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

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SINKING IN—I'm sure you've heard the expression before, especially within the context of "giving full attention to what is being said". I remember my parents saying at various times, "You're just not listening! By your actions what we are saying is just not **sinking in!**"

The same came from teachers in school. Upon a trip to the desk or the principal's office, the phrase found its way to me again. "Wayne, by this grade you show that what is being taught is not **sinking in.**"

Working with my father as a deckhand on a commercial fishing trawler, I was taught the art of net mending. This was a must because of the constant maintenance on our trawls (from tearing by obstructions on the bottom to shark bites). As a youth I watched my father and the instruction was clear, but after my work was examined it was clear something hadn't **sunk in.**

I saw the same in my children, and now my great-grandchildren. Listen closely, your mind is elsewhere. Hello! Are you there? It seems to be a problem I've seen in every generation. I have preached a sermon on say the topic of Heaven, and after the service had someone make a comment about how he or she would love to hear a message about Heaven sometimes. Where had they been for forty minutes? Did nothing that was preached **SINK IN?**

What is the problem? My mother used to put it this way, "It's going in one ear and out the other." It is just not sticking. Sure enough it comes from little to no concentration. The mind is elsewhere. The brain loves to be on vacation. When the heart is not engaged, the problem grows.

Jesus even spoke to His followers about this problem. He would often speak to them about coming events, but somehow they would miss it. In Luke 9:44 He said, "*Let these sayings **sink down** into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.*" Still they did not grasp His words. He spoke often of His resurrection, but they remembered not. The words of men not sinking in is not as devastating as the words of God refused or rejected. This causes eternal damage. Most today give God and His Son Jesus no ear. The words of God have to **sink in** to bring benefit.

Has this verse ever **sunk in?** John 14:6, "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" The only way to Heaven (Father's house) is through Christ. Only a "trust" in Christ's work (death, burial, resurrection) will get you to Heaven's shore.

What about Ephesians 2:8,9? "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" The work of Christ is called Grace, and it is His

work that saves, not ours. Years ago these verses sank deep into my heart. My, what peace they bring!

What about you? I am so thankful to be a child of God and to know that the salvation He offers through His Son is forever. Ephesians 1:12,13, "*That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after than he heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*" I heard, trusted, believed, and am now sealed unto the day of redemption! Let the words of God **SINK IN!**

OCEAN WAVES—Ocean energy could be the wave of the future. The CEO of Ocean Power Technologies (OPT), George Taylor, is convinced that ocean waves will be the future of renewable energy. A high-tech electrical engineer, Taylor started OPT and developed the PowerBuoy system. Taylor's PowerBuoy harnesses the up-and-down motion of the sea to create energy, which is then fed into a cable that brings the power to shore. Recently OPT has built a wave power station in Hawaii for the U.S. Navy. Taylor sees wave energy being used to produce the hydrogen needed for a future full of fuel-cell cars. Wave energy plugs right into the current power grid and has Taylor convinced that it will be competitive with fossil fuels.

Not only are waves a good source of energy, but there are many other ways ocean waves are beneficial. Everybody knows that the sound of the sea is therapeutic. Some psychology professors say that the noise of the waves breaking on the shore or rocks relaxes our brains and stimulates the production of feel-good chemicals in our body, including serotonin and dopamine. Water is then relaxing for the brain and even can be meditative.

I remember years ago buying some music (then on cassettes, now just download) that was advertised as helpful with sleep. Amazing as it was, it was the sounds of the sea.

EDITOR'S NOTE—As I read my Bible, I can understand why Jesus spent so much time around the seashore. I not only enjoy the sea with its benefits, but have the blessing of knowing its Creator personally. Psalm 95:5, "*The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.*" Psalm 77:19, "*Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*"

LURE OF THE SOUTH WIND—The summer will soon be upon us here in the southern U.S. The prevailing wind will be from the South and it reminds me of the story in Acts 27. Paul is on a ship headed for Rome, and he warns the captain and crew of certain disaster. The advice was not taken and the ship left port. When

the gentle south breeze got them off to a favorable start, it looked as if Paul had been wrong, but soon the sky darkened. The breeze turned into a howling wind; waves battered the ship with merciless fury. Several days later the vessel ran aground and was broken into pieces by the storm. Paul had been right!

