"The End Time Dimension Of The Parables"
Lesson #3 - Fishing For The Master, Part 1

Focus: "The **Bible** is the **fully inspired Word of God**. It is the **infallible revelation of His will**. It is the **authoritative revealer of doctrine**, and it is the **trustworthy record of God's acts in history**. **Prayerfully and humbly read and study the Bible more**. For in it we will **find hope** for every crisis. But more importantly, **we will find our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, who **died** to **redeem** us from our **sins**." ref. Psalm 119:142; Isaiah 8:20; Isaiah 41:21-29; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-49; John 3:16-17; John 5:39; John 8:58; John 17:17; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 1:1-8

READ: Matthew 13:47-51; Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-20; John 21:1-14; ***Christ's Object Lessons, p. 122-23, Ellen G. White***

Introduction: The Symbols of the Parable

1. What is **represented** by the **sea** in the **Parable of the Dragnet**? **The sea represents the inhabitants of the world** (Matthew 13:47-50). ref. Isaiah 17:12-13; Revelation 17:15

2. The **net represents the preaching of gospel**. **(COL, p. 122.1)** ref. Matt. 22:8-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; Rev. 14:6-7

3. The **act of casting the net symbolizes the "preaching of the gospel**." **(COL, p. 122.2)** see Ecclesiastes 12:9-10; Acts 2; Romans 10:14-17

4. The **fish** represent the **people who live in the world** (Matthew 4:19). see Eccl. 9:12; Jer. 16:15-17; Hab. 1:13-17; Zech. 8:20-23

5. The **good fish** in the **boat** represent the **just** and the **bad fish** in the **boat** represent **false brethren** in the **church**. **(COL, p. 122.2)** see Matthew 22:10-14; Matthew 13:24-30

Note 1: The **bad fish do not** represent unbelievers in general, but rather **persons who claimed to accept the gospel**. The **gospel net took them in and the fishermen brought them into the boat (the church) but the separation 'on the shore' will reveal that they were counterfeit believers**.[1] ref. Matthew 22:1-14; John 6:22-71; Matthew 7:16-20

[1] The End Time Dimension of the Parables, #3, p. 21, by Pastor Stephen Bohr, SecretsUnsealed.org

6. The boat represents the church. (COL, p. 122.2) ref. Genesis 6 & 7; Jer. 6:2; Prov, 31:10-14; Acts 9 & 10; Acts 27:1-44; Eph. 5:23-27

7. The fishermen are those who preach the gospel. This is made clear in Matthew 4:19 where Jesus tells his disciples: *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* ref. Habakkuk 1:12-17; Mark 1:17

8. **What is represented by the act of separating the good fish from the bad at the shore? "When the mission of the gospel is completed, the judgment will accomplish the work of separation." (COL, p. 122.2)** see Genesis 6 & 7; Ezekiel 9; Matthew 25; Revelation 14:6-20

Note 2: There is a difference between hauling the fish into the boat and separating the good fish from the bad once the boat has arrived at the shore. When the **fish are hauled in to the boat the door of mercy is still open**. **But when the fish are separated at the shore, fishing has ceased. Then, after the separation on the shore had concluded, the good fish are gathered into vessels and the bad fish are thrown away**. ref. Matthew 25:1-46; John 6:22-71; 1 Peter 4:17

9. The **Parable of the Wheat and Tares** has a **similar meaning** as the the **Parable of the Dragnet**: "The **wheat** and the **tares grow together until the harvest**. **The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation**. . . . **(COL, 123.1) When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed." (COL, p. 123.2)** "The **tares** and the **wheat are to grow together until the harvest**; and **the harvest is the end of the world." (COL, p. 75.1)** ref. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; Luke 16:26

Secrets of Successful Fishing

1. When **Jesus commanded Peter** to launch out into the deep, (Luke 5:4) **he complained** that he and his helpers had toiled all the night and had taken nothing.[2] (Luke 5:5)

