

3 illustrations of gospel service involving nets

Part 1

Speaker	Alan Smart
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Matthew, Chapter 4, in Verse 18. Und Jesus, als er durch die See von Galiläa fuhr, sah zwei Brüder, Simon Paul Peter und Andrew, sein Bruder, ein Netz in den See zu werfen, denn sie waren Fischer. Und er sagte zu ihnen, folgt mir, und ich werde euch Fischer von Männern machen. Und sie verlassen direkt ihre Netze und folgten ihm. Und gehend von Fenst sah er zwei weitere Brüder, James, der Sohn von Zebedee, und John, sein Bruder, in einem Schiff mit Zebedee, ihrem Vater, die Netze zu werfen. Und er rief sie an, und sie verlassen direkt das Schiff und ihren Vater und folgten ihm. Und in Luke, Kapitel 5, [00:01:13] und in Vers 1, Und es kam zu passen, dass, als die Leute auf ihn gedrängt haben, den Wort Gottes zu hören, stand er am See von Genesaret und sah zwei Schiffe, die am See standen, und die Fischer gingen aus ihnen und waschten ihre Netze. Und in dem Gospel von John, Kapitel 21, John 21, Sorry, John 21, und Vers 11, [00:02:04] Sorry, Vers 10, wir beginnen mit Vers 10, And the Lord Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fish, and 153.

And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples just asked him, Who are you, who art thou, knowing that it was the Lord.

I was very struck, as no doubt most of you were, about the Gospel and the absolute necessity for the Gospel, and that it's the fundamental base on which our faith stands.

It's how we came into it, through the Gospel. We heard of the forgiveness of sins. I understand there's a tombstone in Baltimore, near New York, [00:03:05] and there's one word on it.

Forgiven.

Wonderful, isn't it? Dear Saint of God, you and I, the blackness of darkness to be our place forever. Guilty, ill-deserving sinners.

Maybe some only 500 pence debtors.

Some of us 500 pence debtors.

Maybe even those that were a thousand pence, but the Scripture only says 500. The grace of God

met us.

The grace of God met us.

How, what was the medium by which the grace of God was announced to us, through the glorious Gospel, the soul-saving Gospel, of a full and free salvation through faith in Jesus' name.

And I read these Scriptures about the nets.

Because there's some temerity, of course, in this fishing village. All you fishermen and ex-fishermen, and of course down in Cookenzie, [00:04:02] where I'm now residing, you know a lot about fishing, don't you? Fishing and nets and things like that. And it was only what we heard as we grew up into the Bible class. Some of us could only stick the Sunday school for a year, but the Lord brought us into the Bible class to hear the glorious Gospel. And we could hear the stories about the nets going out to reach men and women and the analogy, the likeness between the Gospel going out and nets going out to bring in the fish. And there seems to be in these Scriptures, there's four different things are done with the nets. Four different things done with the nets. And now it's not so much the Gospel.

First and foremost, they need to be mended.

They need to be mended.

And need to be mended.

Now, there is nothing wrong with the Gospel.

[00:05:03] No, the Gospel needs no mending. It's perfect.

It's our appreciation and our presentation of the Gospel that really needs to be mended and hang together. All be put together.

And there might be no gaps in it. No gaps in it. And no false bits in it. No untruths. No mending it with wrong things. Bits of string, things like that. Got to be the real net to mend it.

And it was impressed upon me really as a boy of four years old when I used to go down from Trenent to Port Seton. I used to see them mending their nets.

Yes, with the proper net material.

And dear Saint of God, I should need to say it in this company, we don't want to bring anything into the Gospel which is extraneous or nothing consistent with the truth of the Gospel. No, no modification, no messing around with untruths today.

[00:06:02] Yes, there are many that are presenting difficult and fanciful Gospels in all sorts of ways that are going on. You read about a vicar down in Guildford in London.

What's he doing in order to bring the children in? He's bringing in that children's storybook that's full

of wizards. And the children are being brought along with wizard's heads on. Sad state of affairs.

That's not the Gospel.

I know I don't need to tell you about the lack of necessity of that. But it shows you what's going around. Many people going around saying, oh, just preach the love, preach the love, preach the love.

But unless the person knows he's a sinner, how does he know to appreciate the love of God? How does he know he needs the love of God? He's got to see he's a guilty, hell-deserving sinner. I've told this story often.

