

IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE SHORE

Picture Jesus for a moment on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. As He is preaching to the crowd He notices two empty boats. One of those boats belongs to Peter. Peter is cleaning his nets, by the shore, discouraged for not having caught any fish.

Everywhere I go I meet Christians who are sitting on the shore, discouraged. Their boat is empty.

There are probably more of God's people on the shore than in the deep end.

The longer they stay on the shore the more discouraged they become. Their joy is drying up. Their passion for the lost has gone.

Jesus gets into Peter's boat and, after speaking to the crowd, turns to Peter and says, **'Now, go out where it is deeper and let down your nets, and you will catch many fish'**

You cannot spend all your time cleaning your nets. You cannot stay on the beach for ever. It's time to move out from the shore.

What's the name of your shore? Disappointment? Self pity? Depression? Comfort?

Jesus is already in the boat. He's calling you.

God needs you. The boat cannot leave without you.

5 meters from the shore is not enough. Nor is 50 meters. If you want to catch many fish you need to head for the deep end.

What deep end is God calling you to? Reaching out into prisons? Ministering to the sick and dying? Bringing God's love into schools?

Who's going to cast their nets among the 10, 807 000 Patahn people of Afghanistan where only 0.01% are known to be followers of Jesus?

Who's going to the deep end of Chad where 1, 258, 000 souls from the Shuwa people group are living in complete darkness? There's over 2 million White Moors of Morocco among which there are no known believers.

What about the 6, 627,000 Azerbaijanis?

Hudson Taylor once said: ***'I am unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christians rejoicing over their own salvation while millions are perishing-lost.'***

We cannot stay on the shore when we know the facts.

It's time to leave the crowd and launch into the deep end.

I got an email from a Dutch couple who have gone to WEC's Bible School in Holland. They are leaving the shore for the deep end. They write: *'This week in class we learned about children in crisis. We want to make a difference for them. It might just be one child at a time. That alone is already worth giving up our house and possessions'*.

In 1999, I left France for the deep end of Cambodia. With a bunch of dedicated friends we are casting our nets in the city of Phnom Penh where thousands of children are forced everyday to work on the streets for a living.

Over the years in Cambodia, there have been times when my boat was tossed by strong winds. At times some water does get into the boat. Jesus never said we would not have any storms or trials but he said he would be with us.

You won't drown. Jesus is in the boat.

'Let down your nets' says Jesus to Peter, **'and you will catch many fish'**.
All of us have a net –the talents and gifts the Lord has blessed us with.

Don't cast your net on the sand. You won't catch anything. Maybe a dead fish and a few shells.

Cast your net in the deep end. Use your talents where you'll find the fish.

In 1885, at the age of 19, John Keith Falconer went out as a missionary to the Arabians. He wrote: ***"I have but one candle of life to burn and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light."***

Our nets are not to be on display. A net hanging on a wall might remind you and your friends of good days spent at sea, but your net is of no good.

Your nets have probably been on display for a long time. Take them back to the sea. Don't let your God given abilities rust!

And as you go and serve God, there's a promise from Jesus himself, **'You will catch fish'**. In a refugee camp in Sudan, you will catch fish. On a rubbish dump in Bangkok, you will catch fish. In a crowded Afghan hospital or among thousands of foreign students in a European university, you will catch fish.

The Lord will provide other workers to help you pull the nets out. Others from the body of Christ will join in to gather the harvest! And other fishermen came over, **"And soon both boats were filled with fish"**.

When you decide to respond to the Call of going into all the world and preach the Gospel, you won't make everyone happy.

When you leave the crowd you might upset a few.

One day a man on holiday in the Bahamas noticed a big crowd gathered at the end of a pier. As he got closer he observed someone preparing for a solo journey around the world in a tiny boat. Everyone watching was telling him all the things that could go wrong. Suddenly the man felt a strong urge to offer some encouragement. So as the little boat drifted away into the sea he began jumping up and down on the pier, 'Go for it! You can make it! We're proud of you!'

As you launch into the deep end you will hear The Voice telling you, 'Go for it! You can make it! We're proud of you!'

What else can I say: Go for it!

-Timothée Paton with WEC International , in Cambodia