

“PAY-DAY—SOME DAY”

With Other Sketches From Life and Messages From The Word

by

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CHAPTER NINE

“... AND THEIR NET BRAKE”

Although this thrilling episode is mentioned only once in the Gospels, where other miracles are referred to two, three and even four times, nevertheless this text probably is used more often than any other because of its many and varied truths. This morning we shall consider only the net and why it broke.

This was one of the many Scriptures I could never harmonize when studying the Bible, and for that reason I quickly passed by the broken net whenever I used this text. But, here lies a mighty truth—a lesson and a warning that need to be emphasized.

“But, why did it break?” Was it because there were too many fish? Yes and no. In John 21 it is clearly stated that not only was that net full of fishes, but it also mentions that those hundred and fifty-three were “great fishes,” and in the Aramaic version we have: “and in spite of this weight the net did not break.” Here in this instance we are merely told that there was “**great many fish. . . and the net brake.**” There were a multitude of fish.

Someone might suggest that this net was rotten or poor. That, my friend, is assuming something that is not in the text, and if you knew Peter, chances are that you’d never even suggest such a thing. He was without question a great commercial fisherman with many boats and each one was without question equipped with a real honest-to-goodness net. Then why should it break when Jesus was along and evidently in command? Should we not expect everything to be one hundred per cent and be a glorious success when Jesus leads us on? Yes, but you see Peter was not a hundred per cent. You see, Jesus commanded Peter to “**let down the NETS**” (plural) and Peter followed in instruction only partially and let down the NET (singular). And it broke. Then when he saw what really did happen he had to call the rest of the boats and put out all the nets in order to save this great multitude of fishes.

I know the general teaching is that so much blessing was showered on Peter that he couldn’t hold it all but that it “flowed over.” But, my friend, it is inconsistent to say that something breaks in your life if one is fully in the Master’s way. No, indeed, my friends, a complete surrender to Christ leaves no regrets. Being in full harmony with heaven’s plans means only success and no failures when doing business for Christ.

Let us look at this picture for a moment. Jesus steps into Simon's boat in the morning and says to him: "Peter, let's go fishing." The answer is the usual one that always comes from a fisherman who has been out for a whole day or night and caught nothing. "It's no use, they ain't biting today." About the easiest fellow to get along with is a man that returns from a successful fishing trip. He is full of pep, not even tired. There is a sparkle in his eye and he is about ready to hug everybody. You can even tell by the zip of his oars as he nears shore whether he has had good luck. Even on rainy days his sunny disposition will make him forget his soaked-to-the-skin condition as he proudly carries "the big ones" into camp, and he creates an atmosphere which gives to the camp that which every fishing camp needs above everything else: cheer, happiness, contentment and . . . a thrill. Yes, the successful fisherman is easy to get along with. But, look out for the one who has fished "**all night and caught nothing**." Gloomy, downcast and often sour at the weather, even if the sun is shining. The happy fisherman proudly relates how he landed the big one, but the gloomy one has the hard luck story about "the big ones that got away."

This seems to me to have been Simon Peter's attitude that morning when he began arguing with Jesus about the uselessness of trying any more. "Listen, Jesus, I have toiled all night and have caught nothing, which tells me that the fish must have migrated to the other side of the lake, and it's no use. Furthermore, I know the game and You don't understand the fishing business as I do, because I am a born fisherman and You are a carpenter. I fish for a living and You only fish for fun."

"Yes, but, my friend Simon, let's be reasonable," the Master answers. "You already have admitted that you have caught nothing your way. Now why not try My way?" And so in order to be agreeable Simon tells Him he will cast out only one net, thereby suggesting that he had no faith that anything would happen, and besides all this he was weary, worn and tired. So waving to the others that they could go ashore, he follows only in part the Master's order and "just to please Him," throws out one net, and here we have the story of the broken net.

The net broke because of Peter's disobedience. And here we have the sad tragedy in many a Christian's life. You remember the happy day that Jesus stepped into your life. You were so happy because of this heavenly companionship. Then later He called you to full surrender. You remember that inner urge of the Holy Spirit to lay everything on the altar for Christ. But you began to excuse yourself. Of course, you admitted that your service for Him had been a dismal failure. You had tried your best and you had toiled, yes and worn yourself weary by your efforts, but it all had been on shallow ground, oftentimes for the glory of a church organization or to honor a denomination, instead of for Him. But you are moved to follow Him closer in obedience, but not all the way.

What is the result? . . . Do I dare to say? Shall I hesitate a moment and let you recall some nets that broke because you were not wholly obedient to the heavenly vision? . . . Oh, the tragedy of broken lives and sad memories of failures in our Christian service!

I have met many who wished they could stand again at the fork of the road where they once hesitated.

But I have also met just as many who never for a moment regretted the time of full surrender. In order to live a life without worry you must not only place all your cares upon Him, but you must also place your all, your gifts, your family, your business unreservedly in the Master's hand, to be used for His glory.

You have longed for sweet peace,
And for faith to increase.
And have earnestly, fervently prayed,
But you cannot be blessed,
And have peace and sweet rest
Until all on the altar is laid.

Oh, we never will know
What the Lord will bestow
Of the blessings for which we have prayed,
Till our body and soul
He doth fully control
And our ALL on the altar is laid.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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