

Captured and Never Free

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being caught by the Lord, with no escape or alternative, and following Him through challenges and difficulties.

Duration: 52:29

Scripture: John 6:5-7, John 6:37, John 6:44, John 6:53, John 6:60-69

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Simon Peter and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000. Simon Peter initially doubted his ability to follow Jesus and went back to his old profession of fishing. However, when he caught nothing, he realized his need for Jesus. The feeding of the 5,000 occurred in a desert place where many people had followed Jesus. The disciples were concerned about how to feed the crowd, but Jesus performed a miracle with just five barley loaves and two small fishes, feeding everyone and even having leftovers. The preacher emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's provision and focusing on eternal things rather than temporary needs.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to John, chapter 6. John, chapter 6. We'll read from verse 53 through verse 69. John, chapter 6, verse 53. Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man and drank His blood, ye have no life in yourselves.

He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live on account of the Father, he also who sees me, who eats me, shall live also on account of me. This is the bread which has come down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. He that eats this bread shall live forever.

These things he said in the synagogue, teaching in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, having heard it, said, This word is hard, who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmur concerning this, said to them, Does this offend you? If then ye see the Son of Man ascending up where he was before, it is the spirit which quickens, the flesh profits nothing. The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.

But there are some of you who do not believe, for Jesus know from the beginning who they were who did not believe and who will deliver him up. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no one can come to me unless to be given to him from the Father. From that time many of his disciples went away back and walked no more with him.

Jesus therefore said to the twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of life eternal, and we have believed and known that thou art the Holy One. Dear Lord, we want to thank thee for gathering us together here before thy presence. Lord, do pray that in our spirit thou will lead us to that scene in a synagogue in Capernaum.

And enable us to hear the words that thou spoke at that time. Lord, we pray that by thy spirit thou will quicken thy written word to us, speak to our hearts, reveal thyself, thy beauty, thy glory to us once more, that we may follow thee to the very end. We commit this time into thy hands, Lord, to open our hearts, our understanding, bring us into that eternal reality.

Deliver us from all that is temporal, earthly, passing away. Lord, we need thee. Come to us this morning.

We ask in thy precious name. Amen. Many years ago I read a book, and the title of that book is Once Caught, No Escape.

This is the autobiography of Norman Grubb. Now, I don't know how many of you heard about Norman Grubb. He is the son-in-law of C.T. Studd, and I don't know how many of you know C.T. Studd.

This is his autobiography, and that title touched me very deeply. Ever since, I cannot forget that title, because in that title you see real Christianity. You see true discipleship.

You see what is meant by the calling of our Lord Jesus, and you see what true Christians should be. Once caught, no escape. I wonder how many of God's people are caught, not by caught, not caught by a teaching, nor caught by any form or system, but caught by the Lord himself.

And once you are caught, you have no escape. Now, how do we know that you are caught? We know because if you have not been caught, you have many escapes. You have many alternatives.

You have many ways that you can go. But once you are caught by the Lord, there is no more alternative. You are finished.

Finished with him. That is true Christianity. Today, God's people are too easy, have too many alternatives.

When things go right, according to their desire, they go with the Lord. When things become difficult, or when you cannot understand, then you walk no longer with the Lord. In a sense, God's people are not caught by Christ.

Christianity becomes easy. To be a believer means that you believe the Lord Jesus as your Savior. You are saved by grace, and you are blessed by the Lord.

You expect to have an easy, smooth life on earth. You are not thinking of the cross that you have to bear. When you are challenged by the will of God, in your life, you find a bypass.

You have alternatives. This is not Christianity. This is not discipleship.

This is not the calling of the Lord. This is not what Christian is supposed to be. So that title has been with me all these years.

Is our Christianity real? Are we true disciples of the Lord Jesus? Why is it that our Christian life is unfulfilled? It is not what it ought to be. It is a serious matter. To be a Christian is not something to play with.

Sidnestad wrote a booklet called Chocolate Christians. Many Christians are like chocolate Christians. So what is our Christianity? Are we true disciples of the Lord? Have we been caught by Him? Or, we have many alternatives that we can choose.