J.C. Macauley used this story to show what happens to a young person who is lured by the soft south wind of pleasant circumstances that may temporarily accompany wicked conduct. He described five states of decline in Acts 27. A youth leaves (v.13) the moorings of home and church, is caught (v.15) in a whirl of excitement, is driven (v.17) by the winds of passion, is lightened (v.18) of his or her former virtues, and finally is broken (v.41) by the storm.

Sin, like a soothing, gentle breeze
That cools a fevered brow,
May bring delight for just a while—
But not beyond the NOW!
All the water in the world,
However hard it tried,
Could never, never sink a ship
Unless it got inside.
All the evil in the world,
The wickedness and sin,
Could never sink your soul's fair craft
Unless you let it in.

MAN OVERBOARD—There is a story of an ocean passenger lying in his bunk in a storm, deathly seasick. A cry of "Man overboard!" was heard. The passenger thought, "God help the poor fellow; there is nothing I can do." Then he thought at least he could put his lantern in the porthole, which he did. The man was rescued, and recounting the story the next day he said, "I was going down in the darkness for the last time when someone put a light in a porthole. It shone on my hand, and a sailor in a lifeboat grabbed it and pulled me in."

Weakness is no excuse for not putting forth all the little strength we have because who can tell how God will use it? Zechariah 4:10a, "*For who hath despised the day of small things?*" 2 Corinthians 12:9a, "*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*" If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't been in a room with a mosquito!

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY—The grand old hymn of the same title was written by a friend of John Newton, William Cowper (pronounced Cooper), the English poet who struggled all his life with melancholy. According to Ernest Emurian, Cowper wrote this hymn following a period of almost suicidal depression. Calling for a carriage, he ordered the driver to take him to the Ouse River, three miles away where he planned to kill himself. The driver, knowing the state of mind of his passenger, breathed a prayer of thanks when a thick fog enveloped the area. He purposely lost his way, jogging up one road and down another as Cowper fell into a deep sleep. Several hours passed with the driver going in circles, letting his passenger rest. Finally he returned him to his

home. "We're back home!" said Cowper. "How is that?"

"Got lost in the fog, sir. Sorry!" replied the driver.

Cowper paid his fare, went inside, and pondered how he had been spared from harming himself by the merciful providence of God. That same evening in 1774, his forty-third year, reflecting on his narrow escape, he wrote the autobiographical hymn with these opening lines:

"God moves in a mysterious way his wonder to perform; He plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm."

The bridge between despair and hope could be...just a good night's sleep. Psalm 127:2, "*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*"

NEW SPIN ON FAST FOOD—The phalarope is a wading shorebird that has a unique way of dining on creatures too deep for it to reach. Spinning in the water at breakneck speed (a full spin per second), it creates a vortex that "pumps up" shrimp from a depth of three feet.

According to UCLA biologist William M. Hamner, the bird is also a speedy eater. His research team has learned the phalaropes detect prey, thrust, seize, transport, and swallow in less than half a second, at a rate of 180 pecks per minute. David saw God's creative hand in nature and it filled his heart with praise. "*O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts...These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good*" (Psalm 104:24,25,27,28).

FISHY HUMOR

Fisherman to Preacher—"In your sermon this morning, you spoke of our new baby as a 'new wave in the ocean of life'. Don't you think a 'fresh squall' would have hit the mark better?"

A fisherman mourning for his wife said, "She was a good woman. Why, she always hit me with the soft end of the broom!"

Fisherman---My wife prefers tea for breakfast while I prefer coffee.

Friend—Then I suppose you have both.

Fisherman—Nope, we compromise.

Friend—How's that?

Fisherman—We have tea.

Friend—Never despair. Somewhere beyond the clouds the sun is shining.

Fisherman—Yeah! And somewhere below the sea there's solid bottom, but that doesn't help a man when he falls overboard in deep water.

FISHY QUESTION—What did Isaiah tell those who go down to the sea to do? (Hint—chapters 40-44) Write with your answer!