

December 2nd 2007

Launch out into the Deep – Prophetic picture

This morning I'm going to share with you a prophetic picture and words that were given to me a few weeks ago. I saw very clearly in my mind's eye, a picture of a huge net, absolutely full to bursting with shining silver fish. The picture stayed with me and into my mind came the story of 'the calling of the fishermen the first disciples of Jesus. I felt a sense of urgency to go and read the gospel accounts of this story. As I did so certain points were highlighted by the Holy Spirit and have been developed since. These are the four points, which I intend to share with you today.

1. Washing Nets

At the Beginning of the gospel account the fishermen are seen washing their nets. We need to wash out anything in our lives, which we know is not Godly. This does not only mean that our actions and behaviour are to be in accordance with God's law but that our thoughts are to be Godly too. The battlefield of the mind is very real. Be alert to your thoughts and to their source. Satan is a wily foe and has ever been a cunning deceiver seeking to manipulate the minds of Christians to accomplish his purpose, which is to paralyse, immobilise and prevent Christians from stepping out and moving out for God. He will pull out all the psychological weapons in his arsenal. Such as; fear, doubt, guilt, self-condemnation and feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy which when given credence and acted upon will tie God's children into knots.

Do not listen to the voice of the serpent, which tells you what you are not, but to the voice of the one who tells you what you are in Him. The voice of Jesus. And if you do not know what you are in Christ look in the bible it is all there. If you don't know where to look, ask your home group leaders or the elders of their church. When you hear the negative voice of the devil, declare the truth of who you are in Christ and Satan will flee, for he knows that the truth of scripture

when spoken and acted upon will cause the chains that he has put round you to fall to the Earth like dust.

Saint Paul reminds us that we are fighting a spiritual battle that we are to re-new our minds and take our thoughts captive and put them under the authority of Jesus.

2. Peters re-newed trust and repentance

At the start of the gospel account we see Peter on the shore. He is tired, fed up and disappointed. He has given his all and spent his energy and it has come to nothing. We can almost see him pulling at the nets stormy faced, grumbling and cursing under his breath. Then the calm strong presence of Jesus comes and infuses Peter's turbulent emotions and softens his heart.

'Come on Peter. Trust me. Trust me once more' says Jesus
'Alright' says Peter.

He reluctantly agrees and then miracle of miracles they land a catch the like of which Peter has never seen before. He stands amazed. Then turning asks Jesus forgiveness and repents for believing that his God was too small and he acknowledges the authority and power of his king.

We can be like Peter, can't we? We can at times feel disappointed and discouraged when we seem to have given our all to God and things have not turned out as we had hoped. We can believe God has left us behind as we become enveloped in our problems and difficulties. If this is how you are feeling today, then Jesus is saying to you:

'Trust me anew. Take me on board and see what I can do. Acknowledge me again as Lord of your life and acknowledge my power'

3. Jesus in the boat

It was when Jesus came into the boat that things began to happen. It was when they took Him on board and let Him do the guiding and navigating that they were able to plumb

the depths and land the catch. How often do we independently in our own strength and ideas forge ahead for God and often come to grief because we have not really consulted God to find out His plan and strategy. We need to listen and be sensitive too the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Last week Alan emphasized that we are people who value relationships, with each other and foremost with God. And after all a good relationship involves both listening and talking.

4. Unity

In the story the disciples needed the help of their friends in order to bring in the catch. We cannot bring people into God's kingdom alone. We need one another and the best way to begin is to form bonds of friendship within the community of the church. Once we have built bridges with each other and become stronger then we can build bridges reaching into the wider community. Last week William brought a reading from the Psalms in which the writer declares how pleased God is when he sees His people living together in unity. To get back to the nets, we need to make sure that our network of friendships within the church are in good repair that opportunities for God's harvest do not slip through the net because of disagreements and differences. Be content with and seek to serve God in the gifts He has given you. There is no room for jealousy in God's church. We are all part of His rainbow and the quieter blues and greens are just as important as the vibrant reds and oranges.

Be encouraged, God sees and is pleased with the work that this church is doing and has done for him and he says this:

'You have been faithful to me in the shallows, now it is time to launch out into the Deep'.

Pat Warburton