

FISHING TOO NEAR THE SHORE, LUKE 5:1-11

PROBABLY THE MOST SACRED SHEET OF WATER THE EARTH CONTAINS IS THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

IT WAS SITUATED IN THE MIDST OF THE JORDAN VALLEY, ON THE GREAT THOROFARKE FROM BABYLON AND DAMASCUS INTO PALESTINE. A BUSY TRAFFIC OF TEEMING LIFE CROWDED ITS SHORES AND CROWNED ITS WAVES.

ALONG ITS BANKS SPREAD A WONDROUS VEGETATION, FULL OF BEAUTIFUL BIRDS AND FLOWERS AND FRUITS.

THE RICHEST PART OF THE SHORES WAS AT THE NORTHWEST, WHERE ON A LUXURIANT PLAIN THE PRINCES AND NOBLES HAD THEIR COUNTRY RESIDENCES, AND THEIR GARDENS FILLED WITH DATE-PALMS, POMEGRANATES, AND PURPLE GRAPES AS BIG AS PLUMS BENDING THE VINES IN 12 POUND CLUSTERS.

THERE IS NO WONDER WHY THE JEWS CALLED GALILEE "THE GATE OF PARADISE" AND JOSEPHUS SAID, "IT IS A DISTRICT WHERE NATURE SEEMS TO HAVE CONSTRAINED HERSELF TO CREATE AN ETERNAL

SPRING. HERE THE BIG TREE YIELDS HER FRUIT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, RIPENING EVERY MONTH.

(Galilee) IS A PEAR SHAPED LAKE, ONLY 12 MILES LONG AND 6 MILES WIDE AT THE BROADEST PART.

NOTHING CAN EXCEED THE BRIGHT CLEARNES OF ITS WATER, WHICH REFLECTS THE DEEP BLUE SKY ABOVE.

ON THE LAKE WERE FISHERMEN BY THE HUNDREDS, AND AROUND IT NUMEROUS SHIP-BUILDERS. THE WHITE SAILS OF PLEASURE BOATS FLEW BEFORE THE FREQUENT GUSTS FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

THE PEOPLE WHO DWELT AROUND GALILEE WERE FREE FROM THE STRONG RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES WHICH RAISED A BAR TO CHRIST'S RECEPTION IN JUDEA.

THERE WERE THE PEOPLE OF ZABULON AND NAPHTILI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES.

THEY WERE THE PEOPLE THE PROPHETS HAD DESCRIBED AS SITTING IN DARKNESS; BUT FOR THAT REASON THEY SAW MORE CLEARLY THE GREAT LIGHT WHEN IT CAME TO THEM IN THE REGION OF THE

SHADOW OF DEATH.

ON A CERTAIN DAY WHEN CHRIST WAS PREACHING BY THIS LAKE TO THE MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE, THEY CROWDED HIM SO MUCH THAT IF HE HADN'T STEPPED INTO A BOAT THEY WOULD HAVE PUSHED HIM

RIGHT INTO THE WATER.

WHAT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH HERE TODAY IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT HE SAID IN HIS SERMON FROM THIS UNUSUAL PULPIT, — (AS A MATTER OF FACT THE BIBLE DOESN'T EVEN RECORD IT), — BUT WE WANT TO NOTICE WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE SERMON WAS FINISHED.

READ LUKE 5:1-11

TEXT, V. 14, "LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP."

PETER HAD TO OBEY THE LORD'S COMMAND AND LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP BEFORE HE MADE A SUCCESSFUL CATCH OF FISH.

I. MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE A MUCH TOO SHALLOW CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

1. PERHAPS THEIR INITIAL EXPERIENCE WAS SHALLOW.

- A. THE PREVAILING TENDENCY IS TOWARD THE SUPERFICIAL RATHER THAN THE SUBSTANTIAL.
- B. SOME EXPERIENCES ARE 100% INTELLECTUAL AND NOTHING ELSE.
- C. SOME EXPERIENCES ARE 100% EMOTIONAL AND NOTHING ELSE.
- D. SOME EXPERIENCES ARE 100% HYPOCRITICAL AND NOTHING ELSE.

2. PERHAPS THEIR DEVOTIONAL LIFE IS SHALLOW.

- A. PRAYER LIFE MUST BE EARNEST, DEFINITE, AND PERSEVERING.
- B. THE NEARER YOU GET TO CHRIST THE MORE YOU WILL HUMBLY REALIZE YOUR OWN SINFULNESS.
- (1). "SIN-STAINED AM I, AND THOU ART PURE;
OH, TURN THY STEPS SOME OTHER WAY;
HOW SHALL I DARE THY GAZE ENDURE?
HOW IN THY STAINLESS PRESENCE STAY?"
- (2). THE NEARER TO GOD THE SHARPER THE ANGUISH.

