

## THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

Week #1 of a 5-Week Series, "Metaphysical Bible Storytime"

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I thought it would be fun. We're going to start this new series called "Metaphysical Bible Storytime," because we all like a good storytime, right? And I thought it would be fun, because I can remember, I never ... When I was in ... I grew up in Unity, but in my teens and 20s, I didn't like the Bible. Anyone else feel like, *"I don't really like the Bible; I don't really get it?"* It's like back then, and I don't know ...

And then in 1999 – at the ripe old age of 29 -- I went for my first week of classes at Unity Village back in Lee's Summit, about 45 minutes from Kansas City: our headquarters for Unity. And I took my first classes. And I was really burnt out to the time. I had done, you know, undergrad and graduate school and an internship, and started working. And I was burnt out. And I was like, *"Oh, I need to get back to Unity Village and take classes."*

And I thought it was going to be like a retreat. [Congregants laugh] Turns out they assign you the classes to take. And I said, *"Well, I definitely don't want to take the Bible class."*

And she said, *"Girl, you have no choice. You're here for this first week. You get these four classes."*

And I was like, *"Oh."* And then I walked away from that week loving the Bible -- loving Bible stories! Because I started to realize that, once you took the historical context, the metaphysical definitions and meanings, and you put it all together with a new spiritual insight ... well, then you can apply the stories to your life today. And they become really exciting, but also the Bible comes alive for you.

So tonight, we're going to start a five-week series: "Metaphysical Bible Storytime." And I'm going to start tonight with "THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH." It's from Luke 5. And it's also referred to as "Jesus Calls the First Disciples." Because this is really when he's also calling the first disciples. He's starting to gather up his disciples.

Now here we are in Holy Week. So, this is going to be a really quick week, right? We've got the beginning of the disciples; then we've got Good Friday. Why do we call it Good Friday? And then we've got Easter, right? So it's a Holy Week. We're going to kick it off with "The Miraculous Catch of Fish."

**And it's really a story about prosperity and abundance and how we can manifest prosperity in our own lives** based on our own level of faith or belief in our own divine nature and our faith in our own selves. And can I manifest in my life? Can I demonstrate with the power of my words, my thoughts, and my actions?

**It's a story also about knowing that we live in an abundant universe.**

So, let's jump into our first story, everyone. So our guy, Jesus -- he's standing near the lake of Gennesaret. And he's speaking to a group of people. He's teaching; he's preaching. He's got his preach on. And as he's preaching, he sees there's two boats at the water's edge. And he notices that they're pulling up their nets and they've got no fish. And they're just pulling up the nets with no fish and getting ready to go home.

So, he steps into one of the boats -- the boat of Simon. And he continues to speak to the crowd from the boat. And then when he concludes his speaking, he says to Simon, *"Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch,"* meaning go further down into the water; put out your nets.

Now Simon answers, *"Master, we were working all night long. We haven't caught anything. But it's you. So okay; we'll go back out and we'll let down our nets."*

And they do that, and what happens, they catch so many fish that the nets are starting to break, and they need to call the other boat over. And the other boat comes over, and there's so many fish that both the boats are so heavy they're about to sink. That's how many fish now that they've caught.

Now Simon, feeling all the feelings, I guess, because he falls to Jesus' knees and he says, *"Go away from me, for I am a sinful man."* A little dramatic, I think. [Congregants laugh] But nevertheless: *"Go away from me, for I am a sinful man."* And his partners, James and John, are watching this. And they're wondering: What's Jesus' reaction going to be?

And Jesus replies, *"Do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people."* Now, I understand that sounds terrible maybe in today's context, but what he's saying is that you will go out and you will gather the people to me and my new teachings. In other words: You now will be my disciples or my students that will now help lead me into getting my message out to all the people. And this starts the beginning of his disciples.

So, how do we decipher this spiritually? Metaphysically? So, whenever I'm looking at any Bible story, I start with -- Unity has the "Metaphysical Bible Dictionary"; we also have "The Revealing Word," both written by and collected by our co-founder, Charles Fillmore. And it really helps us to define the nouns, the people, the places, so that we can really look at the deeper spiritual meanings and the historical context of what's happening at that time.

So metaphysical means beyond the physical. We don't look at it literally; we look at what's the spiritual message here. So, I always look at those two resources -- "The Revealing Word" and the "Metaphysical Bible Dictionary." And then I kind of rewrite it with the new terms or definitions, and then I look deeper, and I really just sit with it; meditate with it. And I say, *"Okay; how does this apply to me today? What's the message here?"*

So, here's what we learn from this story. So metaphysically, Gennesaret -- remember he's in Gennesaret - - it means the valley of riches. The valley of riches. So, he's in the lake -- Gennesaret -- meaning the lake of riches; the lake of prosperity, of abundance.

