

Be a Fisher of Souls

Dr. M.W. Lewis

San Diego, 2-26-58

Om. Peace. Amen.

The subject this morning: "Be a Fisher of Souls," "Be a Fisher of Souls."

Before it is possible to "Be a Fisher of Souls" you must save your own Soul. You must have that conscious contact with the One Infinite Father; then you can help others. Not until. Jesus said this in Matthew, the 4th Chapter, 18th and 19th Verses: "And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he said [saith] unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," or really fishers of Souls.

You notice Jesus said, "Follow me..." In other words, he meant, follow him in such a way that you, too, feel the Christ Consciousness which I feel; that you, too, are one with the One Infinite Father, as I know I am. Then you can be fishers of Souls. And throughout the ages, all the saints and sages of all countries have said the same thing. One quotation from Guru Nanak, who lived about 1500 in India, these beautiful words: "Wert man to win good name, praise, and approbation of the entire universe, yet he cometh not under the glance of grace..." that is, of God's Grace, "not one shall have a kind word for him. He is as a worm among worms, even worse than criminals."

Now, that simply means, that unless you know, unless you receive the Grace of God, the glance of His Grace, then you're just like any of the other creations of God which are in delusion. That's what it means, "Even a worm amongst worms," because there's no difference between a well thought of man, and God's Creatures. They are one from His One Infinite Light; they are the delusion from the Play of His Light and Shadow.

And so, realize Nanak's words. Unless you receive, even though you are known throughout universe upon universe, unless you receive the glance of God's Grace, you have nothing. And I notice Kabir, who lived about the same time, the medieval saint of India, the saint of both Mohammedans and the Hindus, he had this to say: "Whatever I did you," and he means God did "I did nothing of myself. Man's real power lies in the consciousness of his Union with God."

When our Master was in India and someone was deathly sick, and they said, "Go in and heal and he'll be better." Finally, he went in. And I said, "You knew when you went in he was going to be healed." He said, "Yes. Otherwise I would not have gone in." You have to receive the Commission of God. You have to realize that His Oneness, that you are one with Him, and that His Power, through His Will, is flowing through you. Then you can do something for others.

And, finally, Kabir says: "Those who escape not from the, not themselves from death, I am unable to impart to others the gift of life."

And the great Ramakrishna says this: "One should first of all realize God and have His vision and grace. Thus armed, one should have His command."

Get the permission, the commission from God to work for others, the good of others. Then only, can we help others. And Jesus said, I do nothing of myself, but the Father in me, He doeth all things.¹ And so, if you want to "Be a Fisher of Souls," get that contact with God first. Attain the communion with Him; then you can give it to others. Then you can help others; then you can heal others. Then, above all, you can relieve the ignorance of the Souls of others, which is the greatest sickness and disease.

Those of you who have gone fishing – I don't suppose many of you go fishing now – but who have. Earlier in life I used to go fishing. You know there are certain baits for different fish. I remember I was up in Maine one time, and a gentleman I went with, he says, "You know, these little frogs make awful good bait for bass."

And one time, when I was a small boy, I was sent off to Prince Edward's Island, where my mother came from, to be rid of, I guess, for the summer. So, I went there, and I was at that age when I was looking for fish. There was a little ole pond, and it had lots of lily pads on it. And I had an idea there were fish in that pond. And the, some of the other fellows said, "No, there's nothing in that." But I went there, and I had for bait a very peculiar substance. I had dough. You

know dough? Only, I made it thick. And so, you put a little on the hook and you cast it in. But you had to get that fish the first time when he took it; otherwise the, the dough would come off – it was soft. Well, do you know I got all the fish I could carry home out of that little pond? Why? Well, the fish were there, but the bait was right.

And so, if you want to "Be a Fisher of Souls," you know what the best bait is? Divine Love; Divine Love! If you can give people that, if the Love of the Infinite Father flows through you to others, that's the bait that will catch them, so to speak, in His...and lift them into His Net of Omnipresence.

Divine Love is what the world needs, and we all know it. The world needs one thing, and that is God – and “God is Love.” Divine Love is the bait to use to bring Souls back to God. Divine Peace and Love and Understanding are more important than food and shelter for the body, because the body passes away. And no matter how much we try to take care of it, it’s gonna go. But the Soul exists eternally, and it will not give up its demands until it reaches the Omnipresence of the Bosom of God.

So understand that, that Divine Love, Peace, and Understanding is what we must give to people, if we are to be fishers of Souls. And if God’s Divine Love will flow through us, we have to serve people. And the greatest service you can render to people is to help them in their Spiritual problems, because those are the real problems of life. It’s good, and well and good, to help them materially, but how much better to give them the solace of God’s Presence by your own God- contact and oneness with God. If you can do that, then you are really helping Souls – being fishers of Souls. But you are increasing your own cup of happiness. Because when you give the Love of the One Infinite Father to people, your cup of perception expands that you hold more of His Great Ocean of Spirit.

Now, America, and the Western world, have been great fishers of men. Even whole nations have risen up to help other nations in distress; to feed them. And this action – and to give them shelter, home and shelter – and this action is very commendable, very sincere, and desirable. But still, you look in the faces of millions of people; something is missing. There is that pitiful expression that they do not know the Peace of the Soul.

