

We need a fisherman to comment on a text like this but one can imagine that part of the fascination and joy of fishing is that one doesn't quite know what one is going to catch or quite where the fish are. But this is part of the mystery engendered by our fallibility: God knows exactly where we all are, physically and spiritually, good or bad. This may seem to take the fun out of it especially as see God, then, as already weighing us in the scales and finding us wanting. There was a cartoon many years ago of a terrified man in bed cowering under the sheets with God at the window looking in and pointing his finger and saying, 'I'm going to get you, Kilroy': the image we all have, at times, of a vengeful God, reminiscent of Jeremiah's words:

*Watch, I shall send for many fishermen, the Lord declares, and these will fish them up: next I shall send for many huntsmen, and these will hunt them out of every mountain, every hill and out of the holes in the rocks. For my eyes watch all their ways, these are not hidden from me, and their guilt does not escape my gaze. (Jer. 16: 16-17)*

But God, in Christ, forgives our sins and commissions fishermen, not to condemn us, but to affirm God's love for us or, in the words of the poet Edwin Markham,

*He drew a circle that cut me out  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle and took him in!*

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