
11 feeding.

12 If you are a fisherman you want to know when and
13 where they are going to spawn, and if they have done that
14 yet.

15 You want to consider the water temperature, the
16 location, the location, the location.

17 Here is what I came to this week. I think the fish
18 locator is you, because God has wired you with that kind of
19 a knowledge of all that stuff.

20 You know the seasonal patterns for fish and
21 unfortunately what has happened is churches, and this is one
22 of them, we've caught you maybe in a certain way but by now
23 we've pretty much taken away your fishness in a lot of ways
24 and you've been in the boat for such a long period of time
25 you maybe forget what it was like before you got caught.

1 And we need to rediscover some of that and we need
2 to learn to think like a fish.

3 You swim in different schools of fish. The people
4 you work with.

5 The people that live in your neighborhood. That
6 people that go to your school.

7 The people that you play basketball with, you know
8 their feeding patterns and you know they're spawning and you
9 know the location, you know how warm the water is right now
10 for those people.

11 So I want to give you maybe a tip or two about
12 that, because there are some misnomers out there about
13 fishing and evangelism.

14 And if you really want to get my blood pressure up
15 you use the old expression from the baseball movie "Field of
16 Dreams" and you say, "If you build it, they will come."

17 Nothing makes me more angry when pastors come to
18 me, or lay people come to me and say, "It's no wonder your
19 church is growing. Look where you are."

20 Look where you are. That really makes me angry,
21 because I think it's really defeating of God's spirit.

22 And I'm not saying I'm not glad where we are. In a
23 half hour I could take you to fifty churches that aren't
24 growing within a five mile radius of where we are.

25 So don't buy that if you build it they will come

1 thing.

2 That's what we are trained to think, and I've
3 talked about the old sit and wait for them to bite method of
4 fishing, and this is not the day for that. That's gone.

5 If you build it they will come, that's nonsense.
6 Nothing could be further from the truth and nothing could be
7 less scriptural than that.

8 Just build this big church right out on the fifty
9 yard line of life and everybody will just come here. That's
10 nonsense.

11 I'll tell you another thing that is nonsense is if
12 you invite them they will come.

13 If you invite them they will avoid, and what I mean
14 by that is when you are sitting in your lunch room at work
15 or whatever and you are just kind of sitting there and you
16 have somebody that is having their lunch and you go, "How's
17 it going?"

18 Here's your evangelism method of, "Hey, how's it
19 going?"

20 "Well, I'm doing all right," or, "Not too great,
21 the wife and I are struggling a little bit."

22 "I got this really cool church at 204th and Maple
23 Street. Their worship services are at 9:00 and 10:30. I'll
24 see you there some time."

25 That's the rare exception of a Lutheran actually

1 telling that, but it isn't going to work. If you invite
2 them they will avoid.

3 The other method for that might be something like,
4 "Hey, how is it going?"

5 "Not so good."

6 Or, "Actually it's going really good. My wife just
7 had a baby."

8 "Isn't that cool. Wow, way to go,
9 congratulations."

10 "Yes, we're pretty excited. You know, we are kind
11 of new in the area."

12 "Really? Hey, I don't want to be imposing or
13 anything, but there's a church I go to. I really like it."

14 "Really."

15 "Yeah. It's pretty cool. In fact, the worship
16 services are at 9:00 and 10:30. What time can I pick you up
17 this Sunday morning? They meet at 9:00 and if I leave my
18 house about 8:45, I can leave a little early, I would be
19 more than glad to pick you and your wife and baby up,
20 because kids are welcome there, too. I'll pick you up.
21 I'll tell you what, I'll buy you breakfast afterwards."

22 See, it's different. The statistical evidence was,
23 it used to be I think that Lutherans invited somebody to
24 church once every twenty-three years. Now I think it's down
25 to sixteen.

1 See, part of the problem is we have not effectively
2 equipped you and taught you how to do it.

3 But don't just say, don't be one of those
4 irritating guys, my cable system, I'm on Cox cable and for
5 some reason we don't get the religious channel anymore,
6 which is both a blessing and a curse.

7 I used to like it because there was some good
8 inspirational stuff on it.

9 And I liked it for another sick reason; that there
10 was really some bad stuff on there.

11 And on that they had all these evangelists that
12 would get in people's face and they would do all this
13 inappropriate stuff.

14 Evangelists do not have purple hair and a problem
15 with rage issues, but on that channel they kind of do.

16 You're an evangelist, you're a fisher of people, if
17 you bring them they will come.

18 And Herbert Hoover was a president who loved to
19 fish, he said, "Be patient and calm, for no one can catch
20 fish in anger."

21 I wish the evangelists would learn that on that
22 cable channel.

23 If they think that's going to do it, the days of
24 hellfire and brimstone are no more, and I don't know if they
25 ever were.

