

# Lessons taken from the great draught of fishes

## (Quality: Very good)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 22 April 2007

Preacher: Warboys, Ralph (1927-2008)

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] In dependence upon the Lord, I ask your prayerful attention to the chapter that I read, John 21, and especially verses 10 and 11.
- John 21, verses 10 and 11.
- And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.
- In my thoughts, it came that this Lord's Day is two weeks after Easter.
- And clearly, the record of this event took place at about that time. As we read in the 14th verse, this is the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples.
- [ 1 : 3 0 ] In the previous chapter, he had shown himself to them when Thomas was not there. And then, after eight days, he had shown himself again when Thomas was there.
- So this event took place about two weeks after his resurrection. But before we come especially to the verses, I feel we should look a little at that which is in the setting.
- And that you may follow my thoughts. I say immediately that I believe these fish set forth the Lord's elect people, chosen to eternal life.
- And your concern and mine should be, am I amongst them? Do I know in a spiritual way the things that are set forth here?
- Do I know in a spiritual way the things that are set forth here?
- [ 3 : 1 0 ] I feel it is worthy of note. I feel it is worthy of note that after the things in the previous chapter, how the Lord had revealed himself to the disciples, had reproved Thomas for his doubts.
- Yet after these things, Peter said, I go a fishing. If we did not know a little of our own backsliding hearts, would we not be astonished?
- The Lord had specifically called Peter and the two sons of Zebedee from being fishermen. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men we read.
- And yet after these things, Peter said, I go a fishing. And the other six said, we also go with thee.
- None of them, it appeared, made it a matter of prayer. They did not seek the Lord's guidance. How often have you and I done the same?
- [ 4 : 3 1 ] Do you plead guilty or not guilty? I will do this. This is what I have in mind. This is where we will go. This is when we will go.
- And sadly, not until we get to our wits end do we seek the Lord's guidance in the air. I remember my son saying at a prayer meeting on one occasion, Lord, keep us from deciding what we're going to do and then afterwards asking thy blessing upon him.
- Is not that putting the cart before the horse? Remember you dear children and young people? As well as those of us that are old.

And so they went forth and that night they caught nothing. It wasn't surprising, was it? They caught nothing. And then in the morning the Lord stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Have ye any meat? Meat in Scripture for you dear children often means food. It does not necessarily mean flesh.

[ 5 : 54 ] Have ye any meat? They answered him, no. Cast the net on the right side of the ship. And ye shall find. They cast therefore and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

We return to that in a moment. And the disciple whom Jesus loved, John, of course, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

The Lord loves all his people equally. But sadly, they do not all love the Lord with the same fervent love.

And John evidently loved the Lord especially. And one feels that perhaps that is how he recognised the Lord before the others did.

[ 7 : 01 ] Because he had that great love. And Peter, ever the impetuous Peter, cast himself into the sea to go to Jesus.

And the other disciples came in this little ship. They were not far from land, dragging the net with fishes.

And when they drew near to the land, they saw this far of coals there, and fish laid there on, and bread, food already provided for them.

Well, coming to our subject, Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish, which ye have now caught.

Peter, at the Lord's command, was able to draw the net. The seven disciples in their own strength, could not, because of the multitude of fishes.

[ 8 : 27 ] Peter, Peter, in this context, sets forth one, whom the Lord uses, it may be a minister, may be a deacon, parent, grandparent, brother, sister.

One whom the Lord uses, to bring his people, to his dear feet. What a privilege, to be so used.

May you and I pray, that in our various ways, our various fears, whether in our family, children, grandchildren, neighbours, fellow workers, may the Lord use us.

We cannot do it in our own strength. But with God-given strength, this can be done, at his command.

And one feels we should notice, especially that it was Peter. Each of the four Gospels record Peter's sad fall.

[ 9 : 45 ] Now he boasted, though all men deny thee. John might, Thomas certainly will, but I'm not going to.

Though all men deny thee, yet will not I. And we read, in one, so said they all. But, a boasting Peter's sad.

