

Fishing 101: Conversion

Fishing 101 Schedule:

Week 1 (4/25) - The Gospel

Week 2 (5/1) - Evangelism

Week 3 (5/8) - Conversion

Trapped in our Sins

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendents and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." John 8:31-34

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Romans 8:5-8

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of the sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest we were by nature objects of wrath.

Ephesians 2:1-3

Two key doctrinal concepts

Total Inability

“When we speak of man’s corruption as *total inability*, we mean two things: 1) that the unrenewed sinner cannot do any act, whoever insignificant, which *fundamentally* meets with God’s approval and answers to the demands of God’s law; and 2) that he cannot change his fundamental preference for sin and self to love for God, nor even make an approach to such a change.”

Berkhoff, *Systematic Theology*, 247

Regeneration

“Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us.”

Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 699

Regeneration: a new creation within our hearts

In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

John 3:3

“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” . . . He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the father has enabled him.” John 6:44,65

One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.

Acts 16:14

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by works,

so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8-10

The means of conversion: Word and Spirit

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:17

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

James 1:18

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23