And the soon-to-be disciples, are casting their nets. And they're in shallow water. Or they're kind of just casting it out and, *"Nothing's here; we're just going to kind of come in."* And so often with a challenge -- particularly maybe centered on prosperity -- we're looking at the surface of the water. Right? We're looking at the surface of the water for our answers. We want to just look at what's just right here in front of me. Or the situation seems to be this; this is the answer. *"We went out; there was no fish; we're coming back in."*

Or, *"I have this challenge; there's nothing I can do about it; it's just this way. I'm going to keep on going about and thinking there's no answer here."* We forget to look deeper. We forget to see beyond what's right in front of us -- the surface level; to go out larger, right? Cast our nets wider, and deeper to see more with our spiritual eyes. Because beneath the surface, there are plenty of fish.

Now, metaphysically, fish represents ideas. Specifically, in "The Revealing Word," Charles Fillmore writes fish represent ideas in which there is great possibility of increase. Fish represent ideas in which there is great possibility of increase.

So, here we're being asked to take our view deeper into a spiritual view and to look around. And if you don't like what you see, you don't call it a day and say, *"Well, our nets are empty; we're going home."* But instead to realize, *"Okay; let me look bigger and wider and farther."*

So, even as I'm standing here right now, if I was in need of abundant health ... maybe I need an orthopedic surgeon. Are there any orthopedic surgeons here? Okay, that would be pretty remarkable if

there was, wasn't there? [Congregants laugh] Now, if I just said, *"Okay, I need an orthopedic surgeon: anyone here? Nope. Okay. Well, that's it. Nothing I can do about that knee then."* No! We wouldn't stop there, would we? We would cast our nets wider. We would keep on asking: "Well, maybe in the zip code. Well, maybe in Greater Phoenix. Definitely probably in the state I could find an orthopedic surgeon, right?"

But if I just stopped with just this room, I've limited my good. I've limited my abundance. So, we need to take action -- maybe further, deeper than we thought. Maybe look; widen our view and see all the possibilities.

So, our fifth Unity principle is about taking action: having faith and then taking action. Because as we take action on that faith that the waters are plentiful -- that there's a lot of resources out there; there's lots of fish or divine ideas -- our abundant supply is available to us. Because God -- the Universe -- provides us with an abundance of substance in the way of ideas to take actions on to create our prosperity from.

So, in other words, so often you might be thinking, *"Gosh, what am I going to do about this situation?"* And an idea probably pops into your head, and what do you do? *"Oh, no, no; I couldn't do that. Oh, no, no, that would be too hard. That's not possible."* Right? We swipe away every idea. And yet, ideas are our prosperity!

So, don't doubt, right? So, instead of swiping them away, and doubting, and only seeing shallow waters -- *"No fish; got to go home"* -- keep on trying. Keep taking action on the ideas. Because even if the ideas go nowhere, or don't seem to produce anything, that's information. And the more information we have, the more ideas we have on which to draw. Because there's more fish to draw; more fish or divine ideas to catch. More prosperity is out there for us.

So, with prayer and meditation, we sit in silence; we open ourselves up to listening and hearing divine ideas. But wait! There's more.

Because when we look metaphysically at the apostles -- the disciples that were there that day -- there was Simon. So, Simon's name means "the one who listens." And when we look at our spiritual powers -- our spiritual qualities -- we often associate Simon with the spiritual attribute of zeal. So, here's Simon; he's actively listening energetically, with a lot of energy or aliveness around what Jesus is saying. Because he really could have said, *"Dude, we already tried that. Never mind, we're going home."* But instead he said, *"Well, we tried it, but okay."* Right? He listened. There was an enthusiasm there.

We also have Andrew. Andrew is associated with strength -- spiritual strength. That's to persevere; to keep going. We see that James was there that day -- James, son of Zebedee. He represents our wisdom, our discernment, our intuition, our knowing, our inner knowing.

And then the disciple, Apostle John -- he represents love. And not in a romantic way, but love being that spiritual attribute to harmonize and attract our good to us. That which we are desiring. Plenty of fish. Or plenty of whatever that abundance is.

So, what a fantastic story here to remind us that, when in times of doubt or challenges, we can turn to these divine powers within us -- these qualities within us such as zeal: that enthusiasm to achieve, that urge to keep going past this room. To keep casting out our nets. We have within us strength: the spiritual strength to stay steadfast. We have within us wisdom to discern what is best for us. And we have already within us this love or harmony in order to attract to us and bring to us our good and our abundance. They're already all within us! They're already on the boats with Jesus, that Christ consciousness!

