



“...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.” Matthew 13:47

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FISHFUL THINKING—In reading back over some past articles, I came across “Fishful Thinking”, and wanted to add some thoughts. We are at the close of another year, approaching the season we call “Christmas”. This is a time that evokes many a wishful thought, even from this writer. For children, the sky is the limit, but for us adults, I’ve learned to be careful what I wish for, especially if it affects others. The story of three men deserted on an island is a good illustration. As they walked the beach often, one day one of the men picked up a corked bottle. After removing the cork, yep! You guessed it! A genie popped out and gave each man a wish. The first man wished to be back home, and ZAP—it happened. The second man, who always had a desire to travel to Europe, asked to go. ZAP—he opened his eyes and he was in the heart of London. The third man, now alone on the island, was sad. He looked around and said, “I wish my friends were back!” (If that were true, you can imagine the consequences.)

Do you know the word “wish” is used in scripture? David said, in Psalm 40:14, “*Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.*” I would stay away from any form of wishing someone evil! What if it backfired? Job 31:30, “*(Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.)*” In Psalm 73 the writer says he became envious when he saw the foolish having more than the heart could wish. Verse 7, “*Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*” Once again I want to run from being filled with envy over the abundance of the wicked, because I don’t want the problems that come with more than I could wish for.

In Romans 9, Paul is wishing his own people would get saved and he was willing to pay the price. Verse 3, “*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh*”. Now that is a Godly wish!

In 2 Corinthians 13, the writer is wishing that the believers in Corinth would grow in grace. Verse 9, “*For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection*” (perfection in the sense of spiritual maturity).

Finally in 3 John, the writer is talking about those he loves and says, in verse 2, “*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*”

How deeply rooted are your wishes in the things of God? Plans and wishes that exclude Him may seem to come to pass, but only in a partial way. I want my wishes to reach out further than in this life, so I desire to direct my hope, faith, wishes, etc. to the One who can bring to pass the greatest of my dreams. My

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Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is greater than any genie in a bottle or the old man in the North. I desire to bring Him pleasure during this season. As in John 3, with my heart I also wish for you prosperity, joy, health, and peace with God through Jesus Christ (and that is not “Fishful Thinking”)!

FISH LIGHTS—When I think of this season of the year, I try to enjoy it in ways that keep me with a Christian balance. One of the things that I really like is the lights. Since first reading my Bible and finding out that God is light, and then seeing the beauty of lights throughout His creation, it makes me stand back in awe. Just a look up to a clear night sky gives a light show that is staggering. Man’s artificial lights (although I enjoy them) are no match with those of the heavenly Designer and Creator. I cannot imagine what Heaven will be like! I’m sure the lights of the city of Revelation 21 will take our breath! Now back to our article.

Since this periodical is geared to the nautical, we must find some “fish” lights. It took mankind many centuries to discover electricity and many more years to put it to use. Even so, where it is available, elaborate wiring systems and power plants are required before a factory or home can use it, and then it is not always dependable.

In contrast, consider another wonder in God’s creation. He gave certain fish throughout the world the ability to make and use their own electricity. Deep in the Caribbean Sea there is a fish only three inches long named the *flashlight fish*, having a light as strong as a small flashlight. Its electricity comes from pouches below its eyes and can be turned on and off at will. A large fish pursuing it in dark waters gives up when it swims swiftly in one direction all lit up, then turns off the light and swims in another direction.

There are some fish that have rows of lights along both sides of their bodies and in the dark look like toy ocean liners with lights shining through the windows. They can turn them on and off as they please. Others, such as the deep sea *viper fish*, *dragonfish*, and more, carry torches on the end of fleshy rods which they can turn in any direction and there are still others which have bright red taillights. The *gulper eel*, almost five feet long, is one of these.

So with our electricity we light up our homes and towns, but the author of true light has had the lights on from the beginning. John 1:1-4,9, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*”

Have you allowed this Light to shine into your heart? John 8:12, “*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” Trust Jesus Christ to be your Saviour, then let His light shine in this dark world this Christmas season!