[00:07:01] And it bears repeating, doesn't it, of Sir James Young Simpson. If you're ever visiting Edinburgh, there's a statue to him. Sir James Young Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform. Yes. And, of course, all of us who've had operations, we're thankful for that discovery, aren't we? Discoverer of chloroform. Invited down to London to address the British Association.

There they were, all the professors round about, sitting in his audience to listen to him. The great man stood up.

Says, I have made two great discoveries in my life.

And all the learned men, you know, there they were, they were saying, well, he's discovered chloroform. What's his other discovery? Says, the first thing I discovered was that I was a guilty, hell-deserving sinner.

Silence in the learned audience.

[00:08:01] And he says, the other thing I discovered was that Christ Jesus is the saviour of sinners.

Yes. Wonderful message.

And when we sing that to him, Christ is the saviour of sinners, saviour of sinners like me. Oh, indeed.

Tell it again. Tell it out. Tell it out.

You'll excuse me speaking of myself when I first went to London in 1960 and I got speaking to my boss about the gospel.

He says, oh, you're one of these that believe in the soul-saving gospel, are you?

I said, yes. Yes, I am.

By the grace of God, we still want to tell out that soul-saving gospel. We want to make sure that the gospel we preach is a full and a right and correct one. Many coming with all sorts of stories and tales today. You know, when David Cummings and I are preaching at the mound, and Paul Davis gets the same thing too when he comes along with us, and even when he's preaching in Glasgow, he's probably in Glasgow today, [00:09:03] and we get most opposition from those that claim to be

Christians.

The world passes by heedless and careless, and those who claim to be Christians come and try and tell us we're preaching the wrong gospel. We bring the wrong message to men.

Satan uses them, you see. Oh, yes.

Quite often it's women that come and tell us we're preaching the wrong gospel. But you must tell men and women to get hold of this fact that there's sinners on the way to hell, and then it brings out the wonderful love of God. Oh, it's great to tell men and women that God did not prepare hell for men, prepare heaven for men, prepare heaven for men.

Yes, God wants to populate heaven with men and women.

Precious, glorious gospel is heart of love.

God's wonderful heart of love come out in the gospel. [00:10:02] There we see it in Calvary's cross.

Make much of the gospel, make much of the cross. It all depends upon the cross. The way of the cross leads home. Christ is the answer, that's him. Oh, yes.

Let's get that full, glorious gospel out, mended, all together.

The gospel itself, I repeat, needs no mending. Let's make sure that we preach the clear and certain gospel to men and women today, getting it all together.

Well, I'm sure you get the drift of what I mean. And I'm sorry to tell all you great gospel preachers these things, but we need to be reminded of them today, isn't there? There's a tendency for us sometimes to just water things down, but that's the same gospel.

It's needed for men and women of all kinds, of all stations, of all categories, the glorious gospel.

And even a man like that man Jonathan Akin has been in prison.

[00:11:08] I understand the glorious gospel, the clear gospel was preached to him.

And then, you see, after the nets are mended and we preach the full and clear gospel that stands together, that full and free salvation of the love of God, the wonderful love of God, and then there's got to be the washing, the washing. Now, I know, I understand from various contacts, James Allick was telling me about it and others have been telling me about it, fishing's a bit changed today and things like that. But the other thing I used to watch and see, when even from the age of four and five down in there in Port Seton, they did wash their nets, wash their nets. And what's more, as they would say up here, they steeped them, they steeped them. And I think it was alum, some chemical, to make them strong and endure.

You see, make them strong. [00:12:02] They wouldn't break easily. They steeped them. These great big coppers that they had were steeping them. And, you know, we've got to make sure it's a cleansed and pure gospel. Nothing unholy about it that we preach. And, of course, clearly and obviously, if we

are setting forth the gospel, we ourselves must be clean and pure, cleansed, fit vessels to be used of the Lord.

Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands. Clean hands, yes.

I speak to myself as much as anybody else. Am I living that pure and spotless and clean life of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he everything to me?

Is there a thing that's coming into my heart and life that's making me be unholy, holding me here?

We're here on business for our law of the king. We're walking through the scene as vessels for the service of the master. [00:13:04] Think of that covering, you know, in the read about at Numbers 4.