So, we don't need to look "out there" for qualities that are already within us. All the spiritual attributes and strengths that we think we need are already within us. We already have them. It's just up to us to remember to tap into, to be conscious of them, and to apply them.

So, with this in mind, **what the story is telling us is: that, by embodying our divine nature, we can go deeper into the waters of our consciousness and focus on our spiritual thoughts of plenty. We can listen to our Christ nature -- our divine nature -- and then we take action on these divine ideas. And then we expect to receive even more. We need an extra boat. That's how much good comes back to us!**

Unity minister/author/speaker Eric Butterworth said, *"God is the source of a mighty stream of substance, and you are a tributary of that stream; a channel of expression."*

So, we keep the stream of our supply open by listening to the divine within us and around us. And then we take action on those ideas. When we take action, then we're moving with the flow of life; with the flow of that life energy. So, we keep everything in motion. It's just like a stream. We become the channel through which prosperity is expressed.

So, if you have a body of water and it's just sitting there, right? If we're just ... we're afraid and so we're just holding on to our money, our prosperity, or whatever it is ... well, that pond gets swampy, doesn't it? You need an inflow. But then it's spilling all over the place; you need an outflow. Then we get a flowing stream that's clean. Same thing in our lives. We need an inflow and an outflow so that we can be the channels through which prosperity is expressed.

So, I want you to take a moment right now to think about a time where you felt the happiest. When was a time recently where you felt happy? Everyone got a moment recently where you felt really, really happy? And just in one word, what would that one word be that made you happy? What was it about that moment that made you happy? Just a raise of hands. How many people was it your family? How many people friends? Maybe pets. Maybe it was a trip or travel. Maybe it was a good meal.

Did anyone have the word money? No. Everyone's shaking their head no. No; the word "having money" didn't come to mind. Maybe you needed money to do whatever it was that made you feel happy and have that experience ... but ultimately it was the people, the pets, the environment that you were in that raised your vibration and feelings of happiness; of feeling rich.

So, what makes your life rich? What gives you the feeling of abundance? What makes up a life well lived? It's usually not the material things.

So also in my 20s, I went to a conference and there was a man who was quite wealthy. He had his own private plane and several businesses and homes. And I remember so clearly he said, *"Well, yes; having money made life easier in many ways; eliminated worries about medical bills and housing and food."* But he said it didn't necessarily mean he was happy all the time or that he felt free all the time or that he didn't experience challenges and pain in life.

And then also around that same time, I can remember it was a Unity minister in Orange County in California. But he was also a therapist, and he had a practice in Beverly Hills. And he said, *"I like to work with people in Beverly Hills. You want to know why?"*

And I said, *"Yeah."*

And he said, *"Because I don't have to spend the first four to six weeks of sessions convincing people that money is not going to solve all their problems. They're in my office. They already know that. We've just shaved off four weeks right there."*

Yeah. What makes your life rich?

So, here's on the screen from Eric Butterworth. In "Spiritual Economics," he notes: *"The Latin root for prosperity means 'according to hope' or 'to go forward hopefully.'"*

I wanted to make sure it was on the screen so you can really sink into that. Prosperity: according to hope; to go forward hopefully.

Notice that it's not a condition, but it's an attitude and a way of thinking. It's based on how you think about your life. It's your thoughts and feelings determining your level of how prosperous you feel. It's our third Unity principle: that our thoughts are powerful; that our words are powerful. From your lips to your ears; from your thoughts to your belief system.

So, you can pay your bills and feel poor, or you can pay your bills and feel grateful for your ability to pay them (or what you can pay of them, or that you can set up a payment plan). But there's a choice there.

Here's what Charles Fillmore, our co-founder, wrote in his book, "Keep a True Lent." On your screen; you can follow along. He says, *"Watch your thoughts when you're handling your money, because your money is attached through your mind to the Source of all substance and all money. When you think of money, which is visible, as something directly attached to an invisible Source that is giving or withholding according to your thought, you have the key to all riches and the reason for all lack."*

What energy or thought are you attaching -- consciously or unconsciously -- to your money? In other words, what's that energy or feeling underneath or within you as you handle your money? Or your debit card? Or your tap on your phone? I love tapping my phone! [Congregants laugh] I feel really rich.

But is it fear and worry and anxiety? Or anger? Not enoughness? *"Oh no!"*? Or is it, *"I'm so happy I can buy this right now!"*? When you're at a gas station, are you freaking out and complaining you got California gas prices right now? Or the alternative to say, *"Yay! I can put gas in my car so I can get to where I want to go. I can put gas in my car so I can go visit my friend or I can come to church"* or wherever your car is taking you.

