

Matthew 17:24-27 Money in a Fish's Mouth

Introduction: Did you ever lose something over in the water of the lake? Somebody did on the Sea of Galilee. They dropped a coin and a fish caught it before it hit the bottom. The apostle Peter then caught the fish. The story about Peter's fishing trip is recorded in the bible.

I. The story begins with an encounter with the tax collectors.

A. Jesus and His disciples return to Capernaum, V. 24.

1. Capernaum was a fishing center located on the Sea of Galilee. (More than a village....a city.)
2. It had been the headquarters city for Jesus for about two years.
3. They had been gone for a lengthy time. (About one year)
4. They have now returned.

B. Peter is paid a call by the tax collectors, V. 24.

1. They want to see him, not about his taxes but those of Jesus.
2. They deliberately avoid going to Jesus.
3. They inquire, "Doth not your master pay tribute (taxes)?"

C. These particular tax collectors are not publicans who collect taxes for the Roman government, but Jews who collect the temple tax.

1. Every male of twenty years and older in Israel had to pay a half shekel annually for temple upkeep and supplies.
2. Apparently Jesus usually paid this tax, but had not done so recently because He had been gone.

D. There was no need for such a question.

1. They knew full well He had paid His tax in previous years.
2. There was no indication He would not now pay. He had been gone.
3. They were merely anxious to cast a bad light on Jesus and make it appear that He opposed the temple worship.

E. The apostle Peter answers their question, "Yes," V. 25.

1. He had been with Jesus long enough to know that previously Jesus had paid the temple tax.
2. He had reason to think Jesus would do so again.
3. He knew that these men were out to criticize Jesus.
4. He did not wish to cause Jesus any trouble with them.
5. And so he said, "Yes."

F. Then Peter went to the house where Jesus was to tell Jesus about his encounter with the tax collectors.

II. The story continues with an encounter with Jesus.

A. Peter went in the house intending to tell Jesus.

B. But Jesus already knew all about it and He brings the subject up before Peter gets a chance.

1. He too asks Peter a question.
2. "Simon, do kings collect taxes from their own children or of others?" V. 25.

C. Peter said that kings do not collect taxes of their own children but of others. V. 26.

D. The point Jesus was making was that He was the King's Son (God's Son) and was exempt.

E. Nevertheless, lest His failure to pay taxes might be a stumbling block to somebody, He would pay the temple tax. (Also pay Peter's taxes.)

III. The story concludes with Peter's fishing trip.

- A. Jesus had not done carpentry work in about three years and thus His funds were depleted.
- B. He sent Peter to catch the fish that had the coin, V. 27.
- C. The coin would be of sufficient value to pay the taxes for both Jesus and Peter.

IV. The story has some lessons for us today.

- A. There is always somebody out to criticize the Lord.
 - 1. The Devil himself is the chief critic and he always has somebody to do his dirty work.
 - 2. They criticize the preacher, the deacon, the Sunday School teacher, the choir director, the church member, the church, the Bible and the Lord Himself.
- B. The critics cannot win in the long run.
 - 1. They may sway the masses and stir up opposition to Christianity.
 - 2. But anytime the Lord chooses to do so He can have the victory over them and show them up for their foolishness. (He paid their taxes, but without it costing Him a single thing.)
- C. The Lord knows everything. (He did not have to be told about Peter's conversation with the tax collectors.)
- D. The Lord has all power. (He could cause the fish to be at right spot where the coin would fall and then send him to the right spot at the right time to bite the hook of the apostle Peter.)
- E. Jesus is the very Son of God and thus is able to save those who trust in Him.
- F. Every saved person should support the Lord's work financially.
 - 1. Every Israelite twenty years and up (male) was to support the temple service.
 - 2. Every saved person should support the church.
- G. There is still a lot to learn from the Lord.
 - 1. Peter had been with the Lord for three years, but he was still learning.
 - 2. We still have a lot to learn yet.
 - 3. The one who thinks he knows it all has more to learn than anybody else

Conclusion:

- 1. Trust Jesus and be saved.
- 2. Join His church and serve Him faithfully.
- 3. Support His work every way you can.
- 4. Don't pay any attention to the critics.

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