

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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JUST FISHING

Jerry Dailey

I was sitting on a fallen log at the bank of the AuSable River in Northern Michigan. What I was doing a real fisherman would call, "Resting the pool."

A pool is a relatively quiet place in the river where the water is a bit deeper and flows a little more slowly than the main current. It is a good place for fish to rest while waiting for food to come drifting into their neighborhood. The reason I was resting the pool was because my, earlier, rather inept attempt to entice the trout to bite on my bait was so noisy that it had, in fact, frightened them into seeking shelter in the brush pies near the opposite bank. I was hoping that their memories would be short and they would soon forget about me and my clumsy presentation of an artificial fly. Hopefully, they would end their seclusion, venture out looking for something to eat and find my bait somewhat appealing.

One thing I like about trout fishing is that it affords me plenty of time for reflecting and enjoying the wildlife along the verge of a trout stream. I seem to spend a lot of time resting the pools. On this occasion I was watching a mink looking for a tasty meal in the shallows of the opposite bank. After the mink had gone on its way I began to just watch the water flowing by and I remembered a statement made by some scientists/experts claiming, "That there is the same amount of water in the world today as there was, not a drop less and not a drop more."

I usually view the claims of "experts" with a high degree of skepticism, but in this case I think they are absolutely correct. Their theory about water argues well for Creation. Through the process of evaporation and condensation, the waters of the earth are recycled and replenished. The waters evaporate into the air and eventually condense and return to the earth in the form of precipitation in its various forms.

In view of that, to me at least, startling revelation, I began to wonder if the water that I was watching could have been the same that lifted the Ark or flowed in the Jordan River. Maybe it was the very water into which John baptized Je-

sus. Could it also have been the same water that flowed from the rock which Moses struck or perhaps was in the Red Sea when God parted the water to allow the Israelites to escape from Egypt? We could let our imaginations lead us on and on but you get the idea.

I guess I never thought about it in this way before, but as I came to realize that we could not exist without water, that without water there would be no early or latter rain to nourish the plant life. Without water we would, as my mother used to say, "Dry-up and blow away." In fact, our bodies are composed of about 98% water and as they expel water in the form of waste and perspiration they need to be continually replaced. If we are not rehydrated we will eventually die. This caused me to remember the words of Jesus in the 4th chapter of John when he told the woman at Jacob's well that he could offer her Living Water. The water from the well would satisfy her thirst for a while but eventually she would thirst again. The well water will sustain us temporarily, but only temporarily. He was offering her Living Water, the Word of God.

Have you pondered that, in as much as we spend the first nine months of life suspended in amniotic fluid, in the fullness of time, we are expelled from that fluid and our mother's womb to become a newly born baby, that this process prefigures baptism? How incredibly appropriate is the figure of baptism; just as when the child turns prior to emerging from its mother's womb to become a newly born child, we must also turn (repentance) prior to arising from the waters of baptism to become a new born babe in Christ. This concept of the New Birth and the baptism figure confounded folks in the first century and continues to

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Sunday: 10 am, 10:50am; 6:00pm

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do so even today.

The Apostle Peter phrased it this way: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” (1 Pet. 1:23). And quoting the Prophet Isaiah, “For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower fadeth away but the Word of God endureth forever” (1 Pet. 1:24-25; Isa. 40:6-8).

Well...I guess I've been on this log long enough and it's time to get back to thrashing the water. Come to think of it, Peter was a fisherman and sometimes he didn't catch anything either. Now, *that's* a comforting thought. Now, if the trout will leave me alone, I'll soon get back to my fallen log, rest the pool again, and do some serious pondering. Maybe I'll muse a bit on the roll that fishes play in the Gospel narrative.

BE PROACTIVE CHILDREN OF GOD

Jordon Smith

There are two types of people in the world; there are those who are Proactive and those who are Reactive. Proactive is an adjective, as define by Merriam-Webster, that describes an individual who “acts in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes.” Those who are proactive constantly consider and observe the setting surrounding them. This becomes a crucial part of their identity because those who are proactive are trying to understand and foresee future issues or situations that may arise so then they can be more prepared for such situations. Not every individual is a proactive individual. As was previously stated, there are two types of people, leading us to understand that there are then some who are reactive. To be reactive means these individuals do not plan or foresee problems/situations and therefore, do not take prior action to prepare. Instead, these individuals wait until they are in such situations to then try and understand how to best handle them.

As children of God and followers of Christ, we do not have the luxury to be reactive individuals. (Yes, to be reactive is a luxury because it requires less attention/planning and processing). If we consider ourselves to be true, honest, humble and obedient children of God, then we only have one option. Ephesians 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as *He chose us in Him before the foundation* of the world, that *we be holy and blameless* before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will...” In italics is the key phrase. Before God created the world, He, being the all-knowing, all-mighty God, knew that mankind would fall into temptation and need a plan for salvation. To provide us with salvation, God knew it would take a pure and blameless sacrifice to wash our sins away. God knew this, and planned this, before the creation of the world. I Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of God, as beloved children...” God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) understood we would need redemption. A plan was created for us before the foundation of the world. God understood and saw the problem, before there was a problem. As Christians, we also need to be proactive in our faith. We need to follow the examples of Joshua by determining to serve the Lord. We need to be like Joseph in Gen. 39:6-12, as he determined (previous to v. 11) to flee from temptation. So we cannot afford to wait until we are faced with temptation to process how to handle it/over come it. We must have the foresight to predict the possibilities of temptation, we must have patience to give close attention to the details to see events unfold, and we must actively find the ways of escape God provides. Otherwise, the reward we have so anxiously awaited and longed for could be in jeopardy.