

Trusting Our Bait

I spoke with a friend who is both a fisherman and a fisher of men. As bishop in Texas, he has been fishing and shepherding for several years. While we talked about evangelism and modern philosophies, he told me a story.

Every year in October, he drives out to Rollover Pass, 15 miles from Galveston, Texas, to fish for flounder. Every year he carries the best live mullet as bait. He has to use living bait, otherwise it just sinks to the floor and does nothing. When it is living, it swims around and attracts the flounder. Every year he fishes and never once has his line become hung or caught, at least not at this pass.

However, one year he hooked a shiny, living mullet and dropped it in the water. Every once in a while, he told me, he would lift the bait just to check and make sure it was still living. One time, when lifting his bait to check, it wouldn't come up. He pulled and struggled and pulled and struggled. He couldn't believe it. After all these years of hang free fishing, his line was caught on something. He was going to have to cut it loose. But he gave one final tug and up popped a flounder on the end of his line. With help, he landed it.

What did he learn from this experience? He told me he should have known it wasn't hung. That had never happened. Rather, he should have simply trusted his bait. It was living bait that in time would attract a hungry fish. Instead of fearing he had gotten bogged down, he should have just trusted his bait to do its job.

That is a lot like fishing for men, he told me. Too many people today don't trust the bait God has given us. They try other fake lures they have prettied up and think will attract people better. However, if they catch anything, they only catch those who are hungry for the wrong things.

Jesus said only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be blessed (**Matthew 5:6**). What will attract these? The bait God has given us—the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Instead of developing all kinds of draws and attractions, we need to trust our bait. The Word of God is living and active (**Hebrews 4:12**). It is doing the work God has sent it out to do (**Isaiah 55:11**). We simply need to cast it out into the waters and let it do its job.

Did my friend catch every flounder in the pass? No. He only caught one. The great majority of fish got away that day. But he was still excited. Let's not get sidetracked and discouraged by those who aren't hungry for the true bait that leads to eternal life. Instead, let's trust our bait to reach out to the hungering. Let's get the bait out there so we can catch the one and let's be excited for that one.

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