This reminds me of the scene 2,000 years ago, recorded in John chapter 6. And you know the feeling of the 5,000. You find in all the Gospels. In Matthew chapter 14, Mark chapter 6, Luke chapter 9, and John chapter 6. Now whenever something that is recorded in all the Gospels, you know the significance of that incidence.

The feeling of the 5,000 is recorded in all the four Gospels. But only in the Gospel of John it gives us the inner meaning of the feeling of the 5,000. The feeling of the 5,000 is a fact.

Our Lord performed a miracle. With five loaves and two fishes, He fed 5,000 men beside women and children. And there are twelve basket fragments left.

But the Bible tells us, according to John, that this miracle is a sign. Miracle is not just miracle. Miracle is a sign.

In other words, the miracle is like a signpost pointing to something deeper. Something that is more important. So the feeling of the 5,000 is a sign.

But oftentimes we see the miracle, but we do not see the sign. We stay with the miracle, but we do not follow the sign and find the source of that miracle, the meaning of that miracle. This incident happened.

After John the Baptist was beheaded, the twelve disciples, the twelve apostles whom the Lord sent out, came back. So the Lord took them and said, Let us go aside and have some rest. So they went to a desert place.

It was near the time of the Passover. So you find many pilgrims were on the way. Many followed the Lord to the desert.

So the Lord taught them. And you remember the story. When it was becoming dark, His disciples came to Him and said, Lord, send them away.

This is a desert place. Let them go to the villages to buy food. And the Lord said to His disciples, According to John 6, He said to Philip, Give them to eat.

And Philip said, Now how can we feed so many people? Even if we bought 200 denarii of bread, everybody just only have a bit. There is no way. And there was Andrew.

Now Andrew is a person who is very careful. He notices small things. Of all the thousands of people, he noticed a little boy.

Having five barley loaves and two small fishes. His mother prepared that for this boy as his meal. So Andrew told the Lord, There was a little boy who had five loaves and two fishes.

But what can you do with that so little? And the Lord said, Give it to me. Thank God for that little boy who was not so selfish as to cling to his five loaves and two fishes. When the Lord asked for it, he gave all to the Lord.

And I hope we will do the same. The Lord took the five small barley loaves. And you know barley, according to the custom of that time, is the food of the poor.

He took it in his hand, blessed it, and distributed it. And 5,000 men with women and children were all fully fed. And 12 hand baskets full of leftover.

When the people saw that, what was their reaction? The Lord knew human hearts. The Lord knew that they would force him to be their king. If anyone can solve our food, he can be our king.

He should be our king. Then all our problems are solved. So our Lord Jesus, first of all, sent his disciples away.

Now why did he do that? Because his disciples are no different than the crowds. They have the same idea. And as a matter of fact, that idea never left them.

Even when our Lord Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time, they were still thinking about that. And even after the resurrection of the Lord, before his ascension, that's the question they ask. So the Lord knew his disciples will do the same thing to him.

So he sent them away. Then he sent the multitudes away. He went to the mountains and prayed.

And of course, you know, the disciples, they were rowing in the sea of Tiberias. And there was a wind. And then the Lord walked on the water and joined them.

And you know the story about Peter. Anyway, they arrived on the other shore. The next day, the multitude went back to the place where our Lord fed the five thousands and found the Lord was not there.

They knew the Lord didn't go with the disciples. But there was no other boat. So when the boat came in, they discovered the Lord was not there.

So they all hurried over to the other side. And they found our Lord Jesus in Capernaum. Now by all outward appearance, anyone would be pleased when you find so many people are after you.

But the Lord knew better. Soon when they came to him, a great multitude coming to him as if they were after him. The Lord knew what they were after.

So the Lord said, You come to me not because you have seen the sign, but because you have eaten. They do not see the sign. They were being fed.

It was a miracle. It was a fact. But they do not see the sign.

They do not see how that miracle which the Lord performed is going to lead them into something eternal. Their mind is on all the food. How can we solve our present problem, our physical problem, the need of our body? Our body is our God.

And anyone who can satisfy our belly, he can be our king. So our Lord said, Work not for the things that perish. But work for the things eternal that cannot be perished.