Read about Numbers 4 when the vessels of the tabernacle were taken through. First of all, the ark.

Ark, final covering.

Holy of blue. The heavenly man. Sorry, I'll go on to one of the future readings. The man out of heaven. The heavenly character, blue. I'll say no more, Ernie. I'll leave that one for you to expatiate on, Mr. Lord Lewis. But I was thinking of the covering of badgers, you see. And although, strictly speaking, it is not a badger, I like to think of it, you see, because the badger can go through the slime and mud and it slips away. It's perfectly clear and clean. And let us be following the Lord Jesus Christ in his steps here, keeping close to him.

And if we keep close to him by his side, then we won't be getting mixed up in the filth and muck of this world [00:14:02] and we'll be fit vessels to be here for the Lord Jesus. And let me say again, of course, as it was said in the Bible reading, we're not speaking about men off the platform or in open airs. No, there's a Sunday school teacher, isn't there, to preach the gospel, those who visit in hospitals. Thanks be to God for those who visit in hospitals, telling the word of God. I was very thankful recently when visiting my dear brother Frank Wallace in hospital to see at least there was one man, one servant of the Lord that came around to speak to the patients. Very good.

And as we said, speaking over the garden wall, speaking in the shopping queue, the bus queue, there was a dear brother, now with the Lord. He was standing beside some in the bus, but he never missed an opportunity to tell that person about the Lord Jesus. He was in a supermarket queue, too.

He would tell the next person about the Lord Jesus. Yes, he was in a train, as he often was, to tell them about the Lord Jesus. [00:15:01] A person would jump in, you know, at Clapham Junction, into the train, or just in time, and he would say, are you just in time for heaven? Yes, dear saint of God, bring the message in in every way. But, of course, coming back by a life of giving up to the Lord Jesus Christ, a life of service for him. Yes, a life that needs, that meets, that is here to show forth that you know the need of man. And at the great end, the point in view is to point him to the Saviour. We must, of course, bear our responsibilities, our social responsibilities, when coming here. The word of God tells us that if a man is in great need and needs a crust of bread, then you've got to give him his crust of bread. He's in no condition to hear of the wonderful love of God. Back it up, that blessed message that we have.

And then after the washing of the nets, there is the casting out, isn't there? Casting out the nets to

reach the fish. [00:16:02] Casting out the nets.

And it seems actually from what was done, it's a little bit different from the deep sea fishing that was done in the old days here.

In particular the herring season when they had two boats and a net across which caught the herring and strangled them. I'm told nowadays that it's a sort of big loop net that goes out and gathers up the fish and they're sort of siphoned into the boat. Modern techniques.

Well, you know, it might be effective in fishing, but let us beware of modern techniques, dear saints of God. Let us keep to the old tried ways.

The old landmarks and old ways were done and get these nets cast out, going out with a glorious message, sending it out in every way, in all these various types of ways that we've spoken of. A message out in the Middle East, it seems that what happened was they would cast the net out [00:17:01] and they'd probably row out with the boat and circle around and come back in. And that's the way they seem to do it. Get that net cast out.

But of course we need to be ever mindful that today there's not very much opportunity, is there, of nets being cast out.

It's more today an individual matter as the angler or the fish, person to person, isn't it?

Recently, you know, I've come across an awful lot of saints have not been saved in gospel meetings or large companies, but they've been saved by a personal testimony in their family, by a neighbor in their office, somewhere like that, personal testimony. And it's getting that way more and more, isn't it? It's the angler going out. Remember Mr. Pollock, A.J. Pollock, that is, going down to Galashiels on the train. And at one time the River Tweed was a great place for the anglers for their fly fishing, I think it still is. [00:18:01] And there were all the anglers on the train with their rods up and they said to Mr. Pollock, Are you going fishing?

Mr. Pollock said, Yes.

But I'm fishing for souls, fishing for souls. That was his aim. You can think back, you know, to the Edwardian era, as you remember, you may have been told about Mr. F.B. Hull, that great evangelist as he was, going around and erecting the tent. There wasn't a hole, erect the tent, and the gospel would go out. They told me about it in an out-of-the-way place like Pocklington, New Yorkshire. These dear saints, when I was there in the 1950s, you could remember Mr. F.B. Hull being there. Yes, great day.

