

Weaving the Word

A Fish Story

Part 13 – October 5, 2014



Welcome to a place where we're learning to seek and find and love the truth. **What did you discover about the Lord this week?**

[Jesus said] "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." – Matthew 7:7-8 NIV

Did you seek this week?

Were you up to the task to ask?

Did you knock on the Rock?

[God said] "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." – Jeremiah 29:11-13 NIV



What percentage of your heart is dedicated to seeking God?

Don't be distracted by guilt. *That's* a trick of the enemy.

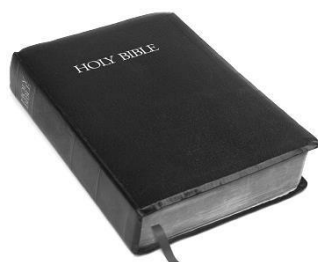
Jesus came to free us with truth, not put us into further bondage. *We're all guilty.*

And, as believers, *we're all forgiven.*

[Paul said] We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ... There is no fear of God before their eyes." – Romans 3:9b-11, 18 NIV

If you didn't seek this week, if you allowed life's demands to dictate or derail you, ask yourself why. **Is there not enough fear of God before your eyes, or love for God within your heart?**

Our freedom in Christ allows us to look truth right in the eyes, and examine ourselves guilt free, so that we can be *transformed*. **We're in an alliance with God, and a battle with the enemy.**



The Bible is under attack like never before; online and in the media, the enemy is methodically tearing into it to tear it apart, in an attempt to discredit God's Word and destroy God's children.

And, to really know truth you must seek truth.

So, what percentage of your heart is dedicated to seeking God?

You don't need to fear the accusations of the atheists who claim, with clever words, that God's Word is filled with contradictions; **but you do need to have a ready answer.**

For your own sake if you're bothered by them; and, for the sake of those being deceived, even if you're not among them. (1 Peter 3:15)

Today we're looking at the story of the miraculous catch of fish, when Jesus tells Peter to push out into deeper water, and put down his net, and then nearly sinks the boat with fish.

This story is only recorded in Doctor Luke's gospel. (Luke 5:1-11)

We'll look at the application next week; today we're seeking something slightly different, because **this particular fish story is used to condemn God's Word as hopelessly contradictory.**

Let's first look at the fish story told by Matthew and Mark. We studied this already, in the message "Calling Fishers of Men".

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, ... As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, ... he saw Simon and his brother Andrew ... Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, ... When he had gone a little farther, ... he saw two other brothers, ... he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John ... They were in a boat ... in a boat, preparing their nets. ... with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ... Without delay he called them, ... and immediately they left the boat and their father ... and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. – Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 4:18-22 NIV

The accusers of God's Word compare this story with Doctor Luke's, and point out several contradictions, like ...

- Instead of walking along the shore, Jesus is standing and teaching a crowd.
- Instead of casting his net, Peter is cleaning it.
- Instead of immediately leaving the boat, they get in and go fishing!

If God's own Word can't get the story straight, how in the world are we expected to understand it, let alone defend it?



I've looked at every supposed contradiction, and you know what I've found: **they mostly contradict when you try to match the wrong pieces.**

So, **we can accept what the enemy says. Or, we can blindly trust God's truth.**

Or, **we can ask and seek and knock, and find a rock-solid answer.**

Time and again, **whenever I make the effort to play seek-and-find with our Dad, the supposed contradictions vaporize and vanish. And my faith is strengthened for the battle we're in.**

But, **we have to make an effort to follow His voice to find the truth.**

[Jesus said] "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." – Mark 10:15 NIV

And, **those troubling inconsistencies will be replaced with insights, buried treasure, hidden truth that was always intended by the Father, and superintended by His Spirit, to be revealed.**

[Jesus said] "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. [Ah, but you *must* "come in"] For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has [sought and found truth] will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has [being contradiction filled *not-truth*] will be taken from him." – Luke 8:16-18 NIV

This is part of *my* created purpose and *my* passion, not only to pursue on my own, but to help you to see and seek for yourself.

Sunday by Sunday we're going to keep finding that **what has been labeled as error or contradiction is simply *reckless listening*.**

In *this* case, Mark is the key. He tells *two stories*, a year apart; and, *everyone agrees* he describes *two separate events*. The first, you just heard, the second comes just after Jesus heals the man with the withered hand, which is just where we left off last time.

Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. ... Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, [Gennesaret; the Sea of Galilee] and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ... Many followed him, ... When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ... and he healed all their sick ... – Matthew 12:13-15; Mark 3:7-8 NIV

And, **this** is where Luke's fish story fits in, like strategic pieces to a puzzle that perfectly complete the intended picture.

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, [Simon-Peter and John] who were washing their nets. ... Because of the crowd he told his disciples [who owned the boats] to have a small boat ready for him, [In the other fish story, how many were in Simon-Peter's boat? Two. How many in John's? five. The small boat is Simon's] to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was. ... *warning them not to tell who he was.* ... He got into one of the boats, [Which one? The small one] the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, [Why does Simon-Peter call Him "Master"? Because he's *already* a disciple] we've [Simon and his brother] worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners [John and his brother] in the other boat [the big boat] to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; [Why does he call Him "Lord"? Because he's *already* a disciple] I am a sinful man!" [This isn't the story of Peter beginning to follow Jesus – it's exactly the *opposite; it's the story of Peter ending his following!*] For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. – Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 12:16; Mark 3:9-12 NIV

Luke's fish story doesn't contradict the one from the year prior; it actually provides a rich contrast with a year later.

The year before, Jesus promised to make them fishers of men, and **Peter happily left his empty nets.** And now, **in a boatload of fish, Peter falls down, ashamed of his sin and in awe of His power.**

And **in this moment of clarity of Peter's unworthiness,** Jesus says, **"Now you're ready. From now on you will catch men."**

You can trust God's Word ... but you must humble yourself and seek and ask and knock.

What portion of your heart is dedicated to clearly seeing Jesus?

It's both a partnership and an ongoing battle.

Will you knock on the Rock, or just recklessly listen?