Well, they take up the word work. All right, if you are talking about work, then tell me, what are the works that we should do? And the Lord said, This is the work of God. Not your work.

This is the work of God. God has done it. God has sent His only beloved Son into this world to be the bread of life.

He has done it. All you need to do to do the work of God is to believe in the one whom God has sent. Of course they could not understand because their mindset is on the food that will nourish their body.

Not on anything eternal. So they ask, What sign do you do that we believe in you? They have already seen the sign but they don't know it. And the Lord began to speak to them and said, I'm the bread of life.

I'm sent from heaven. He that eats this bread, the other bread, that is, the bread that he has multiplied will perish. But he who eats me shall never be hungry or thirsty.

We have life in him. And in the last day I will raise him from the dead. My flesh is eatable.

My blood is drinkable. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life. Our Lord is trying to lead them away from that which is physical, material, earthly, temporal, into something that is eternal, heavenly, forever.

The Lord is trying to lead them away even from His blessing to Himself. That is the will of God. But do you know what happened? Not only the multitudes but the Bible says many of His disciples began to murmur and said, now this is hard saying.

How can we take it? It's too much. And the Lord said, if you see the Son of Man ascending to Heaven then you will see the difference. And from that day onward many of His disciples departed and walked no longer with Him.

Now brothers and sisters, this scene has been repeated numberless times throughout the centuries. Many crowded to the Lord but when the Lord wanted to make real business with them many departed and walked no longer with Him. So finally our Lord turned to the Twelve whom He has chosen.

And the Lord said, do you also want to go? If you feel that way feel free to do it. Thank God for Simon Peter. He said, Lord, home shall we go.

You have the word of eternal life. We have believed and know that You are the Holy One of God. What does it mean? It means that one's caught, no escape.

Lord, You have caught me. Even if You want to push me away, where can I go? Whom can I go? I was caught by You. I have no alternative.

I have nowhere to go. I am stuck with You. You have the word of life.

Even though I suppose Peter did not really understand what the Lord said. I am the bread of life. My blood is drinkable.

My flesh is eatable. I wonder whether Peter really understood. Probably not.

But he was caught by the Lord. No escape. Was Peter always like that? I wonder.

Do you remember the story when Simon led by his brother Andrew to the Lord? The Lord looked in John chapter 1. The word look there doesn't mean just cast a glance. It means look up and down. Look deeply.

Look into His very being. The Lord looked him up. In other words, the Lord knows everything about him.

And the Lord said, You are Simon, but you shall be Peter. And because of that, Simon began to follow the Lord. I believe that when our Lord performed His first miracle in the feast at Cana, His disciples were with Him.

Now, who were these disciples? I believe Simon Peter was one of them. And after John the Baptist was imprisoned, our Lord began His public ministry in Galilee. And the first thing He did, He called for disciples.

He walked by the sea of Galilee. He saw Simon Peter, an angel. They were casting out the nets, trying to catch fishes.

And the Lord said, Come and follow Me. I will make you fishes of men. They left their nets, their boat, and followed the Lord.

But then in Luke chapter 5, when our Lord came back to where Simon lived, you know what happened? He went fishing all night. And the next day, when our Lord was going to speak to the multitudes, He borrowed Simon's boat, and He spoke to the multitude. After He finished, He told Simon Peter, Launch out to the deep, and get a haul.

Why? The Lord knew the heart of Simon. He followed the Lord for a time. Then He began to wonder whether He could do it.

He lived with the Lord Jesus. He heard His word. He saw His actions.

And He looked at Himself. I'm a fish. I'm a drop out.

There is no way to follow Him. I won't make it. So He tried to quietly drop out.

He went back to His old profession. Fishing. But thank God He caught nothing that night.

If He got something, I don't know what would happen. God knows. He caught nothing.

He cannot go back. God will not allow Him. And our Lord Jesus knew all about it.

The Lord knew His heart. As if the Lord said, Now if you really want to drop out, all right. You're no longer following Me, My disciple.

So if I use your boat, I have to pay for it. I will pay you well. A boat full of fish.

