

Fisher Who Mumbled (Missions) (Sharing The Gospel)

19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings. I Corinthians 9:19-23

The Basic Bible Truth

Because of the great gift we have been given—Salvation—we have an obligation to share that good news with others in this world. Paul continually talked of the great lengths he would go to win others to Christ. It is not always easy to share the Gospel. Sometime it requires a concerted effort on our part to make the message attractive and palatable to those we come in contact with.

The Object And Lesson

This is actually a joke I heard the famous Paul Harvey tell on his radio news program. The masterful showman that he was, it took him three days to get to the punch line. I take this story/joke and have volunteers act out the parts as a movie. The director calls out the commands, cue cards hold the dialog needed, and props fill in the rest. I have done this with intro music over opening credits flashed on cue cards, the more the better, and if it all goes a bit rough, that is part of the fun of this little skit. Here is the story/joke.

Two fishermen came down to the water early that first morning. It was bitterly cold, with the wind blowing stiffly from the north. They were all dressed up in their warmest clothing, prepared to sit quietly and fish in the cold, swift flowing waters. They weren't the first to arrive that morning, though. A old fisherman was just down the bank from them, with a pole already in the water. In fact, he had a couple of fish on his stringer.

The two sat quietly, shivering in the cold, and patiently waiting for the fish to bite their bait. But nothing, not even a nibble. Occasionally they looked over at their competitor and would see him reel in another nice fish. And then another. Meanwhile, they caught nothing at all. Finally, in desperation, they yelled at him, "Hey, what's your secret? How are you catching all those fish and we aren't even getting a nibble?" In reply, the fisherman mumbled something unintelligible and turned and continued to fish, again catching them one right after another. The two looked at each other bewildered, shrugged their shoulders, as they could not understand the mumbling, and continued to fish. At the end of the long, shivering cold day, they loaded up their things and not even one fish, and watched in envy as the old man carried an amazing stringer of fish to his pick up. But tomorrow, they would try again.

The next day, it again was bitterly cold, and wouldn't you know it, the same fisherman was already in his spot, fishing. The two set up their gear and began fishing, with the same results as the day before—not even a nibble. But the old man seemed to have no end to his luck, reeling in fish after fish. And as it had happened yesterday, they hollered over to the other fisherman, "Hey, how in the world are you able to catch fish and we can't?" The fisherman turned to them and again mumbled something and gestured

with his hands, but they could not understand what he was trying to tell them, so they dejectedly gave up for the day, determined that tomorrow would be different.

But it wasn't. Now for the third day, they were facing the humiliation of not being able to catch even one fish, while the mumbler over there caught his limit every day. In complete exasperation, they yelled at the successful fisherman, "How are you catching all of those fish?" And again, the old man, holding his full stringer of fish, mumbled to the other two. "Aw, come on," they insisted, "We haven't understood a word you have said. Tell us, what is your secret?" And again he mumbled and gestured, but the two failed to understand even one word. Finally, the old man set his stringer of fish on the ground, leaned forward and took something from his mouth and held it in his hand. Then he said, "The secret, gentlemen, is to keep the worms warm."

(When the moans, groans, and laughter have died down, you can easily segue into Paul's message to church at Corinth. Are we willing as Christians to do everything in our ability to make the Gospel message attractive and interesting to the world we meet each day? When Jesus called His disciples, He told them that He would make them fishers of men. How warm is your bait?)

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