

# Catching Men

March 8, 2009 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

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To begin the message today, let us go to Jeremiah 5:26:

Jer 5:26 For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.

These wicked men were among God's chosen people, Israel. They lay wait to set a trap to catch men who are unaware of the harm that can be done in life when caught by these wicked men.

Humanism is rampant in our day. Humanism is the belief that we must save ourselves; there is no deity who will save us. In this frame of mind, men allow themselves to be caught by wicked men who will lead them into a life of secular humanism that will deny God and his power. Men (people) are being caught in our grade schools and colleges and even in the workplace by the cunning of the minds of men who do not, will not and cannot believe in the God of Heaven and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Superstition is also rampant today. You may see shows on TV about ghost hunters, seances, voodoo, and other superstition-type programs. Superstition is simply a religion. When Paul told the people on Mars Hill that they were too superstitious, he meant that they were too religious. Their religion included many gods, and they had a monument to the Unknown God, which Paul took the time to explain to them. This Unknown God is the God who created the world, and there is no other god besides him.

Men will set traps and catch men in politics today. Politics is a gruesome vocation. Much money is involved in politics, and with money a political office may quickly become

corrupted.

Wicked men set traps to catch people in entertainment. My, what a smorgasbord of entertainment we have today! The entertainment industry is so immense and so competitive that it seems that almost everyone is involved in it in one way or the other. Our bodies are made in such a way that it response to sensuality. The old expression from the 1960's is "If it feels good, do it." Today such words as EXTREME, AWESOME, and RADICAL are used to make things seems larger and more tantalizing that they really are. These are traps to catch men, or people; and it is a good trap. It works really well.

We are all born to a worldly system, and we are marked by sin and slain into spiritual death by sin, our own sins, not just the sins of our forefathers. We have a tendency toward sin, and we certainly can enjoy sin for a season. By the grace of God, however, we can deny the world and deny the pleasures of sin – Heb 11:25 (Moses) *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

These wicked men lay wait for the opportune time to come in for the kill. Be careful with whom you make friends in this world. There are wicked men out there who will snatch you up as quickly as they can, and you will not know how corrupt they are until it is too late.

If you are young today, do not get caught up in the worldly habits that come so easily to young people. They will entrap you and control your life. Then, later on in life when you would like to give yourself more to the Lord and obey his word, you will have these habits that you must stop practicing, and the effort will not be pleasant. Believe me, you will never know how thankful I am that I did not smoke habitually. I have never drunk alcohol socially. I have never taken illegal drugs, and I do not use bad language or listen to dirty jokes. You might think I am a

wimp for not doing these thing, but that is all right; when I was 18 years old, the Lord called me to preach, and I did not have to quit smoking, quick drinking, quick cursing, etc. The reason is that I never started these thing, so I did not have to stop them. Hallelujah! Don't ever forget this little chorus:

Oh be careful little eyes what you see  
Oh be careful little ears what you hear  
Oh be careful little mouth what you say, etc.  
For the Father up above is looking down in love,  
So be careful little eyes what you see.

Riches are also a part of the trap that wicked men put before us to lure us into their traps.

Let's read on in Jeremiah 5. Look at verse 27

Jer 5:27 As a cage is full of birds, so [are] their houses full of  
deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

I suppose today in our declining economy more and more people are wishing they could win the lottery or become instantly rich in some way. But the Bible warns us against riches, because riches are a trap. If you have not read the stories about those who have won the lotteries, then you don't know how miserable these people become once they get their hands on these huge amounts of money.

William "Bud" Post won \$16.2 million in the Pennsylvania lottery in 1988 but now lives on his Social Security. "I wish it never happened. It was totally a nightmare," says Post. A former girlfriend successfully sued him for a share of his winnings. It wasn't his only lawsuit. A brother was arrested for hiring a hit man to kill him, hoping to inherit a share of the winnings. Other siblings pestered him until he agreed to invest in a car business and a restaurant in Sarasota, Fla., -- two ventures that brought no money back and further strained his relationship with his siblings. .Post even spent time in jail for firing a gun over the head of a bill collector. Within a year, he was \$1 million in debt. .Post admitted he was both careless and foolish, trying to please his family. He eventually declared bankruptcy.

Now, if you are without Christ and without hope in this world, you will look for things that will please the flesh. Notice Romans 7:5.

Ro 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

If a person follows the flesh for pleasure, then it brings forth death, for the wages of sin is death (Rom. 3:23). Don't allow this world to sway you away from the teachings of the Scriptures, away from God and Jesus Christ as your Savior. Don't allow the worldly men to catch you in their cages and make you a prisoner in your own body. We are to use our bodies for the Lord, not the world.

Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

God will bring judgment upon this world for sins just as he brought judgment upon Judah in Jeremiah's day.