And dear brothers and sisters, you remember the story. When Simon saw what happened, he was an expert in fishing. Our Lord knew nothing about fishing.

But He said, well, for your sake, I'll do it. But he didn't believe. But when he saw that boat full of fish, he saw the glory of God.

God is almighty. There is nothing He cannot do. He can make the impossible possible.

He saw. So he bowed down before the Lord and said, Depart from Me. I'm a sinner.

He was the one who tried to depart from the Lord. But now he was caught. Depart from Me.

I'm a sinner. You have to understand the inward feeling. The inward feeling is I am unfit.

I am unworthy. But Lord, will you take me? And the Lord said, Do not be afraid. I will make you a fish of man.

And from that time onward, this man was caught. No escape. How shall we go except going with you? We are finished.

Brothers and sisters, I wonder whether this is our condition. What is our concept of Christianity? Is it just blessings? If the Lord is trying to lead you away from blessings to Himself, will you go with Him? If the Lord takes away all the blessings and gives you a hard time, will you depart? Do you have an alternative where you can go, what you can do? Or has the glory of the Lord so caught you that you are finished? You have no alternative but follow Him. That is Christianity.

That is discipleship. Have we ever been caught by the Lord? Throughout the centuries, many people are caught. And if you read their biographies, you find that they have been challenged.

They have been tested. And in their life experience, they met the Lord or the Lord met them in such a way that the Lord became the first in their life. Abraham, the glory of the Lord, the Lord of glory appeared to him.

And that finished him up. He had to depart, separated from all the old relationship and by faith follow the Lord, not knowing where to go. He failed many times but no escape.

It doesn't mean that once you are caught you will never fail. You do. You are not stronger than anybody else, not better than anybody else.

It is the grace of God, the mercy of God. But even so, no escape. You may try but it won't work.

Brothers and sisters, think of the Apostle Paul. On the road to Damascus he was caught by the Lord. And once caught, no escape.

To be a Christian, to be a disciple of the Lord, is a challenge. I believe, brothers and sisters, in all our Christian lives, after you have believed in the Lord Jesus, you must be challenged by the Lord many times in many ways. Sometimes it is something that you love more than anything else.

But the Lord will challenge you. When you are challenged, what is the meaning behind it? Very simple. Who is first? Who is all? Is Christ or something else? A thing that you love, a habit that you will not give up, a friendship even the nearest and closest to you? The Lord said, unless you love me more than your father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, children, even your own life, you cannot be my disciple.

The requirement is absolute. The Lord demands our all. Above all things.

And that's the reason why in our Christian life you are almost daily faced with these challenges. The Lord or something else you love. Which comes first? Are you willing to give up what you love and love the Lord? I'm afraid, dear brothers and sisters, we are living in a very testing moment.

As the Bible says, not only the earth but the heaven are being shaken. It is very true. And in this time of shaking, unless you have a very solid relationship with the Lord, I wonder what will happen to you.

In no sense it means that you are stronger than anybody else. No. But you need a stronger magnet.

The Lord has so attracted you that you have no escape. Otherwise, I'm afraid, we will not be able to stand. May the Lord, dear brothers and sisters, draw us in such a way.

Nothing can really draw us except himself. His glory. His love.

His will. His perfect purpose concerning us. Only this is strong enough to catch us.

At once caught, no escape. So that's the burden of my heart. And I do pray, Lord, that every one of us will really go back to the Lord and ask the Lord to show us where we are.

Whether we still have many alternatives, many escape roads, or whether we are caught by the Lord. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, we do praise and thank Thee for Thy love towards us. Thou are willing to give up everything for us.

May Thy love touch our hearts that we will not keep back anything from Thee. We will not allow anything to take precedence before Thee. We are willing to lay everything at Thy feet and acknowledge Thee as truly our Lord of all.

Do not allow us to take our relationship with Thee lightly. Lord, Thou are looking for a people who are ready for Thy return. Do it to us.

We are willing to be willing. We want to follow Thee all the way. Aside from Thee, there is no one we can go.

Nowhere we can go. You have the life, word of life. You are the Holy One of God.

We worship Thee in Thy precious name.

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