C. B. Bible Study

3. PERHAPS THEIR COMPASSION FOR SOULS IS SHALLOW.

4. THEREFORE THE SHIP OF THEIR FAITH IS WRECKED ON THE ROCKS OF TEMPTATION.

"O, WATCHWORD BRAVE FOR THOSE WHO SAIL
ACROSS THE SEA OF LIFE,
STEER FAR AWAY FROM EVERY ROCK
WITH AWFUL DANGERS RIFE.
LEAVE ALL THE SHALLOWS AND THE SHORES;
FAR IN THE DISTANCE KEEP;
STRIKE BOLDLY RIGHT AMID THE WAVES—
"LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP!"

II. MANY CHRISTIANS ARE PADDLING IN THE MARGIN OF REAL BIBLE STUDY.

1. THE VALUE OF A PLAN.

- 2. TODAY IS THE DAY TO BEGIN
- 3. HOW TO READ THE BIBLE.

 - A. PRAYERFULLY
 - B. INTELLIGENTLY
 - C. PRACTICALLY — APPLYING IT TO YOUR OWN LIFE.

III. MANY ARE FISHING ENTIRELY TOO NEAR THE SHORE FOR SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

1. FISHERS OF MEN — TAKING MEN ALIVE.

- A. MEN INSTEAD OF FISH.
- B. TAKING ALIVE, INSTEAD OF DEAD.
- C. "LAUNCH OUT, O LAUNCH OUT, WHERE THE BREAKERS ARE HIGH,
WHERE SOULS SINK BENEATH THE DARK WAVE;
LAUNCH OUT IN THE DEEP ERE THEY LANGUISH AND DIE —
BRING THEM SAFELY TO CHRIST WHO CAN SAVE."

2. THE NECESSITY OF A LARGER VISION.

- A. LOST LOVED ONES
- B. LOST FRIENDS
- C. LOST NEIGHBORS
- D. A LOST WORLD (SEE NEXT PAGE)

THE EVANGELICAL MOVEMENT SAVED ENGLAND FROM THE BLOODY REVOLUTION THAT SCOURGED FRANCE.

WHEN THE REVOLUTIONARY YEAST WAS BEGINNING TO WORK, VOLTAIRE WROTE, "WE HAVE NEVER PRETENDED TO ENLIGHTEN THE COBBLERS AND THE MAID-SERVANTS; WE LEAVE THAT TO THE APOSTLES."

IN A FEW YEARS THOSE COBBLERS AND MAID-SERVANTS WERE FLOODING THE GUTTERS OF PARIS WITH THE BEST BLOOD OF FRANCE; WHILE IN ENGLAND THE EVANGELICALS HAD PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO THE COBBLERS AND MAID-SERVANTS AND HAD WON THEM TO THE LORD.

BUT AS THE YEARS PASSED ON, SOME WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL GROUPS SHUT THEMSELVES UP, MORE AND MORE TO THEIR LOCAL CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS, AND TREATED THE GREAT HUMAN WORLD OF SECULAR THOUGHT, ACTIVITY, AND INTEREST, AS QUITE OUTSIDE ITS PALE.

OUR CHRISTIAN VISION MUST EMBRACE NOTHING LESS THAN A WHOLE LOST WORLD WHICH GOD LOVED SO MUCH THAT HE GAVE HIS SON.

3. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE.

A. "AT THY WORD."

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE STRONGEST FORCE THAT SWAYS THE UNIVERSE. GREAT GOD, IT IS "AT THY WORD" THAT SERAPHS FLY AND

CHERUBS BOW.

WHEN THE EARTH WAS FRUITLESS AND BARE, THY VOICE, O GOD, WAS HEARD, SAYING, "LET THERE BE LIGHT," AND "AT THY WORD" LIGHT LEAPED FORTH.

"AT THY WORD" DAY AND NIGHT TOOK UP THEIR PLACES, AND "AT THY WORD" THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED FROM THE WATERS BY THE FIRMAMENT OF HEAVEN.

"AT THY WORD" THE DRY LAND APPEARED, AND THE SEAS RETIRED TO THEIR CHANNELS.

"AT THY WORD", THE GLOBE WAS MANTLED OVER WITH GREEN, AND VEGETABLE LIFE BEGAN.

"AT THY WORD" APPEARED THE SUN AND MOON AND STARS, FOR SIGNS, AND FOR SEASONS, AND FOR DAYS, AND YEARS.

"AT THY WORD" THE LIVING CREATURES FILLED THE SEA, AND AIR, AND LAND; AND MAN AT LAST APPEARED.