Note 3: Hard work did not guarantee success in the task of fishing. **Peter and his colleagues** fished at the **right time** and in the **right place**. They were **experienced** fishermen. They **knew the right time** to fish. They **used the best techniques** and **had state of the art equipment**. And yet the **secret of success was not found in any or all of these**. **So it is in**

[2] ibid., 21-22

the work of soul winning. Arduous labor, state of the art evangelistic tools, knowledge of demographics and the latest methods do not guarantee success. ref. Psalm 127:1 John 15:5

2. When **Peter and his fellow laborers** went out that **night**, Jesus was not in the boat. But in the morning, Jesus "entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's." (Luke 5:3) see Psalm 30:4-6; John 10:16

Note 4: The fish were not attracted to the fishermen or to the beautiful boat or to the upbeat programming going on in the boat. They were attracted to the ONE who was in the boat. Jesus created the fish and they were simply responding to the call of their Creator!! Do you want to attract people to church? Coffee and donuts will not do it. An upbeat worship service will not cut it. A state of the art facility will not help. Programming to peoples' "wants" will fail. True church growth comes about because Jesus is in the church. Jesus said: *"**Without Me ye can do nothing**."* (John 15:5) ref. Psalm 127:1; Isaiah 1:10-31; Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7; Philippians 4:13

3. When Jesus told **Peter** to launch out into the deep and cast out his nets, **Peter was dumb founded** yet he said: *"nevertheless at **thy Word** I will let down the net."* (Luke 5:5)

Note 5: Peter was perplexed. Fishing in the daytime was unthinkable because the fish could see the nets in the clear water. Besides, Jesus was a carpenter while **Peter and his colleagues were experienced fishermen**! Yet in the most unlikely of circumstances, the presence of Jesus attracted the fish. It is not our role to attract the fish; it is our role to obey the Word and cast out the gospel net. **Even in the most prohibitive circumstances we are to obey the Word and cast out the net. And when we obey the Word, it accomplishes what it set out to do.** Eccl. 11:1; Isa. 55:8-13; Acts 17:15-34; 1 Kings 19:1-18; Philip. 4:22

4. God once said through the **prophet Isaiah** that when He sends forth His Word, it will not return unto Him void **[empty]** but shall accomplish that for which it was sent.[3] (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Note 5: God's Word has power within itself to accomplish that which it commands. The book ***"Christ's Object Lessons"*** expresses it this way: "As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be

[3] ibid., p. 22-23

accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings." ***(COL, p. 333.1)*** ref. Nehemiah 6:1-16; Luke 10:1-24; Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 1:20

5. The story of Luke 5:1-8 **teaches** that **divine power must be combined with human effort**. **Jesus attracted the fish but the disciples had to cast the net**. (Luke 5:5). see John 11:32-45

Note 6: The fish were attracted to the boat because Jesus was in it, but they did not jump into the boat! The fishermen had to cast out the net and pull in the fish. So it is with soul winning. Jesus promises to attract the interests through His power but we must bring them in by arduous evangelistic work.[4] ref. John 12:32; Romans 2:1-4

Appeal Song:

Closing: "In the apostles of our Lord there was nothing to bring glory to themselves. It was evident that the success of their labors was due only to God. The lives of these men, the characters they developed, and the mighty work that God wrought through them, are a testimony to what He will do for all who are teachable and obedient. He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels. If men in humble life were encouraged to do all the good they could do, if restraining hands were not laid upon them to repress their zeal, there would be a hundred workers for Christ where now there is one." *Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 250-251*; ref. Exodus 3 & 4; Jeremiah 1:1-19; Matthew 9:35-38; Romans 10:8-17; 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

[4] ibid., p. 23

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***I Will Make You Fishers Of Men*, by HARRY D. CLARKE**

I will make you fishers of men,
Fishers of men, fishers of men,
I will make you fishers of men
If you follow me.

If you follow me,
If you follow me,
I will make you fishers of men,
If you follow me.

Hear Christ calling, “Come unto Me,”
“Come unto Me,” “Come unto Me;”
Hear Christ calling, “Come unto Me,”
I will give you rest.

I will give you rest,
I will give you rest;
Hear Christ Calling, “Come unto Me,”
I will give you rest.