**Who are we called to fish? (Luke 15:3-7 and Ruth)**

**Part 2: “Dones”**

**May 14, 2023**

We are called to go and make disciples. To fish for men and women in our neighborhoods, communities and in our lives, sharing the good news of Jesus and inviting them to come and follow, just as Jesus’ did.

Who are we supposed to fish? Those who do not know Jesus. Last week, we focused on a group called the “Nones,” those who believe in nothing in particular, those who embrace some form of spirituality, pulling from all types of spiritual practices, but do not believe in any certain thing.

Today we are going to focus in on the “Dones.”

“Dones” are people who have grown up in the church and have invested in the church. However, they have struggled with the structure, social message and politics of the institutionalized church and have decided to leave.

Josh Packard, a leading researcher and author of a book called Church Refugees, has been working specifically with this group has identified four common threads and or breakdowns that have led to “dones” leaving the church or their faith entirely.

1. They wanted Community…They got Judgment
2. They wanted Conversation…They got Doctrine
3. They wanted to affect the life of the Church…They got Bureaucracy
4. They wanted Meaningful Engagement with the World…They got Moral Prescription

While “Dones” are harder to define, we do know this group is on the rise and is estimated to include an additional 7 million Americans within the next few years.

(Space for Notes)

**Luke 15:3-7**

While we have to be careful to not assume that all “dones” are lost, as never knowing or living in a relationship with Jesus. The reality is that all “dones” have chosen to walk away, in one shape or form. Just like this parable, we should go out and intentionally seek to reach and find the “dones.”

How do we reach the “Dones?” (Story of Ruth, as a Case Study)

1. We recognize that this is our calling and we leave seek out the “Dones.” **(Ruth 1:16-17, 20-21)** Ruth intentionally reaches out to be a visible reminder of God’s presence in Naomi’s life.
2. Empathy is essential. **(Ruth 1:14)** Ruth enters into Naomi’s world, embracing the pain and sorrow that Naomi is experiencing. This often includes actively and sincerely apologizing on behalf of the church and/or its members.
3. Reflect the Image of Jesus **(James 2:26, Ruth 2:10-12)** Ruth reflects the image of God and people notice. This doesn’t mean acting self-righteous.
4. We Whole-heartedly Invest in Others. Ruth’s and Naomi’s relationship wasn’t reciprocal. Ruth gave and Naomi took. God used Ruth to be a tangible expression of his love, grace and mercy. Her role was significant in Naomi’s healing. However this does not mean we allow people to take advantage of us, we still need to have healthy boundaries.
5. Invite into Small Group Communities **(Ruth 4:14-17)** The women of the town began to speak into Naomi’s life, celebrating with her and naming how God had worked through her hurt and pain.
6. Remember the Holy Spirit is at Work. We take the pressure off ourselves to try to bring healing to a “done,” and just trust that in God’s timing and through his grace, He is using us as (as a means of His grace) to bring healing and restoration to this person’s life.