When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

I. A Distinction: (Two Kinds of Fishing)

This distinction serves as both my first point and my message introduction. While no type is perfect, the Lord indeed typified reaching folks with “fishing”. He told a bunch of fishermen that had just began to follow Him “Follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17)

These men were excellent fishermen. They were expert at fishing for fish, yet they would have a lot to learn in order to be successful fishers of men. The point isn’t that we need fishing lessons, the point is that we need following lessons! It seems that it is easy to lose track of the significance of being a follower of Christ in our pursuit of catching men! We have gotten it all backwards. We are focused on the fishing. We have become masters of technique and have left of following the Master!

A. “Catch and Release” ~ Fishing for sport

Object: Catch the biggest, best fish The main object of sport fishing is ultimately pleasure. The pleasure of catching, recording, boasting…

Motive: Pleasure

Method: The sport fisherman (catch and release) isn’t so much concerned with the quantity of fish he is catching than he is the quality. His desire for the largest fish will lead him to be particular in where and what he fishes for. He is very discriminating as far as fishing holes are concerned!

More of the Sport-fisherman’s time is spend on the “catching”. He is not interested in dirtying his hands trying to clean the fish. He is fishing for pleasure and pride (recreation)

At the end of the day, this fisherman focuses on the “fishing”. 
B. “Catching and Cleaning” ~ Fishing for Survival

Motive: Living/eating/surviving

Method: The fisherman that fishes for his sustenance isn’t so much concerned for pleasure and “bragging rights”. Don’t get me wrong, he would be very pleased to haul in a huge fish. But even if he did, it would still end up feeding his family and not adorning his office wall! He is fishing for survival (rescue). Catching and cleaning is a much more difficult task. To fail could threaten survival. To succeed promises dirty hands and more work ahead.

At the end of the day, this fisherman is focused on the fish!

II. An Illustration: (Jesus’ kind of fishing!)

John 4:4-14 And he must needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. ~ The entire account is from verse 3 through verse 42~

The Lord Jesus … “must needs go through Samaria” (vs.4)

What the Lord Jesus did in Samaria wasn’t received immediately by His own disciples. They would have critical thoughts and feelings within themselves that they dare not speak out loud, but they struggled with them nonetheless.

Mt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

What we need to understand is that obedience to the Great Commission is not only what God expects of us but it is also the very way in which He will build up His church! In order for the Church to truly survive and thrive we must learn to FISH. In order to learn to fish we must FOLLOW!!!!

III. An Application: (The right view of fishing comes from following Jesus!)

We see the Lord Jesus taking the disciples to a place they didn’t want to be. He reached out to a woman that they didn’t want to know! The Lord Jesus Catches and Cleans with the intention to KEEP!!!

A. Prejudices to be overcome:

On the part of the woman:
John 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

On the part of the disciples:

John 4:27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

B. Practices to be observed from the master fisher of men!:

The Lord told her of HEAVEN (Everlasting life) ~ vs. 10;13-15

John 4:15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

*How many “soul-winners” would have at this point had this lady bow her head and pray a rehearsed prayer??* This isn’t comfortable to us, but we must confront it!

The Lord dealt with HER SINFULNESS ~ vs. 16-18

The Lord dealt with HER FALSE-RELIGION ~ vs. 19-23

The Lord brought her to HIMSELF ~ vs. 24-26

C. Purpose of Christ to be adopted!

The Lord led as an example to His disciples. What He did here was not something too high for His disciples to follow suit! He was able to endure and overcome prejudices through a few purposes revealed to His disciples...

1. The Will of the Father ~ Commitment to His Father!

John 4:32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

1Ti 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2Pe 3:9-10 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2. The Whiteness of the Harvest ~ Care for the Harvest!

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

2Co 6:1-2 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)
I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

Compassion (translated: compassion, mercy)

a. The Compassion that MOVED the Master

Strong’s Greek Dictionary

splagcnizomai splagchnizomai splangkh-nid’-zom-ahee

middle voice from 4698; to have the bowels yearn, i.e. (figuratively) feel sympathy, to pity:–have (be moved with) compassion.

~ This is something that comes from WITHIN the bowels of my Saviour! This word applies exclusively to the Lord in person or parable in our N.T.~

Matthew 9:36 (the multitudes), Matthew 14:14 (multitude) , Matthew 15:32(multitudes), Matthew 20:34 (blind men) – What Moved Jesus was compassion…

b. The Compassion that should MOLD and MODIVATE His servants!

Strong’s Greek Dictionary

eleew el-eeo el-eh-eh’-o from 1656; to compassionate (by word or deed, specially, by divine grace):–have compassion (pity on), have (obtain, receive, shew) mercy (on). See: Matt 18:33

Matthew 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

The Lord doesn’t expect me to have the compassion that He has, he knows that I am incapable. He expects me to allow the compassion that He has towards ME to be the motivating and moulding factor in my dealing with others!

3. The Wages to be Reaped! ~Consciousness of Reward!

John 4:36-38 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another
reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. 

Heb 12:2-3 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

The Lord Jesus followed in obedience the will of the Father “even unto the death of the cross” all the while having the reward in view... “...the joy that was set before him...”