And so, you can see if you can give people a little bit of God’s Presence – that’s what the Soul wants – and whether they have a home or not, it makes no difference. Jesus had no place to lay his head, but he had the Great Love of the Infinite Father with him. And that’s what people want! That’s what people must have. And there’ll be no peace or happiness on this earth until people realize they need one thing: and God Alone, God’s Great Love.

India, because she has clung to God Alone, in spite of all her troubles – famine, pestilence, disease, and invasion – has preserved Her National integrity. And greatest of all, She has preserved Her Spiritual treasure. Why? Because She has clung to God Alone, in spite of all Her troubles. And so, we in America, who are good people, who do for other peoples in this world, we need that which India has preserved; our Spiritual treasure, our Spiritual heritage. And if these two countries can get together, so to speak; one with its material advancement and the know-how, and India with the Great Spiritual treasure, I know the world will be a better place in which to live, as they take their respective places among the Nations of the world.

Now, from India has come Self-Realization Fellowship teachings through our own Master, Paramhansa Yoganandaji. And these teachings are the scientific method of what? God contact! And, if you have that God contact, you'll willingly and unselfishly be ready to "Be a Fisher of Souls." If you have that God contact, through you will flow Divine Love; and that Divine Love is what Souls need; and that Divine Love will change people, even though you say not a word.

God is silent; He does not speak. But look at the Power He has; what He has created. So we must do likewise. We must first know our oneness with God. Having that, His Divine Love will flow through us, making us true fishers of Souls. And the realizations which you attain through contact with God, those realizations will let others know the truth of your realizations. And they, feeling that, will be encouraged to do likewise.

There's no example like real living. The Master said to me, "Let your life be a spiritual example for others to follow..." He said the worst thing he could to me, 'cause that's the hardest thing to do! But I know, and I know you all want to do that, as I do. "Let your life be a spiritual example for others to follow to our one abode of light where all will meet who live and do right."

Self-Realization will give you the techniques – the scientific techniques given from India – who has preserved Her Spiritual treasure so that you, and all who follow, will become Spiritual examples to lead others back home to God.

I have a reference from the Bhagavad [Gita]... from the AY3, I'd like to give you at this time, showing what our attitude, or really what our goal should be, as being fishers of Souls. Master has written: "...an adamant resolution arose in my breast: I would share with my fellows, so far as lay in my power, the unshackling truths I had learned at my guru's feet. 'Lord,' I prayed, 'may Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts.4'"

Therefore, if we are to be fishers of Souls, first get God contact. Be enthusiastic about God and meditation. We're so enthusiastic about things in the world. But those things of vital importance to us, our real Soul's nature in its existence, sometimes, we are not as enthusiastic as we should be toward that. So be enthusiastic toward God and toward meditation.

In India; India is the only country that has found it necessary to have meditation for life. That is, it is a necessary of living, necessity of living in India. India is the only country who regularly meditates. In

America, more and more we are coming to it. But in India, it is a necessity for life. And so, let us realize that, us, too, be enthusiastic about God, and about meditation, and having, having the commission of His Presence, we can do our utmost, and will do our utmost, freely, and without any reservations to be fishers of Souls.

One other thing that comes to my mind, and a reference from the Autobiography, is our attitude toward others. Our attitude toward others must be unselfish. This business of "me and mine" must pass away. This business of "I have this; this is mine; this is my automobile; this is my house; this is my television this is..." We must begin to think of others, and realize that we have no quarrel with others, except we have one relationship. And that is to see to it, according to our action, that they are happy in finding God.

And so, Sri Yukteswarji, speaking in the Autobiography says these words, and I think we all can remember them: "I do not expect anything from others.⁵" The first thing we meet somebody: "What can he do for me?" "Who does he know?" That's wrong. He says: "I do not expect anything from others so their actions cannot be in opposition to the wishes of mine.⁶" No one can hurt your feelings. The minute your feelings are hurt, the ego is there. And, he says, most wonderfully: No one...the actions... "...so their actions cannot be in opposition to the wishes of mine. I would not use you for my own ends. I am happy only in your own true happiness.⁷" What a friend the guru was to our Master. Love others unselfishly, as our Heavenly Father Loves us.

And so, in conclusion, when in God's Presence, after attaining God contact, pray one way: "Father, reveal Thyself. Reveal Thyself as Thou art." Having Him, His Divine Love will flow through you. You will not have to speak much; but His Divine Love, flowing through you, will change others.

It isn't your words that change others. It isn't any preacher's words that change others. It's the Power of God's Love that changes them. Get that contact with God. Be one with His Infinite Love, and others will change in your presence. Because Jesus said, "I do nothing of myself, but the Father in me, He doeth all things." And remember Guru Nanak's words: "Even if you are known throughout universe upon universe and receive not the glance of God's grace, you have nothing."

And so, to be fishers of Souls, contact God, that His Great Love flow through you. And you will change others by being a fit instrument of God's Love.

1 St. John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

2 1st John 4:8, "Whosoever is without love does not know God, for God is love."

3 Autobiography of a Yogi, Paramhansa Yogananda, Revision 1951 or earlier

4 Ibid, Revision 1951, Chapter 27, Page 253

5 Ibid, Chapter 14, Page 148

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.