

Fishing for the Master

Lesson * 3 (COL 122-23; Mt. 13:47-50; Lk. 5:1-8; Mt. 4:18-20; Jn. 21:1-13)

The Symbols of the Parable

1. What is represented by the **sea** in the Parable of the Dragnet? In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the **field** represents the _____. (Mt. 13:38). In the Parable of the Dragnet, the sea would also represent the _____.
2. The **net** represents the _____. (COL 122)
3. The **act of casting** the net symbolizes the “preaching of the _____.” (COL 122)
4. The **fish** represent individual persons (Mt. 4:19). The **good fish** represent the _____ and the **bad fish** represent false _____ in the _____. (COL 122)
5. The **boat** where the fish are gathered into represents the _____. (COL 122)
6. The **fishermen** represent those who preach the _____. This is made clear in Matthew 4:19 where Jesus tells his disciples: “Follow me, and I will make _____ fishers of _____.”
7. What is represented by the act of separating the good fish from the bad at the shore? “When the mission of the gospel is _____, the _____ will accomplish the work of separation.” (COL 124)

Note: 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 into 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 has concluded, the good fish are gathered into vessels and the bad fish are thrown away.

8. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares has the same basic meaning as the Parable of the Dragnet: “The wheat and the tares grow together until the _____. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation. . . . When the work of the _____ is completed, there _____ follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever _____’ (COL 123,) “The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the _____; and the harvest is the end of _____ time.” (COL 72)

Secrets of Successful Fishing

1. When Jesus commanded Peter to launch out into the deep, (Lk. 5:4) he complained that he and his helpers had _____ all the night and had taken _____. (Lk. 5:5)

Note: 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 the work of soul winning. Arduous labor, state of the art evangelistic tools, knowledge of demographics and the latest methods do not guarantee success.

2. When Peter and his fellow laborers went out that night, Jesus was not in the boat. But in the morning, Jesus _____ one of the ships, which was _____.” (Lk. 5:3)

Note: 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).

3. When Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and cast out his nets, Peter was dumfounded yet he said: “nevertheless at thy _____ I will let down the net.” (Lk. 5:5)

Note: 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 thrown 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.

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

Note: God’s Word has power within itself to accomplish that which it commands. Ellen White expressed 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 accomplished in His strength. All his biddings are enablings.” (COL 333)

5. The story of Luke 5 teaches that divine power must be combined with human effort. Jesus attracted the _____ but the disciples had to cast the _____ (Lk. 5:5)

Note: 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 the 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.

6. The same lesson of cooperative effort is taught in Matthew 9:37-38. After deploring the fact that the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few, Jesus states: “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth _____ into _____ harvest.”

Note: Here Jesus is not so much concerned with the power which produces the harvest as with the laborers who will bring it in. The power of God ripens the harvest but we must bring it in! Prayer attracts the fish but hard labor brings them in. There may be many souls attracted to the church by the power of prayer but if we do not labor to cast out the net, they souls will remain “in the water”.

7. Successful “soul fishing” not only requires cooperation between God and man but also between fellow believers. This is seen in Luke 5:7 where we are told that Peter and those who were in his boat, “beckoned unto **their** _____, which were in the other ship, that **they** should come and _____ **them**.”

Note : There is no room for rivalry among churches in the task of “soul fishing”. There are enough souls in the sea of humanity to fill each and every church. Evangelistic outreach is a cooperative effort where there is no room for competition.

8. The fishing expedition was incredibly successful because we are told that “they inclosed a great _____ of fishes: and their net _____. . . . And they came, and filled _____ the ships so that they began to _____.” (Lk. 5:6-7)
9. Ellen White explains why this expedition met with success: “During that sad night on the lake, when they were _____ from Christ, the disciples were pressed hard by unbelief, and weary with fruitless toil. But His _____ kindled their faith, and brought them joy and _____. So it is with us; apart from Christ, our work is _____, and it is easy to distrust and murmur. But when He is _____, and we labor under His _____, we rejoice in the evidence of _____ power.” (DA 249)
10. In John 21:11 we are told that after the resurrection, Peter fished _____ great fishes. Obviously, statistics were very important.
11. The spectacular success of this fishing expedition led to no boastfulness. Peter took no credit because he well knew that it was Christ’s power and not his own skill which had led to success: “When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, _____ from me, for I am a _____ man, O Lord.” (Lk 5:8)

12. In Matthew's account, Jesus called the disciples with the following words: "Follow Me and I will _____ your fishers of men." (Mt. 4:19)

Note: Notice that Jesus did not say: "I will show you how to fish," or "I will exemplify how to fish." Jesus promised "I will **MAKE** you fishers of men." In other words, Jesus was promising to **empower** them to fish.

13. After the resurrection, Peter and his colleagues were once again fishing on the lake. They unsuccessfully toiled all night. In the morning they saw Jesus walking on the shore and he told them: "cast the net on the _____ side of the ship, and ye shall _____." (John 21:6). What was so special about the right side of the ship?

Note: Ellen White explains: "And Jesus had a purpose in bidding them cast their net on the right side of the ship. On that side **He stood** upon the shore. That was the side of faith. If they labored **in connection with Him**,—His divine power combining with their human effort,—they could not fail of success." (DA 811) Clearly, the fish were drawn to the right side of the boat because Jesus was no that side!!

14. What is it that draws people to Christ? "'And I, if I be _____ up from the earth will _____ all men unto _____.' This He said, signifying what _____ he should die." (John 12:32, 33)

15. We are told that when Peter and his colleagues had brought their ships to land "they _____ all, and _____ Him." (Lk. 5:11)

Note: Mark this point: When they were at the peak of their prosperity, even before taking the fish to the market, they left all to follow Jesus. This teaches us a vital lesson. No matter what our occupation or profession might be, it must be subordinated to the great task of fishing men. Nothing should stand in the way of this task. Peter had launched out into the deep to catch fish and now he was to launch out into the deep to fish men. Having found the treasure, they gave up all they had. Having found the Pearl of great price, they forsook all.

16. Pentecost illustrates the various elements of the Parable of the Net. Notice the following comparison (based on Acts 1-2):

- ✓ The fishermen were the twelve _____.
- ✓ When the disciples _____, the power of the Holy Spirit was poured out without measure. (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4)
- ✓ Peter then threw out the net, that is, he _____ the gospel. (Acts 2:14ff)
- ✓ As a result, Peter caught a multitude of fish (people), _____ thousand in number. (Acts 2:41)

- ✓ These fish (people) were then brought into the boat which represents the _____ . (Acts 2:47)
- ✓ The secret of the disciples' success is found in Acts 4:13: "Now when they [the multitude] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were _____ and _____ men, they marveled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had _____ with _____ ." (Acts 4:13).

Summary and Conclusion

The existence of transformers, power stations, power towers, cables, wires, switches and plugs does not guarantee that there will be electricity. In the same way, state of the art equipment, a nice building, good music, excellent "felt needs" programming, does not guarantee success in soul winning. In order for electricity to be a reality, there must be power. In order for soul winning to meet with success the power of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. Why not call upon the Lord for power today so that He can use you for the finishing of His work?