

9-3-17 Picture Sunday
Earthly Pictures Heavenly Realities

JOH 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

JOH 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

JOH 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

JOH 3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

JOH 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

JOH 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

Today is what we call picture Sunday. It is a day we collect pictures of everyone for our pictorial directory. The Bible is full of object lessons and spiritual pictures to help us understand spiritual truth.

We need to be very careful we do not go beyond what the Bible says about pictures. We are forbidden in the Bible to make graven images and bowing down to graven images. But God has given the church certain ordinances that are pictures. Also the Bible uses earthly things as an illustration of heavenly truths. This morning I am going to share truths about the importance of earthly pictures that portray heavenly realities.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL PICTURES
IN THE BIBLE.**

Now this morning we are going to be doing a lot of turning in the Bible, looking up verses. So make sure you have your Bible handy. First of all:

I. GOD SAID HE MADE MAN TO BE A PICTURE OF HIMSELF.

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Man is to be a reflection of God.

One of the greatest aspects of the image of God in man is clearly given in these verses.

LET HIM HAVE DOMINION OVER:

THE FISH.

OVER THE FOWLS.
OVER CATTLE.
OVER THE EARTH.

Now this is God's plan for this planet and for mankind.

Those who are the enemies of God try to thwart this command.

Radical environmentalism is an example of how those who hate God are trying to thwart this command.

According to Wikipedia this is a definition of radical environmentalism..

The movement is typified by leaderless resistance organizations such as Earth First!, which subscribe to the idea of taking direct action in defense of Mother Earth including civil disobedience, ecotage and monkeywrenching.¹ Movements such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Earth Liberation Army (ELA) also take this form of action, although focus on economic sabotage, rather than civil disobedience.³ Radical environmentalists include earth liberationists as well as anarcho-primitivists, animal liberationists, bioregionalists, green anarchists, deep ecologists, ecopsychologists, ecofeminists, neo-Pagans, Wiccans, Third Positionists, anti-globalisation and anti-capitalist protesters.

In essence this group of people believe men should be ruled by nature and not nature by man. It is the opposite of what God said here in Genesis.. "let him have dominion..." To reject that command is to reject the God who gave the command.

The first great spiritual picture is clearly found in the creation of man by God. Man is a picture of God on earth. Just as God has dominion man is to have dominion.

In fact the reason God said to Noah that murder should be punished by death is because when a person murders someone else this attack on man is an attack on God.

Genesis 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

II. The Next Great Spiritual Picture In the Bible Is God's Covering for Sin Through The Skin Of An Animal.

Genesis 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

First thing that happened to Adam and Eve when they sinned was they realized they were naked.

Nakedness is a spiritual picture of man's fallen sinful condition.

God clothing man with animal skins was a picture of Salvation and restoration.

We could read from Genesis to Revelation. That nakedness is a picture of shame and sin, where as Salvation is pictured as being clothed with proper garments.

Clothing is a spiritual thing.

It amazes me how it is that God's people do not see that their relationship with their God should be reflected in the way they dress.

The modern trend of exposing our nakedness in the styles of clothes we wear is an example of rebellion against our creator. Nakedness was a result of the fall. Before the fall Adam and Eve were clothed spiritually.

When they sinned they became spiritually naked which was reflected in their awareness of their physical nakedness.

This is why the priests were commanded to wear proper garments when they offered sacrifices. The Lord said:

THE LORD TOLD THE PRIEST TO WEAR PROPER CLOTHING WHEN THEY MINISTERED IN THE TABERNACLE.

Exodus 28:42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

Exodus 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Proper Clothing is a picture of our salvation!

III. God Dealt Harshly With His Leaders When They Broke Spiritual Pictures.

Breaking Spiritual Pictures.

1. ***Nadab and Abihu Lost their lives for breaking the spiritual pictures of the priesthood and offering strange fire to the Lord.***

Leviticus 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

Leviticus 10:2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

2. ***God Dealt Harshly With Moses For Breaking A Picture When he struck the rock rather than speaking to it.***

Numbers 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

Numbers 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Numbers 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

3. DAVID WAS PUNISHED BECAUSE HE VIOLATED THE PICTURE OF PRIESTHOOD WHEN HE ALLOWED UZZAH TO DRIVE THE CART THAT CARRIED THE TABERNACLE.

A simple mistake in driving the cart with oxen when God commanded the priests to carry the ark.

II Samuel 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

II Samuel 6:7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

II Samuel 6:8 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

II Samuel 6:9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

I Chronicles 15:13 For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

IV. THERE WERE MANY MANY PICTURES OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE.

Jesus plainly gave some of these:

He told Nicodemus:

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

John 3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

He used earthly illustrations to explain spiritual things. How can we learn heavenly truth without these truths being explained by earthly examples.

So through out Scripture we have example after example.. Picture after picture to illustrate and explain things we cannot see. Heavenly truths or realities pictured by temporal earthy things that we can see with our human eyes.

Some great pictures of Christ and the Gospel in the Bible.

1. Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness was a picture of the gospel message.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

If you look back at what happened when Moses made that serpent in the wilderness you will remember that the people had sinned and as a result of their sin God sent fiery serpents who were killing the people and afflicting them.

Numbers 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

Numbers 21:6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Numbers 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

Numbers 21:8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

Numbers 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

So it is that our sin brings all the destructive things that afflict us. The wages of sin is death. The serpents were the result of the peoples sin, so death is the result of our sin.

So Jesus took our sin upon himself on the cross and was lifted up on the cross. When we look to Him we are saved.

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

What a beautiful picture of salvation and the gospel message.

2. ANOTHER PICTURE OF THE GOSPEL JESUS SHARED WAS THE STORY OF JONAH.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Jonah was a picture of Christ.. and the miracle of him being in that whales belly three days and nights was a type of the great miracle of Jesus being resurrected from the grave.

V. IN CONCLUSION CONSIDER THE TWO GREATEST PICTURES IN THE BIBLE.

Jesus time and time again shared earthly pictures or illustrations to try to get us to understand heavenly truth.. There are two I believe to be the greatest for us today out of many many.

Today we could share the many but time will not permit us to do this.. **It would take a whole series of messages to cover all the Earthly pictures used in the Bible to illustrate Heavenly Realities.** But briefly I will outline some.. of these as follows:

Consider these earthly pictures that point to heavenly realities:

Sower of seeds as an example of sharing the gospel (Luke 8:5)
Fertile ground as an example of a receptive heart (Matt 13:23)
Thorny ground, sun scorched, Rocky ground as an example of unreceptive hearts (Luke 8:5-6)
House built on a rock an example of solid faith and obedience to Christ (Matt 5:24)
House built on sand as an example of disobedient believers (Matt 7:26)
Being in the vine an example of being in Christ (John 15:5)
Wheat and the tares example of true believers and Judas Iscariotes in church (Matt 13:25-30)
Sheep and Goats example of saved and lost (Matt 25:31-46)
Mustered seed's growth and our faith's growth (Matt 17:20)
Casting a net for fish and sharing the gospel to win souls (Matt:13:47)
Invitation to a wedding and invitation for salvation (Matt 22:2-10)
Wedding Guest Not having Proper Attire – A person not really saved (Matt. 22:11-14)
Bride groom and his bride and Christ and his return for his church (Matt 25:1-13)
Investing money as a earthly servant to illustrate our heavenly stewardship (Matt 25:14-30)
Duty of a doctor to heal .. duty of Christ to convert souls (Mark 2:7)
Son asking his father for food us asking God for His spirit (Luke 11:11)
Man making a long journey Jesus going away and returning (Mark 13:34)
Wealthy man auditing his employees, Judgment seat of Christ (Luke 16:1-8)
Planting a vineyard for fruit, seeking spiritual fruit from us (Luke 13:6-9)
Good Samaritan, our responsibility to our neighbor (Luke 10:30-37)
Shepherd with sheep , Jesus with his disciples (John 10:27)
Laborers for hire, Disciples serving Christ Rewards based on grace (Matt 20:1-8)
Lost coin, backslidden child of God (Luke 15:8-10)
Prodigal son, joy of one who returns to God (Luke 15:11-32)
Shepherd with one lost sheep, rejoicing over conversion of one person (Luke 15:4-9)
Cleaning your house, cleaning your spirit of demons (Matt 12:43-45)
The leaven in bread.. the sin that spreads in a church (I Cor. 5:6-7) (Matt. 16:6)
Invasion of your home by thieves, invasion of demons into a soul (Matt. 12:45)
Feeding of ravens and birds, God taking care of us (Luke 12:24)
Beauty of Lilies of a field, our worry about being clothed and taken care of (Luke 12:27)
Long hair short hair is a picture of heavenly headship and earthly headship (I Cor. 11:4-16)
A shepherds gate, our entrance into Christ's fold (Matt. 7:13-14)
Wise earthly steward, unwise heavenly stewards (Luke 16:8)
Servants employed to invest money, our obligation to bring forth fruit (Matt 25:25-26)
Wind Blowing we hear it and sense it.. so it is with being born again (John 3:8)
Light and darkness, God and Satan (I Thess 5:5, Eph. 6:12)
Drinking water Quenching your thirst, being filled with spirit and fulfilled in Christ (John 4:14)
Reaping a harvest, winning souls.. (John 4:35)
Laboring in harvest fields, Laboring to win people to Christ (John 4:36)
Kernel of wheat planted in ground, the resurrection of the dead (John 12:24)

All these are great earthly pictures that show eternal and heavenly realities.

But of all these there are two pictures I believe are the most important for us today.

CONSIDER THE TWO GREAT SPIRITUAL PICTURES FOR THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE.

1. BELIEVERS BAPTISM, I BELIEVE, IS ONE OF THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL PICTURE FOR THE US TODAY.

Today we are going to have a baptism. Baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the first thing that the Lord commanded us to do after we are saved.

It is a great spiritual picture because Jesus commanded us to perpetuate it till He returns.

Baptism is a picture of the gospel message.

This morning we are going to have a Baptism.

It is important that we know what this picture represents, and we properly represent it.