NOT ONLY IN CREATION IS THE WORD OF THE LORD SUPREME, BUT IN PROVIDENCE TOO ITS MAJESTIC POWER IS MANIFESTED, FOR "THE LORD UPHOLDS ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER."

SUNSHINE AND RAIN AND STORMY WIND ARE ALL FULFILLING HIS WORD. NATURE ABIDES AND MOVES BY THE WORD OF THE LORD.

SO, TOO, ALL MATTERS OF FACT AND HISTORY ARE BENEATH THE SUPERME WORD.

ALL THE EVENTS OF THE AGES COME MARCHING BY AT HIS WORD, AND BOWING TO HIS SOVEREIGN WILL.

"AT THY WORD" NATIONS RISE AND EMPIRES FLOURISH.

"AT THY WORD" DYNASTIES DIE, KINGDOMS CRUMBLE, MIGHTY CITIES BECOME A WILDERNESS, AND VAST ARMIES VANISH LIKE THE DEW OF

THE MORNING.

PROPHECY UTTERS HER ORACLES, AND HISTORY WRITES HER PAGES,

"AT THY WORD", O LORD.

PETER'S DECISION, "NEVERTHELESS, AT THY WORD, I WILL", HAS BEEN THE WATCHWORD OF THE SAINTS OF ALL AGES.

(CONT. OVER)

Some people spend their lives in the subjunctive mood of doubt, uncertainty, & indecision, among the "mights" & "shoulds", always saying "I would" & never "I will."

ABRAHAM QUILTS THE PLACE OF HIS CHILDHOOD, LEAVES HIS FAMILY AND GOES WITH SARAH TO A LAND OF WHICH HE KNOWS NOTHING, WHERE HE ROAMS AS A STRANGER AND A SOJOURNER ALL HIS DAYS.

EVEN WHEN HIS BROW IS FURROWED AND THE HOT TEAR IS READY TO FORCE ITSELF FROM BENEATH THE PARTIARCH'S EYELID, AS HE LIFTS HIS HAND WITH THE KNIFE TO STAB ISAAC TO THE HEART, IF ANY THINK HIM MAD, HE LIFTS HIS EACE TOWARDS THE MAJESTY OF THE MOST HIGH AND SAYS, "IT IS AT THY WORD, LORD." THE OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD IS ONE OF THE GRANDEST PRINCIPLES WHICH RULE AMONG INTELLIGENT BEINGS. EVEN AS THE RICHES OF ACTING IN CONFORMITY TO HIS WORD, WE FEEL OURSELVES TO BE IN ORDER WITH ALL THE FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE, TRAVELLING ON THE MAIN TRACK OF ALL REAL EXISTENCE.

4. OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD IS THE CURE FOR DISAPPOINTMENT.

IV. SINNERS ARE FISHING TOO NEAR THE SHORE IF THEY EXPECT TO FIND FORGIVENESS FOR THEIR SINS APART FROM CHRIST.

3. LAUNCH OUT INTO THE GREAT DEEP OF GOD'S MERCY. "THE MERCY OF GOD IS AN OCEAN DIVINE, A BOUNDLESS AND FATHOMLESS FLOOD; DANCY OUT IN THE DEEP, CUT AWAY THE SHORE LINE, AND BE LOST IN THE MERCY OF GOD.

BUT MANY, ALAS, STAND ON THE SHORE AND GAZE ON THE OCEAN SO WIDE; THEY NEVER HAVE VENTURED ITS DEPTHS TO EXPLORE, OR TO LAUNCH ON THE FATHOMLESS TIDE.

OH, LET US LAUNCH OUT ON THIS OCEAN SO BROAD, WHERE FLOODS OF SALVATION O'ER FLOW; OH, LET US BE LOST IN THE MERCY OF GOD, TILL THE DEPTHS OF HIS FULLNESS WE KNOW."

1.2. RELIANCE ON GOD'S POWER TO FORGIVE.

2. MANY DON'T WANT TO BREAK CONTACT WITH LAND CUT AWAY THE SHORE A. DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THEIR OLD SINS A. DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THEIR OLD FRIENDS B. DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THEIR OLD FRIENDS THE SUPREME WORD.

AT THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN COME MARSHES BY AT HIS WORD.

AT THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN COME MARSHES BY AT HIS WORD.

AT THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN COME MARSHES BY AT HIS WORD.

AT THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN COME MARSHES BY AT HIS WORD.

(CONT'D. OVER)

1st Inf. Bde, Ft. Bragg, 25 Sept 60

H. M. 1-30-55; Bedford, Ky. 7/17/55; H. M. B. C. 4/12/59