But, as we read, he went out and wept bitterly. Repentant. Peter. And I like, how we read, in one of them, where, they, that were at the, sepulchre, the Widdia women, were told to go and tell his disciples, and Peter.

Peter. Peter. And so sadly and solemnly formed him. But he was restored, after his repentance.

And now the Lord, used him especially, to bring these fish to him. A net, is a discriminating thing.

- [ 11 : 06 ] Indeed, there are, of course, regulations for those, that fish in the sea, that, a small mess, should not be used, lest, the young fry, get caught, before they are fully grown.
- But I believe, this gospel net, that is what is set forth, catches great sinners. Great sinners. Not little ones. Are you, and am I, in our estimation, a great sinner? Oh, well, Joseph Hart puts it.
- To see sin smarts, but slightly. To own with lip compression, it is easier still. But oh, to feel.
- Oh, to feel. that's deep, beyond expression. Sinners can say, and none but they, how precious, is a sign.
- [ 12 : 16 ] We cannot dwell now, at length, upon conviction, of sin, but, I mention, as I probably, have done before, there are, two types, of conviction.
- There is, that natural, conviction, that Judas, Iscariot had. I have sinned, he said, in that I have shed innocent blood.
- King Saul said, several times, said, David, I have sinned. Balaam said, I have sinned. And they were all lost characters. And if someone here, is building their hope for eternity, only upon the knowledge, that you are a sinner, you are building on a sandy foundation.
- You must have that, but you must have more than that. And how often, and one experienced it, in our own regeneracy, convicted of sin, in some particular respect, we wouldn't use those words again.
- We wouldn't keep that company. But, as the poet puts it, the more I strove against sin's power, I sinned and stumbled.
- [ 13 : 40 ] But the more, till late, I heard my Saviour say, Come hitherso, I am the right.
- Those fish did not come out of the sea to the feet of Jesus in their own strength, did they? Had they not been caught in the gospel net, they would have stayed where they were.
- And does not this sea set forth nature's darkness? Nature's darkness. They had been born there.
- They had lived there. They were quite content to remain there. just as you and I were by nature. In the world.
- In nature's darkness. Until that irresistible power brought us out of that condition.
- [ 14 : 45 ] We read of the Lord's words in John chapter 6. No man can come unto me except, except, the Father which hath sent me, draw him.
- Draw him. When something is drawn, the power is in front. A man may push a wheelbarrow, the power is behind.
- But the horse draws the cart, the power is in front. And only that drawing power of God in the Trinity can bring us to Christ.
- If we have a love to the Lord, we shall pray for it. Did not the bride in the Song of Solomon say, draw me and we will run after thee?
- Run after thee. In the 31st chapter of Jerry Moore.
- [ 16 : 07 ] We have that word there. This was one of the last expressions of my dear mother when she died in 1972.
- I went into the bedroom and she took no notice of me. Appeared to be unconscious. That I felt led to read from Jeremiah 31.
- When I read those first, when I read the second and verse, she suddenly sat up in bed and said, God gave me that promise years ago before ever you were born.

And the third verse is, the Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

Here is election in eternity past. I've loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, because of that, with loving kindness, have I drawn thee.

[ 17 : 24 ] Peter went up and drew the net to land.

what would be the effect of these fish being drawn out of their natural element in which they had lived thus far to the land.

They would die. and you and I spiritually must know this experience to be dead to those things wherein we were born.

Paul in the epistle to the Romans, if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.

[ 18 : 59 ] And also in the epistle to the Colossians. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, the things of the world.

And then in the next chapter, set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Are you dead to the things of nature? Now, we all have to be in the world, we have to go to school, earn our occupations, the many things even in retirement we have to do.

And the Lord said, I pray not that thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil which is in the world.

[ 20 : 34 ] Ah, where are your affections? I think of that dear woman in Luke chapter 7. She came to Simon the Pharisee's house, no doubt she would be well aware of the sarcastic reception she would get from that self-righteous man, who said in his heart concerning Christ, this man if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is.