But even he said towards the end of his life, in about 1960 or so, the last time I spoke to him, he said, well, he called me Mr. Smart. He was always very polite, Mr. Hull.

And he said, you know, today it's no longer the large nets going out, [00:19:02] as I was enabled by the grace of God in my youth to go out with this large net.

And he said, no, today it's an individual matter, individual matter.

And I said, of course, it's very significant that Mr. Hull, though he was out there evangelizing in that tent, he still had time to speak to one certain F.E. Raven about what he was hearing of his own teaching and telling him straight that he didn't think very much of it. Anyway, that's by the by. He had a care for the saints and what was going on in the truth, as well as a large heart, a large heart, as Mr. Darby speaks about, in our mind, a large heart.

We're on a narrow path, but we must have a wide, wide heart to embrace the saints.

So there's the casting out, and then, of course, in that precious portion in John's gospel, verse 11, [00:20:01] he went at the command of the Lord.

Jesus saith unto them, bring of the fish which ye have now caught, bring of the fish which ye have now caught, the Lord's command.

And you know, perhaps today, to be drawing it in, drawing the net in.

We've been speaking to souls. I'm sure all of us, there are those that we have contact with. Some are privileged, of course, in daily employment to have contact daily. And there are neighbors, there are those in our family, friends. And perhaps now we should be moving, moving more to draw the net in, bringing the word home carefully and prayerfully to them, seeking that there might be a drawing in. Oh, there's a need today, dear saints, for a drawing in.

And you know, there's many, too, that say they believe in God, but they need the assurance of salvation. And there are many, many souls that you come in contact with. They have some ideas, they have some faith, [00:21:01] they have some trust, and they need that confession of the Lord Jesus Christ. As it says in Romans 10 and 9, that favorite verse of mine, and I'm sure favorite verse of yours, Romans 10 and 9, that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Many people that have some sort of belief there but need to reach them and carefully, tenderly speak to them and seek that there might be a drawing in in these days. How we need it.

We need it, don't we, that drawing in, that's our work today.

Of course, in Matthew 13, the angels do the drawing in. But here, let us be like, that's why I referred to John 21.

Let us be found as those that are drawing the net to land. And it says that net was full of great fishes. What a wonderful count there was, 153.

I remember several years ago when our dear brother in here, [00:22:02] I was sitting there at the time with my dear brother George J. Davison and this matter came up, 153. No, sorry.

He said there were 17 glories in scripture, you see.

And I said, is that why we have 153 fish? Here, you see, because 153 is 9 times 17. 17 mysteries, sorry.

And 9 is the number of the glory of God. So we've got 9 times 17 making 153.

So you see there, you are getting a hold of the mysteries of God and the glory of God and launching into them. But our dear brother George didn't think very much of that idea.

And Daniel ventured to give what is the generally accepted one that I think after the Day of Atonement, isn't it, or the Feast of Weeks, if you count, there's 153 days until you come to the new year. So I think that is the generally accepted one. But I was pleased to see that our dear brother Andrew Buchan, he agreed with me afterwards.

Not publicly.

[00:23:02] Just a little bit aside. But seriously, dear saint of God, it is, you know, these people that we are talking to, let us just seek, if you might, draw them along. Maybe perhaps it just needs that invitation to the home, maybe. Maybe that's what it needs. Or some way of going with them, going that little mile, that further mile with them, in some way reaching them. I know, of course, that we must be very careful in this matter of the extent, the level to which we socialize with those who are not believers. But, you know, let us be just careful how we handle them, you know. The Apostle Paul says that by all means, all means, might save some. He didn't say, of course, by any means. So it needs wisdom to weigh these things up. And the Lord has given us the scriptures. So I just leave these considerations with you, dear saints of God. We are all involved in this glorious gospel message in every single way. Even some very young ones are. And it can, and at all stages of life [00:24:01] we need to be in contact and ready and at all times to have a gospel that has no bits missing in it, no defects, proper gospel and a clear and clean gospel and ourselves, of course, being fitted vessels and sending the message out and then drawing into land carefully and prayerfully. Well, dear saints of God, as we consider the gospel this afternoon, these thoughts came again before me. Trust that you will see something of what the Lord has laid in my heart. In Jesus' Name. Amen.