

PURPLE FISH

Sermon Notes

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These sermon notes are to be used in conjunction with *Purple Fish: A Heart for Sharing Jesus* by Mark O. Wilson (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2014).

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CONTENTS

About These Notes	4
Week 1. The World's Greatest Treasure	5
Week 2. Lost Treasures	7
Week 3. Better Than Great News	8
Week 4. Open, Ready, and Willing	10



ABOUT THESE NOTES

Purple Fish forms the basis of this four-week sermon series encouraging Christians to share their faith with others. Used along with the book, *Purple Fish: A Heart for Sharing Jesus*, your people will be inspired and equipped to reach out to lost people with Christ's love.



THE WORLD'S GREATEST TREASURE

1 Chronicles 16:27–31

INTRODUCTION

Ancient merchants of Tyre searched for a rare shellfish, valued for its rich purple dye. The Greek word *kalchaino* means “in search of the purple fish.” Purple fish equals greatest treasure. Jesus is the ultimate Purple Fish: the world’s greatest treasure! We are called to treasure the Treasure. First Chronicles 16 is a psalm of David when the ark of the covenant came home. The ark represented the presence, power, and glory of God returned to God’s people! All rejoice and David writes a song—a song to treasure the Treasure!

SERMON OUTLINE

I. We Treasure the Treasure through Worship

Worship comes from old English *worth-ship*, meaning what is most precious to us (what we treasure) and also where we obtain our worth (our identity).

Mark Batterson said, “Singing is something you do with your voice. Worship is something you do with your heart.”¹

Worship is experiencing and responding to God’s holy love.

II. We Treasure the Treasure through Holiness

Holiness is living in the overflow of holy love. It is loving God back with your whole life.

While visiting The Billy Graham Museum of Evangelism in Wheaton, Illinois, I noticed a letter from overseas on display addressed to: “God’s Man, Minnesota, USA.” It was delivered to Billy Graham. I can think of no higher compliment than to be identified that way. Where would that letter go if it was addressed to your town?

III. We Treasure the Treasure through Mission

Since Jesus is the greatest Treasure, what does he treasure? What is most precious to his heart? People! Lost, broken, hurting people!

Jesus went after Zacchaeus, the vertically challenged tax collector and said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

If our lost neighbors matter to Jesus, shouldn’t they matter to us? How many lost treasures are within a mile of our church? How can we love them to Jesus?

Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision, wrote in his Bible: “Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God.”² Can you say the same?

NOTES

1. Mark Batterson’s Facebook page, accessed April 28, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/markbatterson/posts/10151664401958140>.

2. Rick Ezell, “Sermon: Let Your Heart Be Broken—Jeremiah 8, 9,” LifeWay.com. July 12, 2012, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/sermon-let-your-heart-be-broken-jeremiah-8-9>.



LOST TREASURES

Luke 15

INTRODUCTION

Lost people are not lost causes; they are lost treasures! Lost cause means you write them off. Lost treasure means you seek them out. Have you ever lost something important? Wallet? Keys? What did you do? Probably an all-out search and didn't quit until you found the lost item.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Parables of Lost Things

- A lost sheep.

- A lost coin.

- A lost son.

II. Continuing Theme

- Something of great value was lost.

- The lost treasure warranted an all-out search.

- There was great rejoicing when the lost was found.

*This outline has been adapted from a message by Bill Hybels from his *Becoming a Contagious Christian* video series.



BETTER THAN GREAT NEWS

John 4:1–26, 39–48

INTRODUCTION

What does the word *gospel* mean? “Good news.” But ramp it up a few notches. In Bible times, *Euangelion* (gospel) used to announce major events, that is, great military conquest or royal birth. *Gospel* equals better than great news! So why doesn’t sharing the gospel seem like great news? Becky Pippert said, “Christians and non-Christians have something in common: we’re both uptight about evangelism.”¹ Maybe we’re thinking about it in the wrong way. Jesus is the better than great news!

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Gospel—What It Is and Is Not

The gospel is not a belief system, theory, or idea. It is a person with nail holes in his hands. Jesus is the greatest treasure the world has ever seen!