When people are Baptized and do not understand the meaning of it they just got wet.

We got our name Baptist because a group of people were reading their Bibles and discovered that the only people that were Baptized in the Bible were people who professed Christ and were saved.

Churches started putting man made ordinances into the church and sprinkling people and calling it baptism.

So people read their Bibles where it said that only after a person believes with all their hearts and is saved should they be baptized.

We are Baptized once after we are saved, and it is to be done by immersion to picture death, burial and resurrection. Many people have been Baptized but the picture was not done properly, so they should be re-baptized so the picture is proper. This is where we got the name Baptist, which originally came from the name Anabaptists, or re-baptizers.

We were called Anabaptist because we preached that if you were baptized or christened before you truly received Christ, or if you got Baptized and did not understand what it meant you should be Baptized in a proper way that would fulfill the Biblical picture that God intended Baptism to portray.

Baptism should only take place after a person is saved and anyone who was christened or baptized before that, should start over (so to speak) and be re-baptized in the proper way so hence the name anabaptists.. Condensed being Baptist. You see many churches started to just christen babies, assuming that they would accept Christ when they got older. No one is born into this world a Christian. We must be born again into the family of God. Baptism is not like circumcision in this regard.

Baptism pictures, death, burial and resurrection. If anyone was baptized and their baptism did not represent the true picture, they just got wet. They need to be re baptized in the Biblical fashion.

Some people were Baptized as infants that is not Baptism.

Some people were Baptized before they had the assurance of salvation. That is not baptism it breaks the picture.

Some people don't think they ever have to be baptized. That is disobedience.

In Acts 19 there were a group of disciples who were not biblically baptized. Paul re-baptized them.

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Notice how these disciples were preaching Jesus and were following in the tradition of John the Baptist but their Baptism did not represent the New Testament Baptist spike of in Matt. 28:19-20. So Paul re-baptized them.

Baptism represents a profession of your faith. You believe Jesus died, and was buried and rose again.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Baptism is a very important spiritual picture because Jesus said it is.

Everyone who receives Christ is commanded to be Baptized and fulfill this picture.

So in the day that we live this is the most important earthly picture that we are to act out in our Christian experience. Everyone who receives Christ is commanded to be Baptized.

2. THE SECOND GREAT PICTURE IN THE BIBLE IS COMMUNION.

The other great ordinance that is a picture is our Lord's table. Each time we partake of communion we are saying that we believe that we are part of the body of Christ. Many members one loaf. We all share the same cup which represents our Lord's blood.

Communion or the Lord's supper is an ordinance that we perpetuate often in remembrance of what the Lord did for us and our looking forward to His return.

It is a picture of a spiritual reality. Next week we will celebrate the Lord's table. Because there was so much going on this morning we thought it best to have the Lord's table next week.

It is very important that when we partake of the Lord's table that we make sure we are not violating the spiritual picture it represents. Also we should make this ordinance special. We are commanded of the Lord to partake of this ordinance.

Remember what the Lord did to Moses when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it.
Remember what the Lord did to Nadab and Abihu when they offered strange fire to the Lord.
Remember what the Lord did to Uzzah when he touched the ark.

So too, the Bible warns of God's chastening to anyone who violates the Lord's table by having a spirit of divisiveness in the assembly.

The Lord's table pictures this.

One loaf represents one church all being Christ. Christ = his church members.
Many pieces represents the various members of that loaf.
This is called the body of Christ.

One cup is representative of Christ's blood. What flows between the various members of the church is our Lord's spirit.

I Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Just as the blood that flows between our various members of our Physical body unite this body into one unified person, so the members of Christ's church are unified by one spirit.

We partake of the Lord's table often, in remembrance of him, we do it first Sunday of the month and on special occasions.

Conclusion:

We shared a lot of spiritual pictures this morning.

How sad it is that many people think that the physical is all there is. Everything in this physical world is passing away. The Physical world is temporary.. the spiritual world is what is real!!!

Wednesday we are doing the funeral of our beloved Brother Ron White. It is hard saying good bye to a loved one. We will miss him greatly. However, every funeral is a reminder that this life is temporal. We are just passing through.

Our bodies are frail and passing. Ron White was 79 yet to most of us he didn't seem old. Yet the Bible says,

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

The Bible says, the average is 70 if we make it to 80 were doing good. How then should we live in light of this. I believe we should play our part well for God. What kind of picture will we leave behind when the Lord takes us?

You know that for each of us there is going to be a funeral. Do we really believe it? The older I get the more I think I am going to pray LORD COME QUICKLY. I would rather go with the upper taker than the undertaker.

God help us to maintain all the earthly pictures the Lord mandated.

Three things the Lord requires of all of us.

GET SAVED.

GET BAPTIZED.

GET FAITHFUL.

ASSEMBLE YOURSELF TOGETHER.

AND BE A PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S TABLE.

Be faithful Till He comes back.

I Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Till he comes let's get busy being an illustration of His grace to this world! Your life is painting a picture for all to see. Does that EARTHLY PICTURE ILLUSTRATE HEAVENLY REALITIES?