

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Psa 24:1



WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN
FOCUS

Gold in the fish, diamonds on the street! And other stories of faith! (Part I)

I love the story of when Jesus paid his taxes with the money found in the fish's mouth! How truly awesome is that!!? Let's have an inspiring look at the text about this at the end of the 17th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

Mat 17:24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

Mat 17:25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

Mat 17:26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

Mat 17:27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.



Apparently they came to the commercial town of Capernaum on the lake of Galilee. Capernaum was quite a business hub of the Roman Empire. Taxes were a big deal to keep the system running throughout the land of Israel and support the entire Pax Romana.

Of course, people who avoided taxes were not highly

esteemed at all. That's why the people in the Gospel story asked their question in the negative to Peter in verse 24: 'Doesn't (Doth not) your Master pay tribute?' Meaning, 'we have some doubts over whether your Jesus is actually paying his taxes or not, and if he isn't coughing it up, then HOW COME?' '**We** all have to render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and you better had too!' at least this is one of the meanings I take from this.

I find it very funny, that when they got into some private space where they couldn't be overheard or bugged or under surveillance that Jesus even brought up the topic to Peter and let him know that he and his disciples were really meant to be free. Possibly you could say that Jesus was even saying we should even be free from paying taxes, although this is not 100% clear!

However what I find most amusing is that Jesus basically said, 'look we have to pay this stuff otherwise it will become a big deal in this world or society,

however, look, Peter, just go to the lake, throw out a hook and the first fish you catch, have a look inside and you will find some money in his mouth, use that piece of money to pay your taxes and mine too while you're at it, Peter'. And that's exactly what Peter did.

Money in the first fish means there could have been money in every fish of the lake, had it been necessary; which means God can create the wealth anyway in everything if necessary. Should gold have been needed in the fish, it would have been gold. The resources of God are unlimited and also completely beyond the carnal mind, and so exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think. Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

We could never have imagined it, never 'thought it up' ourselves, could we? it wasn't Peter who said, 'Oh, cool Lord, I have an idea, let me go throw a hook out and I am sure that when I catch the very first fish, there will be a piece of money in it and I will then go and pay our taxes with that!' (Apply that to your life right now!)

No way **Peter** could have thought the idea up, it had to be Jesus who sourced the information and the idea, and that's exactly the same with us. We are not able in our present human form to think up or imagine what God is able to do.



1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

1Co 2:10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

However we have to give Peter the credit for acting on Jesus' command. In the natural that was so ridiculous. It doesn't say Peter argued about it, he just went ahead and did it! God bless him. I wish we could all be so obedient when the Lord tells us what to do. Most of us don't even make IT TO FIRST BASE AND LISTEN. It's very possible some of your blessings from

God you are not going to be able to access without some real steps of 'Gold in the fish' obedience.

The widowed woman who went to Elisha to ask for help concerning her debtors who wanted to take her two sons as slaves to be payment for her debts, was told several specific pieces of information to follow in a step by step process by God's prophet. He was the one who gave her the information, and that's how it always should be with us when we have difficulty, we should go to the source, to God and/or His prophet. He won't let you down and His solution will always be so far out, so out of this world and out of the brain and outside human thinking that it will only serve to emphasize the miracle in your mind and make it a testimony to others also!.

The reason some of us suffer financially or otherwise is because we fail to do two or three things:

▶ firstly we don't ask God what we should do and be doing to produce money or wealth to live on (and pay our taxes) (and our tithes and offerings). (Deut 8:18)

No, it seems we just default to operating according to the fashion or course of this

world and follow the trend or the expected way or normal way, or lean to our own mind and understanding or others opinions what we should be doing job wise. We base decisions along these lines.

▶ Secondly, we almost never listen to God or His prophet* about how we can solve our problems financial or otherwise, and finally if we do hear we often don't have the dynamic faith to act on what He may be telling us, possibly because it is so outlandish and extreme like the gold in the fish story here. In short, we don't pray, listen and obey, at least not enough!