We treasure him best when we treasure lost, broken, hurting people. He is on a redemption mission and calls us to join him.

Jesus meets us right where we are with the better-than-great news.

II. Woman at the Well

Jesus needed to go through Samaria to find a lost treasure. He found her at the well (see John 4:1–26).

She went to the well with a thirsty soul, looking for validation and affirmation. She wondered, “Am I worth anything?”

She came with buckets filled with regrets and shame. She had a string of men and broken relationship weighing on her soul.

III. Jesus Meets Us Where We Are

We need not travel far to find Jesus. He covers the distance and stands at our door and knocks.

We are never far from God because he followed us all the way. We cannot escape him! Poet Francis Thompson described his flight from “The Hound of Heaven” this way:

I fled him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled him, down the arches of the years;
I fled him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears.²

Jesus met the woman at the well and gave her living water. He met her at her point of need and quenched her deepest thirst.

IV. Jesus Connects Personally

Jesus took this long journey just for this conversation with one woman. She was special to him. It was a personal encounter.

Salvation is always personal. Personal sin requires personal salvation and all have sinned. Salvation is the most personal experience we can have.

Jesus asked this woman personal questions and revealed personal solutions for her life. And Jesus personally seeks us to save us too.

V. Jesus Mends Us to Send Us

The woman at the well didn’t keep it to herself. She had to share it. Christ’s love is for sharing.

Has Jesus saved you personally? Do you have friends and loved ones who need what only Jesus offers? What are you going to do about that? Atheist comedian, Penn Jillette received a small Bible from a fan after a show. Reflecting on this experience, Jillette expressed appreciation and said, “How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”³

Jesus meets us personally right where we are. Then he mends us to send us, so we can meet others personally right where they are.

Where is Jesus sending you? Where is the dark place? Where will we find the lost, hurting, and broken? The chances of catching fish increase exponentially when we actually go fishing.

NOTES

1. Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker & Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 15.

2. Francis Thompson, “The Hound of Heaven,” *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, eds. D. Nicholson and A. Lee (Oxford: Clarendon, 1917).

3. “Penn Jillette Gets a Gift of a Bible,” YouTube video, posted August 4, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhG-tkQ_Q2w.



OPEN, READY, AND WILLING

Acts 8–10

INTRODUCTION

Are you ready to make the necessary changes to welcome lost people? Are you open to following the nudge in order to find someone who needs a blessing? Are you willing to pay the price and obey Jesus, whatever the cost?

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Be Ready and God Will Send Them to You

In Acts 10, Peter needed to deal with his own junk (prejudice and legalism) before God sent a lost treasure (Cornelius) his direction. God treasures lost people, and he won't send them to us if he thinks we're going to mess them up.

What issues do we need to deal with in our own hearts that make us ineffective in reaching lost people?

- Apathy
- Lukewarmness
- Fear
- Legalism and Moralism (“earning God’s love” vs “responding to God’s love”)
- Small vision
- Small heartedness

We must repent of these things.

What do we need to do to more effectively welcome our neighbors? Why would they join what we have to offer?

II. Be Open and God Will Guide You to Them

Jesus said to go. That wasn't an option or multiple choice. What part of go don't we understand? Where and how shall we go? Ask the Lord and let him guide you. In Acts 8, Philip followed the divine nudge down a desert road and found a spiritual seeker from Ethiopia.

Try this: Before you go somewhere, pray, “Lord, guide me to someone who needs you and help me to be a blessing and encouragement.” Then go and follow the promptings. A trip to grocery market or hardware store will be a mission trip.

III. Be Willing and God Will Use You to Make a Difference

In Acts 9, this is what Ananias did. God sent him to persecutor Saul. And Ananias had courage to obey. What is God calling you to do? His calling never lets us stay in our comfort zone. We need to get out of the bubble in order to make a difference.

Let us be able to pray: “God, break our hearts for what breaks yours. Enlarge our hearts and vision. Help us to see it *your* way. Help us see the purple fish.”