Jer 5:29 Shall I not visit for these [things]? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

What is the Lord to do about the sins that so easily beset us? Is he just going to stay in Heaven as if nothing is happening? God must and will judge sins. This nation is more privileged before God than any other nation—we are all responsible before God.

God sent Judah into 70 years of captivity into the nations of the world, and one day God's judgment will fall upon the entire world. There will be a tribulation that is not easily described due to its harshness and God's vengeance upon the earth.

READ HERE – Revelation 6:12-17

Now let's go to the next passage for the message today: Luke 5:8-10. This is the story of how the disciples had fished all night and had caught nothing, even though they were professional fishermen. When the Lord told them to cast the net on a particular side of the ship, they caught a multitude of fish, so many that the boat began to sink. Now notice verses 8-10:

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

This was a great lesson for the disciples. They know why the Lord performed this great miracle—it was to show them that there are many men out in the world who need to be caught. Why should the Lord and the disciples be concerned about men in the world? It is because Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Matt. 18:11).

It is also because, just as the disciples had a desire to catch the fish in the sea, so we have a desire to catch men who are in sin, the sea of the world, and they are lost out in that worldly sea without Jesus Christ. We have the message that can save them from their lost condition, and we have the privilege of announcing the Gospel to them. This is the way we catch men.

We do not force men into the kingdom of God or persuade them against their will. We tell them the good news of the Gospel, and the Spirit of God takes charge of that message and works in an individual's heart to bring to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We must become followers of men before we become followers of God.

1 Thess. 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

So, if you are not yet saved by the grace of God, do not hesitate to listen to a Gospel message from a preacher, a teacher, or a friend, or even a stranger. The Gospel (that message) is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and that Gospel will save your soul if you can repent, turning from your sins and yourself as you are right now, turning to Jesus Christ, knowing that he died on the cross, shed his blood, and resurrected from the dead for your justification, and believing in him with all your heart. That's what salvation is all about.

The Bible teaches salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If there is no other Gospel (and there is no other Gospel), then we need to preach that truth. Salvation is not of works lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-10). It is by faith in Jesus Christ:

Ro 3:22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

When the disciples fished there on the sea and the Lord told them to put down the net in a certain place, they caught a lot of fish. These fish, no doubt, were of many kinds. So it is when we go fishing for men. We fish for men of many kinds. We are not fascists, but we are to preach the Gospel to every creature—every man, woman, boy and girl. So, when the Lord reaps the harvest of souls, he will reap souls of many kinds. There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. We all must be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

God is no respecter of persons as to their color, creed, or origin. He sees all men as sinners (Rom. 3:23) no matter what color or creed or place of origin. All men, then, need the Lord for their salvation. It is our job, then, to “catch men.”

There on Skull Hill near Jerusalem (Calvary from the Latin, Galgotha from the

Hebrew—both meaning “skull”) Jesus hung as a sinner himself, because he became sin for us that we might have the righteousness of God.

2Co 5:21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

There, while he looked upon the forlorn disciples and a desperate mother, watching the soldiers and others as they went by wagging their heads at him, and as he suffered in physical pain from his beating and from the crown of thorns and the nails in his hands and feet, Jesus was dying for men—people of the world. At noon the face of the earth was blackened with such a deep darkness that it struck the hearts of everyone. God had veiled the world in darkness so that he and his Son, Jesus, could complete the transaction that would pay for the sins of his people. There in that deep darkness, only Jesus and God were performing anything that was worth doing—God was pouring out his wrath on our sins, which Jesus had taken in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Jesus was accepting that suffering in our place (drinking the cup of suffering) so that neither you nor I should need to spend an eternity in Hell under the eternal wrath of God. What a sacrifice! What a transaction! What a Savior!

Now today if you are saved by God’s grace, you need to remember that we are saved to serve. We are become fishers of men, and we should be busy about our business of fishing and catching men. The world has caught many a young person and adult alike into the clutches of worldly pleasure, but you and I are to catch them, bringing them by God’s grace into the kingdom of God and by the Gospel message delivering them from the wrath to come.

I don’t particularly like fishing as some of you probably do. I don’t have any desire to catch a fish. Sometimes I don’t particularly like to fish for men, either, which is a shame to say.

But I am a fisher of men, and you and I need to be fishing for men lest they fall headlong into hell at their death and never be able to trust in our Savior and be saved.

Hell is eternal, and it is no pleasant place. God has prepared Hell for the devil and his angels, but every sinner who does not trust Jesus Christ will be cast into the Lake of Fire where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:50).

Now, today, will you trust him as your Savior? Will you become a fisher of men? Will you serve him? Will you surrender yourself to full service? Will you tell others the Gospel by tract, phone, personal conversation, or some other means whereby they might trust Jesus Christ as Savior?

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