



Volume XL

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

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LIFTED UP—Three times in the Gospel of John our Lord refers to His being "lifted up". On the first occasion, He spoke of it in a private conversation with Nicodemus. This is where the Master said, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* John 3:14-15. Jesus, in that verse, was referring to the absolute necessity of the cursed cross.

Again, in a public discourse in the Temple, Jesus said, *"...When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he..."* John 8:28. In this passage He was speaking to those who would be guilty of executing Him in the manner reserved only for the lowest of the low...the cross.

Lastly, just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus said, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* John 12:32. Lest there be any doubt as to what He meant by being lifted up, verse 33 tells us, *"This he said, signifying what death he should die."*

Jesus prophesied not only His death, but also its manner. He foretold that He would be crucified. That is why He couldn't be assassinated, murdered or killed in any other manner. In Luke 4, the enraged crowd planned to throw Him over a cliff, but they couldn't because Jesus hadn't chosen to die that way. He had declared the cross as the way He would die so He walked through the midst of that enraged, murderous mob (see Luke 4:28-30).

But there is much more to learn from these three verses. In the first place we are told that the drawing of people would be absolutely dependent on His death. Remember He said in John 12:32, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* Think about it! There could have been no drawing of people to Christ for salvation if He had not died on the cross! We read in John 6:44, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."*. But what use would there have been in the Father drawing people to Christ if Christ had not died for their sins? If Christ had not died, the just for the unjust, we could not have been brought to God. 1 Peter 3:18, *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God..."*. However, there would have been no bringing us to God had Christ not gone to the cross to die.

In John 12:24 the Master taught, *"...Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone..."*. Jesus was the grain of wheat and unless He had given His life, He would have been alone. If He had not died on the cross, His work of salvation would not have been accomplished. He could never have declared, "It is Finished." Notice how He doesn't say, "If I go on working miracles, I will draw all men unto

me." Nor does He say, "If I continue living a holy life, I will draw all men unto me." Our Saviour fixes our attention on the death of the cross to show us that His death was absolutely necessary in this matter of salvation.

Today it is vitally important that we understand that the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is the center of the Gospel. His death as our substitute, His sacrifice of Himself, and the pouring out of His blood is the heart of the true Gospel. There are other precious truths leading up to the cross, and there are many precious truths flowing out of the cross, but the doctrine that Christ died for the ungodly is the center.

--MM

MAGDALA, CITY OF NEW LIFE—In 2009 a new hotel was to be built in Migdal, Israel—the ancient fishing village of Magdala on the northwest edge of the Sea of Galilee. That Jewish village had been destroyed by the Romans. Before the construction began, the remains of an ancient synagogue were discovered. There the Israel Antiquities Authority found the Magdala Stone. The carvings on this stone represent the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, but is also adorned with symbols meant to commemorate the First Temple. The carvings show the Second Temple's columns, candlesticks, tables of shewbread, and the Holy of Holies. The stone was probably used as a place for the Torah Scroll to be laid while someone read from it. It is believed that Jesus Himself spoke there. Mark 1:39, *"...he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and cast out devils."* A local coin found in a side room of the synagogue was dated from the year 29—when Jesus was going all through Galilee. The site of the dig is only five miles from Capernaum, a known center of Jesus' activities. Also uncovered were an ancient marketplace and a separate area of rooms with adjacent water pools, presumably used for producing the salty cured fish that Magdala was famous for; a large villa or public building with mosaics, frescoes and three ritual baths; a fishermen's neighborhood, scattered with ancient hooks and other equipment; and a section of a first-century harbor.

Magdala was the home of Mary Magdalene. The Bible says that Jesus cast seven devils out of Mary (Luke 8:2). When she was demon possessed, her life would have been filled with torment, pain and desperation. But Jesus healed her and delivered her from that old life. Her life became peaceful as she committed her life to Christ and became His devoted disciple. She was present at Jesus' trial; she saw Him beaten and humiliated; she stood near the cross; she went early to the tomb to anoint His body with spices; she was the first to see Him after His resurrection; and it was Mary Magdalene that Jesus sent to tell the disciples that He had risen (John 20:17).

