

Kingdom Baits aims to bring Jesus to saltwater anglers

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Greg Blank, Kingdom Baits founder and student at Stark Seminary and College, didn't grow up in church. He grew up fishing.

The son of a bass fisherman and deepwater oil rig worker, he's been "throwing lures" for a long time, he said, though his interests moved from bass to saltwater fishing once he tried it.

"I prefer not having to throw 10,000 times to catch five fish," he mused, but saltwater or fresh, he still loves fishing.

Fishing was his whole life, Blank explained, saying, "I worshipped fishing."

He fished professionally offshore. And he "went to school for aquaculture, the study of raising fish, everything fishing," until he met his wife.

Blank has been producing Kingdom Baits for about 15 months with the help of his family including his teenage son, Fisher, and his other children, but the business is still just getting started.

Between supply-preaching, working on his certificate of ministry at Stark and shift work at Seadrift Coke—a plant that produces petroleum needle coke—and his main job of husband and father, Blank said he's short on free time to devote to his Kingdom-focused startup.

But the calling he feels and his heart for young anglers propels him forward in the business that he sees as more ministry than money-maker.

He's able to make enough baits to stock about four shops in high-traffic areas along the coast near where he lives.

While he had visited churches here and there in his childhood, Blank said he'd never gone with any regularity until he met his wife Tara. She told him, after they met at a wedding, if they were going to date, she expected him to be in church with her on Sunday.

At the time, he was working on an oil rig offshore, but for three weeks at a time when he was onshore, he was in church with Tara. They didn't date for long before they decided to marry.

During pre-marital counseling, the pastor of the church, John Fisher, asked Blank if he knew the Lord.

He had begun to understand what he was hearing in church, but it wasn't until the pastor placed his hand on the back of his head and asked, "Son, do you know Jesus?" that Blank's desire to know God moved beyond intellectual.

He cried and he prayed to accept Jesus. Then he found out later, if he hadn't come to know Christ, the pastor did not plan on conducting the wedding.

Growing faith



Greg Blank with his Kingdom Baits

display in one of the shops where they are sold. (Courtesy Photo)

Blank said the first year of marriage wasn't easy. He was still working on a rig offshore. That environment is rough, he explained, and it is not an easy place for a new Christian's faith to grow.

Compounding the strain of an ungodly environment and lengthy stays away from his young family, in 2010, a sister drilling rig exploded.

The danger of his job began to weigh on the Blanks, and during one phone call from a community phone on the rig, Tara told him she couldn't live that way anymore. She said he needed to choose—the rig or his family.

Leaving the rig was not an easy decision, Blank explained. His dad, grandfather and brother all worked in the oilfield.

He was making good money. He was proud of his family's legacy and his ability to provide. He didn't know if he wanted to give it up.

But he had a decision to make, he noted. "It was either my pride and my family's legacy ... or it was my faith and my family."

In the mudroom of the rig "behind shale shaker No. 5," he dropped down to his knees and prayed for God's help.

God gave him his life verse, Blank said: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

"And I knew right then and there what that meant." It meant his whole life was going to change, he said.

"And I don't know what it looks like, but I knew that I was leaving that rig," he recalled.

Blank communicated to his coworkers his plans to make a change. He applied for a different job, but never heard back on it.

Then, he said he began to sense God convicting him to stop “conforming to the rig culture” and be bolder in sharing his faith.



Greg Blank supply preaching.
(Courtesy Photo)

At the close of a safety meeting for the crew, the meeting’s leader asked if anyone had anything to add. Blank spoke up. He said he knew they knew of his plans to leave the rig, but they probably didn’t know that he was a Christian.

He apologized to the room full of more than 80 “rowdy roughnecks and oilfield hands” that they didn’t know he was a Christian “because I haven’t been acting that way.”

Then he assured them the rest of the time he was there, anyone who wanted to know about Jesus could talk to him about it.

Instead of the laughter he expected, the room was “dead silent.” And he got a nod of approval from the shift leader, for his apology and his faith statement.

He finally heard back about the job shortly thereafter. Seadrift Coke wanted him to come in for an interview. Blank saw the call as evidence that when “you’re obedient to God, he’ll make a way for you.”

When Blank tried to explain to Seadrift he was on a rig in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico and that getting there for an interview on Wednesday or Thursday wouldn’t be easy, the caller was unmoved. He told Blank if he wanted an interview that’s when he needed to be there.

So, he asked the top guy on the rig if he could go ashore, the response was, “Greg, I can’t send you to shore for just a couple of days.”

He urged Blank to make good on his decision and urged, “If you’re leaving, leave.”

Acting on faith

Blank said he was raised not to quit a job unless you already had another one lined up, but he did it. And he had peace about the decision. It took a couple of months to secure the position, but it was a milestone in his faith.

He knew if he was obedient and trusted God with his whole heart, “even if it looks radical, or ridiculous, that he is faithful—all the time.”

Blank explained he sees Kingdom Baits as the same type of situation, where he is walking by faith every day, learning and trusting where God is leading.



A good day's catch. (Courtesy Photo)

He will pray for all the anglers at an upcoming saltwater fishing tournament, one of the biggest on the Texas coast. He hopes being at fishing events to share about Jesus is something he's able to do on a more regular basis.

Blank also is considering pursuing a chaplaincy degree at Stark when he finishes his certificate. He envisions Kingdom Baits allowing him the opportunity to develop a chaplaincy ministry to anglers, to help young men and women know how to live a life of meaning in Jesus.

The packaging of Kingdom Baits contains a barcode link where Blank hopes to host a series of short, daily devotionals for fishermen and women to discuss while they're out fishing.

Blank noted he has to be intentional about keeping fishing in its proper place. For him, it can easily become an addiction, he said.

But Blank trusts God will point him in a different direction if Kingdom Baits ever stops being the ministry God has for him. Until then, he will continue to make baits for God's glory.

To follow Kingdom Baits' growth visit <https://linktr.ee/kingdombaits>.