1 It was just browbeating people into some sort of a
2 submission that I don't believe lasted most of the time
3 anyway.

4 And if it did, they just became the same thing that
5 they had done to them.

6 Then they became rage-a-holics, I've got to go out
7 and be in the airports and be irritating to people and
8 bother them and hassle them when they are sitting next to me
9 on the plane and all that. There is an anger beneath that
10 instead of a grace.

11 Fishers of people don't do it out of anger; they do
12 it out of, "Hey, what time can I pick you up? I will be
13 glad to pick you up."

14 "Well, I really can't leave the baby this week."

15 "My kid is a teenager. We would be glad to
16 baby-sit for you. I tell you what, maybe now is not the
17 time. I'll get back to you on that."

18 See, that's fishermen, too. They know the
19 temperature of the water.

20 That's a very important aspect of fishing. You
21 want to make sure the water is right, and sometimes it just
22 isn't right.

23 But it's not that, "Well, I don't ever need to
24 check because I've done my thing in my last sixteen years
25 and so I am going to wait fourteen and a half more years to

1 do it."

2 That's not what I'm saying. Now might not be the
3 time, but next week might be, or something similar to this.

4 I want to talk about the way some people like to
5 fish and some don't.

6 I don't like to get in people's faces about
7 evangelistic stuff. It's just not who God wired me to be.

8 I don't feel a sense of call to be on the street
9 corners putting pamphlets in people's hands and getting in
10 people's faces.

11 Some people need to do that. I understand that. I
12 honor that.

13 But I have two pictures of two different nieces of
14 mine. I have two nieces.

15 This is Britta. This was taken a few years ago.
16 Britta is one of my nieces. I have only two.

17 My brother doesn't have any kids and neither does
18 my sister, but my wife Wenda has three sisters, and April,
19 this is her youngest, this is Britta.

20 And five years ago Britta's daddy died and that was
21 really traumatic.

22 That was when Pastor Wenda and I were invited to
23 stay as pastors here at Bethany and we just celebrated here
24 Friday night in fact a wedding that took place the weekend
25 of Bruce's funeral. That was Britta's dad.

1 And during that time I had the privilege of taking
2 these two nieces fishing and they had never been fishing
3 before.

4 It was Britta and her sister Kirsten. This is
5 Kirsten, and go back to that previous one, this is Britta,
6 she loved it.

7 She was all over it. She was like, oh, that's
8 cool. She held the fish. She petted the little bluegill,
9 "This is great, Uncle Mark. This is fantastic."

10 Look at the smile on her face and you can see the
11 smile on mine.

12 I was so glad we caught something, because they had
13 been running dry.

14 They had been watching their dad die and that was
15 brutal for all of us.

16 But then the next one is my niece Kirsten. She's a
17 couple years older and she could not get far enough into the
18 corner of that paddle boat.

19 She's like, "Okay, we caught a fish. Can I go home
20 now? Get that thing out of my face."

21 And I was like, "Here, don't you want to touch it?"

22 "No. Get that thing away from me."

23 I mean, she was ready to go over board. Some of us
24 like it and some of us don't.

25 But, again, maybe it's not time. That's okay. We

1 have to be sensitive to the timing.

2 It's not an excuse to say I don't do fish. Yes,
3 you do.

4 You have been caught and released and you are
5 called to fish.

6 So it's not an excuse to say I don't that, I will
7 do other stuff, it's part of who we are, but it isn't done
8 by getting in people's faces.

9 I want to share kind of a haunting story in the
10 Bible.

11 Matthew 13, this is one that can kind of keep you
12 awake at night.

13 Matthew 13, verses 47 to 50. Jesus is speaking
14 here, and you might not want to look at this one if you want
15 to go and just sit in the boat, but check this out.

16 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that
17 was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind. When
18 it was full they drew it ashore, sat down and put the good
19 into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the
20 end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the
21 evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of
22 fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

23 That's brutal, and that good and bad thing really
24 haunts us, and sometimes as Lutherans it really haunts us,
25 because, "Well, we don't believe in good and bad, we are all

1 good. We are saint and sinner at the same time."

2 I wonder if Jesus is not saying something in that
3 particular parable about the fact that it's time; that we
4 need to kind of work on the walk a little bit, because some
5 of us have been in the boat of self-righteousness for a
6 really long time, and we have kind of numbed ourself to the
7 whole reality that there is a world out there that is
8 thirsty and hungry and needs to get saved and safe.

9 I wonder in that thing if it's not something about
10 when they are separating out the good and the bad, maybe the
11 bad are the ones who were saying it wasn't my job.

12 And I'm not trying to be a heretic on that, but
13 that's an eye-opener for me, because churches have not done
14 a good job of teaching all of us that we are called fish.

15 That's all I want to throw on that one, and we are
16 the net, and in that one story in John the net still has
17 room for more.

18 God is involved in this amazing catch and release
19 program.

20 He brings us in and he loves us so much he sends us
21 back out.

22 And here is another thing. Cleaning them is his
23 job.

24 That's another thing that bothers me about those
25 guys with purple hair and they get in people's faces, they

1 are always talking about people getting cleaned up.