But see, it's the strong feeling that's driving the thought and therefore the experience. Prosperity is an attitude: let me go forward in this situation with hope.

An action my husband and I have taken in the past -- of course, whenever I share a personal story, I've asked permission first -- and we continue to take is tithing. We tithe to circulate our good. Because giving is a way to be more abundant.

And it seems counterintuitive. *"What, I've got to give in order to receive? You know, give to get?"* Yes! Because as we give, what happens is: It's an energetic message to the Universe that says, *"Yep. I know I'm in the flow of prosperity and I will be supported."* We're acknowledging as we give that there's no lack except in our consciousness.

So, when our kids were younger, I was a stay-at-home mom. Juan was starting out in a new career. Money was tight. This is around 2012. So in 2012, we had maybe like \$25 for a week. I did the math. With inflation, that's like having \$37 for the week with two small children. So if you can think of ... Like, I mean, we bought the food for the week ... but there was gas to get to games and school. There were other things that would come up during the week. It was tight.

And so, there was the reminder: *"Hey, the truth is we live in an abundant universe."* That's what we would say: *"The truth is we live in an abundant universe."* And then we focused our thoughts on: *"There's an abundance of resources in the universe. We will be supported. And we will listen for ideas that come to us."* And then we aligned our consciousness with the knowing that there is enough.

And then, with this belief in mind, we tithed. Even when we only had \$25 for the week, we still tithed, even if it was a couple bucks. And you know what? Somehow the \$25 --\$37 in today's money ... Somehow we got through the week with \$25 and a full tank of gas and everything we needed.

Because tithing is living in a giving consciousness. It's not just about our words. It's about the energy. Our energy shifted. The vibration we were sending out changed. Because remember: we're vibrational beings. So, we had our action – tithing -- matching our thoughts.

The action: We threw out our nets. And the thought was, *"If I throw out my net, I'm going to receive what I need and even more."*

And remember, prosperity: it's not just about money. We often associate it with money. But time can also be something that we bemoan we don't have enough of. Or maybe I don't have enough friends, or I don't have a relationship, or I don't have good health. It's that lack thinking. *"There's not enough fish, so I'm going to go home with my empty net."*

But that lack thinking turns up in every area of our life. So, we start to pay attention to it. This is your invitation; start to pay attention! Again, in Unity we teach: our thoughts have creative power to determine our events and attract our experiences. So, we often hear, *"Where your focus goes, your life flows."* Or The Law of Mind Action: thoughts held in mind produce after their kind.

It's easy for our humanness to see too much poverty or too much hate or too much violence. And I'm not saying to pretend it's not there. But what I'm saying is: We can use our pivotal mind; this is a term Charles Fillmore often used. We use our "pivotal mind" to, instead of seeing the abundance of not enoughness -- of lack -- we can pivot our minds; shift our thoughts to the abundance of enoughness. We can throw our nets out wider, place our focus there, and know that there's an abundance of good.

We don't just look for it, but we expect it.

Prosperity comes from our thoughts and our attitude. It comes from within us. So be the feeling you want to experience or manifest. That was our meditation tonight. Be the feeling you want to experience or manifest. Because we're connected to and a part of this wonderful Life Force: the One Power and Presence of the Universe. And so, we determine how we're going to experience life and therefore our prosperity.

So, it's up to us. Cast our nets with zeal, with wisdom, with perseverance to harmonize with the Oneness, the Allness of the Universe.

So, I have some affirmations for us before we end. The first one is: *"My prosperity begins with me."*

Together: [with congregants] *"My prosperity begins with me."*

*"As I follow Spirit's direction, my life overflows with unexpected blessings."*

Together: [with congregants] *"As I follow Spirit's direction, my life overflows with unexpected blessings."*

And last: *"Guided by divine wisdom, I cast my net and receive more than enough."*

Together: [with congregants] *"Guided by divine wisdom, I cast my net and receive more than enough."*

Absolutely! As you cast your net in faith, the Universe will meet you with overflowing good.

So, the invitation today/tonight is to know that we live in an abundant universe.

So, what we learn from the story of "The Miraculous Catch of Fish" is that there's many fish in the sea ... meaning there's many divine ideas and opportunities that will lead you to your prosperity if you listen and take action on them. It's remembering our Unity principles: our spiritual tools of gratitude, of giving,

of elevating our thoughts to focus on abundance. And that's when we can experience a more prosperous life. That's the invitation.

So, I wish all of you blessings on your prosperity journey. Blessings, everyone! Thank you.

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