

## REFLECTIONS

*Thoughts on nature and the Christian faith - 8/26/19*  
***"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." - Mt. 4:19***



This is a belted kingfisher, a bird that feeds almost exclusively on fish. This particular one is a female. The females, unlike most birds, are more colorful than the males. Males do not have the distinctive rust-colored belt that the females have. I had been photographing this female for quite some time from my photography blind set up in the back waters of a local lake as she perched on a limb overlooking the water until she spied a small fish swimming near the surface. Immediately she swooped down into the water, brought the fish back to this limb, and then swallowed it whole. Then the preening began and continued until she was apparently satisfied with her looks. What efficient fishers these birds are! They seldom return to their nests in the banks of the streams and lakes they inhabit without food in their bellies. Christians also are called to be fishers, fishers of men. It is a pursuit we are not just called to do, but are equipped to do. And how, exactly, is that to be accomplished? Scripture is clear. The power resides not in a technique we use or in our ability to persuade, but in the message we are to proclaim. And that message is the gospel. Apparently that is a fact many have chosen to ignore. The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of sinners whose very nature it is to run from, not toward, God. Hearts are changed by a work of God alone so that when the gospel is presented, it is freely accepted. God prepares the soil, we spread the seed. We can use all sorts of other methods to bring bodies into our churches or cause people to walk down our aisles, but all we will have accomplished if that is all we do is to give people religious masks to hide who they really are. Any means of evangelism that ignores or adds to the gospel only results in distorting it. We are to fish using the gospel and the gospel only. It doesn't need supplementing or enhancing, it only needs proclaiming. Kingfishers succeed because they know that what God has given them needs no improvement. Oh, that we would learn this too. - John