TRUE FRIENDS—The animal inhabitant of a certain bivalve shell is a blind slug or snail, called a pinna. It has many enemies, the worst of which is the cuttlefish. No sooner does the pinna open his shell, than the cuttlefish rushes in. How can such a blind, defenseless creature secure food and protect himself?

Luckily there is a kind of crab-fish, with keen sight, who is a constant companion of the pinna. They live together in the shell that belongs to the pinna. When the latter is hungry, he opens his valves and sends out his faithful companion to secure food. If any enemy approaches, the watchful crab dashes back to his blind protector, who quickly closes the valves as soon as his friend is inside.

On the other hand, when the crab has returned with food and no foe is about, he makes a gentle noise at the opening of the shell, which is closed during his absence. When admitted, the two friends then feast together on the fruits of the crab's industry. Proverbs 17:17, "*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*"

FROM SELF TO SERVICE—Most of us are confirmed, self-centered egotists. We are continually petting and coddling ourselves. When we have a headache or the blues or lose some money or get insulted, we act as though we were the only person to whom such a thing had ever occurred. We magnify our ills and misfortunes and forget that our woes are a tiny drop in the great ocean of a common human experience.

What happens to you and me doesn't matter much. Next time you have a flat tire or have to go to the hospital, don't imagine you are the only person who ever had such luck. Look all around you and you'll see thousands with flat tires and inhaling the ether, and most of them usually have flatter tires or worse appendixes than you. As a matter of fact such things as those—trouble, hardship, pain, disaster—are purely incidental matters and not worth half the importance we attach to them.

The important thing is not what happens to you, but what you cause to happen in life. The real object of our existence is not to see how long we can live, how well we can keep the old body machine knocking along, how many years we can stay here. Plenty of folks live more in thirty years than others in eighty. It is not how long but how well you lived that counts. How we fare personally is secondary; what matters is that we produce some worthy contribution to the world we live in.

The best way to get over self-centered living is to select some congenial and worthwhile work and spend the energy you would consume pampering yourself upon some labor of love for the betterment of the world in which you live. Set out to produce a good book or great music; to teach youth or befriend the friendless; to relieve pain or preach the gospel; to raise better vegetables or dignify politics; and work that adds to the sum total of human welfare and the glory of God whether it concerns pigs, politics or poetry.

This way of living for something greater than yourself takes away much of the worry and strain of

life. Petty bothers and concerns for one's self such as vex the self-servers do not fret these greater souls. They are careful to keep themselves in good trim if they may. But if adverse circumstance and condition overtake them they are resigned. They know that they themselves are incidental and are willing that the grain of wheat may die that the better harvest may come.

It is in this way that we pass from self to service, and losing our own self-lives find ourselves again glorified in the betterment of all mankind.

John 13:15, "*For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*"

August 4, 1929—Vance Havner

FUN AND FACTS

--A good memory can remember the day's blessings and forget the day's troubles.

--When is an eye not an eye? When an onion makes it water.

--What is a pirate's favorite letter? Not R (r-r-r-) but C (sea).

--Why does eating fish increase brain-power? Because it travels in schools.

--Did you hear about the skunk that went to church? It had its own pew.

--Has it ever occurred to you that nothing occurs to God?

--Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked.

--I've learned two things: there is a God, and I'm not Him.

--Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.

FISHY QUESTION—February's edition asked you to guess the next three letters in the series GTNTL__ __ __. ITS is the answer (**Guess The Next Three Letters In The Series—GTNTLITS**). For this edition when does $8+8=4$? (Hint—think in terms of time). Get your answer here soon!

AMAZING ANIMAL FACTS

--A flea can jump 350 times its body length.

--Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards.

--Crocodiles cannot stick their tongue out.

--Starfish do not have a brain.

--Slugs have 4 noses.

--Only female mosquitoes bite.

--A polar bear's skin is black.

--Dalmatians are born without spots.

--Dogs sweat through their foot pads to help keep them cool.

--Greyhounds are the world's fastest dogs. They run up to 45 mph.

--A dog's sense of smell is 1000 times greater than human's.

WORDS IN ENGLISH—Recently the Oxford English Dictionary editors named the most complicated word in English and it is only three letters long—RUN. In verb form alone "run" has 645 meanings. **WHATEVER** was named as the most annoying word!?