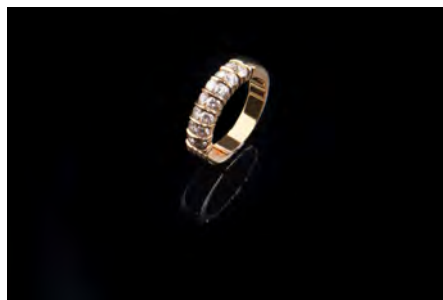
*This could be any man or woman of God or pastor that you have a close link to in your life.

I am sure the tax collectors didn't ask Peter where he got that piece of money from. And that's what normally happens --

Normal people don't ask you where the money came from, as long as you have it to pay. If you told them you opened the mouth of a fish and lo and behold there was some gold that was inside the very fish just waiting to pop out, well we can imagine what reaction you would get if you came up with that kind of story! Truth is stranger than fiction for sure! Praise the Lord.

One time my wife and I were trying to raise money to go to INDIA as missionaries. We had done quite a few things we knew to raise money, but funds were low and income was only trickling in.

One day we were out in a shopping mall in Decatur, Georgia, USA. We passed through the parking lot and my wife suddenly bent down and picked up a small purple velvet bag. There were no cars parked in the vicinity at all. Just this little purple bag an inch or two wide. Looking inside we found some gold rings with large diamonds fitted on them. We had no way



of returning them to the owner we walked around the car park for a while looking if we could see people anywhere else who looked like they had lost something.

Eventually, we took our find as 'from the Lord', and the few thousand dollars or so we sold them for helped get us to the next mission field at that time. Gold in the fish, diamonds on the street, what a funny God we have! He surely must have

a sense of humour and U.S. dollars in the wind if you read in another testimony from my book 'Shake off the Dust'. (See the chapter 11-'Arriving in Antigua')

We may need to do all we can and work hard and exert some considerable effort to take care of ourselves and family, but we should always primarily remember God has the ability anywhere and at any time to put that 'money in the fish' for you.

You should always be expecting the impossible with the Lord **as you love Him and please Him.**

Deu 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

THE ICE PRAYER.

On a similar line about expecting God to answer us when we pray I love this anecdote I read many years ago.

A young Missionary had gone out to some part of Africa to establish God's Kingdom. He had helped God's work go forward and he lived in an area of several villages where he shared the Gospel.

One day he was called to the hut of a young family. The young mother there was cradling a small boy who had a high fever. She looked up to the young Pastor and said, please pray for my son, that God will heal him now, as you have told us about that God and Jesus will heal us. I have heard my son will need ice. Please pray for ice!

The pastor looked at the boy, and thought; 'Oh goodness! This boy needs ice right away. But where am I going to get it here in this sweltering heat?' It was so foolish to think that ice could be found that he dismissed the idea from his western mind quite quickly. However, he knew he had to pray for the boy. So he started a longish prayer, you know, the meandering prayer, that doesn't actually mean much, containing words like; 'Oh Lord, if it be Thy Will.... And 'help him to get better in your time etc etc.' and he finally ended with 'Lord you know what's best for all of us, Amen.'

The young African woman, realising her pastor had not actually prayed for ICE, went immediately into her own non-meandering prayer! 'Dear God, I have heard that ice may be necessary for my son's healing. Please send ICE right now, Oh God! I do believe! Amen!'

as soon as she had finished praying a small ball of ice rolled right into the hut where they were! More ice came in the same manner. The ice was part of a very localised hail storm that had immediately begun! So local, in fact that no crops were damaged but enough ice had come to the hut, to help this small boy. The woman lifted up her face and praised God, gathered the ice into a large mass and applied it to her son.



Her faith grew of course while the Pastor learned a big lesson, never to limit the awesome power of God. And thats the way to 'Get things from God! Praise the Lord. Until next week, Jerry for the WCF TEAM

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