

The Lord Says: 'Let Down Your Nets for a Catch'

I rarely use this column to share a word of prophecy. But for the past few weeks, a message from the Holy Spirit has been rising in my heart. I sense that leaders all across the nation feel a similar stirring.

Everywhere I go these days, I encounter weary Christians and stressed-out church leaders who have been slogging through the challenges of this pandemic season. Some feel disoriented after months of online church meetings. Others have seen church members drift away during the quarantine, never to return. Still others feel they are on the verge of a breaking point because of spiritual warfare, tension in relationships, government lockdowns or overwhelming discouragement.

It reminds me of how the disciple Peter must have felt after fishing all night and catching nothing. Peter had failed the Lord. He had denied Jesus three times. He assumed he was disqualified. He went back to his old fishing career, but he couldn't even do that successfully. There were no fish in his nets.

But then the resurrected Jesus called from the shore. He said confidently: "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find the fish" (John 21:6, NASB).

Peter recognized the familiar voice of His Savior. He still felt ashamed for denying Jesus, yet Jesus gave him another chance. Peter hesitantly threw the net back into the sea, and the fish began to swarm in the water. The net wasn't strong enough to contain the catch.

This miracle was Jesus' way of showing Peter that he was still in the game—and that God would use him to bring about a spiritual breakthrough. It would only be a few more weeks

before the day of Pentecost, when 3,000 people made the decision to follow Jesus after Peter's first attempt at mass evangelism.

Many of us feel like Peter after he had fished all night. We are tired. We wonder if our labor is making a difference. We see aging congregations, ineffective methods of ministry and an increasingly secular culture that is hostile to our faith.

But I hear the voice of the Lord calling from the shore. He still invites us to put our nets into the water—not in the same old way we did before, but on “the right side.” He invites us to try new methods, shift our paradigms and toss old traditions. He promises a surprise after a long season of fruitlessness.

Many churches I have visited in the past several months are beginning to see an unexpected harvest of souls. Many pastors have told me that new people who never attended church in the past are showing up at their services as congregations are meeting in person again.

My friend Josh Lindquist is a 37-year-old evangelist who leads Global Harvest Revival in Minneapolis. Before the pandemic he spent most of his time preaching overseas because he felt people were more open to receive the gospel in foreign countries. But today he is witnessing a new spiritual openness in the United States.

“I believe that the on-fire, remnant church is realizing that the only hope for America is a spiritual awakening,” Josh told me yesterday after leading an outreach in downtown Chicago. “America has been very hardened to the gospel, but now because of all the shakings in our society—the coronavirus, political turmoil and economic issues—I am seeing such openness.”

Lindquist has been working with two national ministries—evangelist Sean Feucht and Awaken the Dawn—to conduct bold evangelism campaigns in major cities. Awaken the

Dawn's goal is to set up 100 tents all across the United States to mobilize community-wide outreaches. At many of these events, Lindquist has seen dramatic displays of repentance.

"I've seen people bringing their drugs, meth and vapes to the altars," he says. "Usually I see this type of response overseas, but I'm seeing such a desperation here, especially among young people. There is a huge hunger. I believe America is awakening."

We can't miss this moment. We can't sleep during the harvest season. The Lord is saying to us:

"I have not given up on this nation. I will draw the broken, the hopeless and the hungry, and I will pour out my mercy on them. Prepare your nets and use them. Open your hearts wide and preach with compassion. My Spirit will empower you to reach the lost. Don't rely on old religious methods. I will give you creative strategies, new ideas, new partnerships and a message that is soaked in My love and forgiveness, not condemnation or judgment. Expect even the rebels, the prodigals, the addicts and the skeptics to surrender to Me. Cry out for the rain of My Spirit. Expect to be shocked by the level of response. Then preach with boldness, and I will give you a catch that you cannot contain." {eoa}

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