2 It's not our job. That's God's job. So you don't
3 worry about cleaning them. You just help catch them a
4 little bit.

5 I'm going to wind it down at the end here. When
6 you go fishing you get your hands dirty and maybe it's time
7 for some of us to think about that, because we are pretty
8 sterile.

9 I'm always haunted by our tradition of coming to
10 church with your best clothes on. This doesn't look like
11 fishing clothes.

12 But God has sent you into different schools where
13 you swim and live and have your being and you need to know
14 that you're going to slip once in a while, you're going to
15 fail.

16 I will close with a brief story before my song. I
17 brought two poles today.

18 I brought Wenda's pole and I brought my own. This
19 is Wenda's fishing rod.

20 I'm so proud of her. Two years ago she decided
21 that you love it so much, I'm going to try it, too.

22 So I got her a fishing rod and we went up to
23 Minnesota and she got pretty good, she really got pretty
24 good, but she has a funny way of doing it because she likes
25 the colorful spinner baits, whether they are working or not,

1 she likes the orange one, and she can throw that darn thing
2 all day and I'm like, "You might want to change to
3 chartreuse."

4 "No, I kind of like the orange one," she'll say.

5 She will bring a book along and she will have a few
6 casts and then she will wait.

7 We were up in Minnesota and we had been out for
8 hours, we had been out for days, and we had not caught
9 anything.

10 And finally she says, "I'm getting a little sick of
11 the hamburger that we're eating back at the cabin. Can you
12 catch a fish today?"

13 I'm like, "Okay. We're going to have to go with a
14 little more intensity then."

15 So we went out and sure enough I got a couple of
16 Northern that day, we found where they were finally, we
17 didn't pay for a guide and all that, and we were over in the
18 weeds and sure enough I threw it out, I got one, "Get the
19 net."

20 She gets the net out, and they provide a net for
21 you, a big long hairy thing, not very deep, it's about that
22 deep, it has a plastic net thing in it, she's just ready and
23 she's taking swipes with that.

24 I said, "Relax. When I get the fish right up to
25 the boat put it in there and then bring it up."

1 "Okay."

2 She gets it, she brings it up and threw it right
3 over the boat, threw the fish right over the back of boat
4 and the lure fell out of his mouth and off he swam.

5 (Laughter)

6 She's crestfallen. "What did I do wrong?"

7 I said, "We'll learn from our mistakes. Here we
8 go."

9 I got another one about twenty minutes later,
10 brought him up.

11 I said, "Just hold that thing down in the water, I
12 will bring him to you."

13 And she has that thing and she's moving it and I am
14 trying to move the fish and when a Northern Pike sees the
15 net it just dives.

16 He went down and broke the line off and so we are
17 zero for two and she is getting really upset.

18 Finally I get another one on, I say, "Slow down,
19 you cannot catch fish in anger," that's what Herbert Hoover
20 said.

21 I got it up, she's gets the net, she is choking up
22 on it a little bit because it had a really long handle on
23 it, she gets the fish, she just threw it right in the boat
24 and knocked the tackle box all over the bottom of the boat,
25 but it was wonderful because we finally got a fish.

1 What we learned from that lesson was the timing was
2 right. Third time is a charm.

3 God continues to call us, but not out of anger; out
4 of patience. Follow me and I'll make you fish for people.

5 Zebedee is no failure. It just wasn't his time.
6 You're not a failure.

7 You are going to miss a few, but God is continue to
8 cast in your direction.

9 I close with a John Mellencamp song that Brad has
10 ready. I like this song.

11

12 "Your father's days are lost to you
13 This is your time here to do what
14 You will do
15 Your life is now - your life is now
16 In this undiscovered moment
17 Lift your head up above the crowd
18 We could shake this world
19 If you would only show us how
20 Your life is now"

21

22 I don't know, but I have a suspicion and maybe now
23 is the time God is calling you.

24 I know he's calling me. Again and again and again
25 he casts in my direction.

1 And he says if you believe in me you'll follow me
2 and hang around a while and I'll teach you how to fish for
3 people.

4 I hope you hear that call that is continually cast
5 in your direction as you go from this place today to make a
6 difference.

7 There is a lot of hungry and thirsty fish out
8 there.

9 Would you join me in moment of prayer, please,
10 before we go.

11 Gracious God, your life is now, and it's an
12 abundant life that is there for the catching.

13 Thank you for catching us in your net and sending
14 us from this place today to make a difference in the world.

15 Teach us how to fish in effective ways, Lord,
16 because we've got neighbors, we've got siblings, we've got
17 kids, we've got parents in our own family that just don't
18 know, so it's our opportunity, Lord, to bait the hook and to
19 remind them and us of your grace.

20 Thank you for this time together. Send us from
21 this place to invite somebody into the stream of your grace
22 and forgiveness, which is ours in Christ. Amen.

23

24

25