She is a sinner. She is a sinner. But she was drawn by love. Her love did not begin when he said, thy sins are forgiven thee.

She had a love to Christ before she received assurance her sins were forgiven. and that love drew her to the feet of Christ to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head.

Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes. Full. we read there was a hundred and fifty and three.

You dear children might like to do this at some time. It is a factorial number. We used to use these in calculations in telecommunications.

[ 22 : 25 ] A number if you add one to two to three to four to five and so on up to seventeen. you will come to one hundred and fifty and three.

And if you continue it to twenty two you will come to the number that was in the ship with Paul on the voice around. Why this should be I do not know but I do know this.

It was a definite number. It wasn't one hundred and fifty two because one fell out of the net. And it wasn't one hundred and fifty four because an extra one managed to creep in.

It was a definite number. And those that will be found at the right hand of Christ in glory are a definite number.

You read in the book of Revelation of the twelve thousand from each tribe. I think if memory is right the tribe of Dan is not mentioned but both the half tribes of Joseph are mentioned giving a hundred and forty four thousand and John said in his vision after this I saw a number which no man can number from every kindred tribe and town.

- [ 23 : 53 ] But the number is known to God and it is a definite number. And your concern and mine should be am I amongst that number?

Again referring to the poem he played numbered with them may I be. now and in eternity.

When we used to sing that hymn at Oakington in my unregeneracy I used to think I want to be numbered with them in eternity but I don't want to be numbered with them now.

I don't want to give up my worldly pleasures and my sinful companions. But I do want to be numbered with them in eternity to escape hell.

How about you? Do you say now and in eternity? We might say and again this figure would be true would that not net as it drew those fish out of the sea bring them closer together than they were in their natural darkness.

- [ 25 : 19 ] They would be gathered close together one to another. And is not that so spiritually with the Lord's dear people?

When that love unites them one to another, John uses it as a illustration, as a confirmation that we pass from death unto life.

We know that we pass from death unto life because we love the brethren with a spiritual love. We didn't love them before.

We despised them and thought them old-fashioned and out-of-date. but now loved one to another. The net was full of great fishes and hundred and fifty and three.

And for all there were so many, yet was not the net rung. none of the Lord's people can ever be lost.

- [ 26 : 37 ] They may on the main the high seas of temptation be tossed. Their sorrows may swell as the sea, but none of the ransom can ever be lost.

The righteous shall hold on his way. Peter went up and drew the net to land.

And again we might say this, they were in darkness in the sea, they now came brought to the night.

Brought to the night. John, the Lord spoke, I think it was to Nicodemus, of those that love darkness because their deeds are evil, but brought to the light.

They could now see Jesus, which they could not see when they were in their natural element. They could not see Jesus when the net first caught them and brought them out.

- [ 27 : 57 ] And then again we have election set forth here. There must have been thousands of fish in that sea, but the net caught that precise number where the Lord gave his disciples instructions to cast the name.

The rest were left to perish where they had been born and lived. They died. Calvinism can be set forth by an acronym of TULI.

We have it in this verse. T for total depravity, great fishes. U for unconditional election, they were chosen by God.

L for limited atonement, limited to this 115 threat. I die for invincible grace.

No doubt they struggled when that net first caught them, struggled to escape. Perhaps someone here is when they have been born again, the work of grace begun in your heart and you are struggling against it.

- [ 29 : 37 ] But that power will bring you to the feet of Christ and pay for the final perseverance. for all there were so many, yet was not the net hope.

Well, we leave these things with you. Do you and I know these things in our personal soul's experience?

Set forth here simply love to be truly for our teaching, for our instruction to make us diligent in seeking to make our calling and election sure.

If we are elected, it is already sure in God's eternal purposes. But if you and I are rightly concerned, we want it sure in our personal experience.

Well, may the Lord bless these things and pardon anything we've said amiss. Amen.