WHO WOULD'VE KNOWN—Psalm 44:21, *“Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.”* I read a story from one of my boat magazines recently of a well-known and reputable professional boat builder along the east coast who was asked to build a plywood powerboat to a particular designer’s plans. This 19’6” boat was built with an expensive plywood known as Sapele, a relative of African Mahogany. As explained to me by a good friend, Sapele has lustrous characteristics and is simply beautiful when varnished and stronger than most plywoods, making it an excellent choice for boat building. The hull was planked and the deck covered with epoxy and a beautiful polyurethane topcoat paint to finish her off. Once finished, the boat was then launched into the Chesapeake Bay where it was taken to the proud new owner’s dock. In spite of the durable, waterproof epoxy coating, the Sapele plywood deck began to delaminate from the heat of the sun. Soon the bubbling had spread to the hull. With the delamination not confined to a single area, the owner and the boat’s builder grasped the horrifying truth. The entire shipment of the plywood was faulty and the damage beyond repair. The boat was a total loss!

Yes, it was built with Sapele that is well-known and well-suited for the environment, and it even had all the markings and looks to prove that it was, but something was wrong on the inside. How many times do we see ourselves, others, or even something we are looking to purchase where everything looks perfect on the outside, but inside there is something wrong? In Psalm 139:23,24, David quotes, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* Maybe there is an area in your life that only God knows about. Ask him to reveal it, pray for forgiveness and deliverance, then ask him to lead you to walk in His way so that when we are exposed to the elements of life, your boat will remain seaworthy. —S Fisher

MUNCHING OF MOLLUSKS—The Victorians introduced an air of elegance to oyster eating. Poised for the palate, the tasty morsels were served on special plates with carefully-crafted depressions that cradled the individual mollusks. Many oyster bars, on the other hand, did not bother with plates. The shucker shucked, the customer slurped, and the tab was tallied by counting the number of empty shells.

King James I said, *“He was a valiant man who first adventured on eating of oysters.”* But in America, where sailors found oyster beds large enough to capsize ships, the courageous and cowardly alike gulped them with gusto. In fact, river oysters helped the Jamestown settlers survive their winter of starvation in 1609.

The tasty bivalves soon became a staple in the diets of many, with recipes from the Gilded Age calling for oysters by the hundreds. They were sold by the piece and by the barrel, eaten at shops, stands, and bars, and shipped inland on wagons and canal

boats. The prodigious heaps of shells left behind were sometimes used as landfill.

All this manic munching of mollusks is still alive today. Visit us between November and March and we’ll treat you!

TONG TIED—Many an hour has been spent by this author at the other end of a pair of “tongs” (oyster). Here in Alabama we still have to do it the old fashioned way (manual labor). No dredging is allowed, public or private. The watermen who labor on the oyster reefs are almost an extinct stock. This is because of the constant war over waterfront properties and conflicts over control of water areas by environmentalists and sports fisheries. The oyster industry, as well as the commercial net fisheries, sees on the horizon the **tongs tied**. Our imported seafood products are the coming fad.

Now to the point of this article. I must confess that at times, concerning the things of the Lord, I have been “tong” (tongue) tied. To stop the growth of true Christianity, all that Satan has to do is tie the tongues of its possessors. While the world’s religions scream in our ears forcefully, Christianity lies quietly on the sidelines. Where are those who can show their ID?

We are paralyzing our faith by this shut-mouth profession. False religions are taking us over. Our children are being led astray and ensnared. The truth is hushed, and so seldom heard today that when heard, it even sounds strange to the ears of listeners. Yes, within some of our churches, we continue to hear truth, but it is not carried outside the building. May it never be said of us as believers that we were “tong tied”. *“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so...”* Psalm 107:2 (**especially this season**).

LARGEST FISHING TALE—Gib Morgan, a Texas oil man, claimed he fished using a pine tree for his fishing pole, and a ship’s anchor, baited with a steer, for his hook. Once he caught a huge catfish that lowered the water table in the river by two feet (?????). Now that’s a tale!

FISHY HUMOR

--During the Christmas holidays, a man was visiting a friend in a mental institution. He noticed the man’s roommate sitting in a chair fishing in an empty 5-gallon bucket. Thinking he would humor the man, he asked, “How many have you caught, Pops?” The old man replied, “You’re the ninth!”

--An engineer returning from work offshore on an oil drilling rig was greeting the family when his teenage son said, “Dad, if you don’t let me use the car some during Christmas, according to the Bible you hate me.” “Just where does it say that?” replied the father. “In Proverbs 13:24,” replied the son. “He that spareth his ROD hateth his son....”.

FISHY QUESTION—Last edition’s question was the kind of ship that is most unpleasant to travel on. The answer is HARSHIP. For this edition, what would you put on a skiff at Christmas? (Hint—starts with the letter “o”).