

THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER

Psalm 91:3

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

The words "surely he" - that is God, will deliver thee - that is you. Each of you from the snare of the fowler. That is the trap of the Devil.

I am so glad that the Gospel has been so thoroughly humanized, that it does - it comes so close to me and to you. That as we think about a text like this, it makes you glad that Christ came in the flesh and walked with human feet. And carried out human deeds with human hands. And spoke wonderful words of the human tongue. He talked, ate, and slept. But Christ comes no closer to the world than does this wonderful book, the Bible. Now in this book, we have the truths of the Gospel illustrated under all conditions of human life. From the tent to the palace - from the shepherd boy to the King. From the maid to the Queen. From the little boy on the street to the king in the palace. There is a lesson in each illustration and each story.

We are thinking about the snare which is indicated by different words in the Bible. It appears many times and tells us that it is a method by which birds and animals were taken. It was a noose for small birds - small animals. It was made of wire for larger birds and a little larger animals. The snare was set in a favorable location. Grain was scattered to attract the attention of the feathered creatures. They accepted the bribe of good feeding and walked into the snare not suspecting danger.

For this reason, the snare became particularly a thing to be applied in

describing the temptation of bribes and offers of the flesh - that men would have made by others that would lead into trouble. It might be a snare unto death.
Ex. 10:7, I Sam. 18-21.

The snare is used symbolically here - it might have been in the form of a hole in the ground that was concealed. They dig a pit - Jer. 18:22. And hiding the snare from the animal so that his feet would be trapped. The North American Indian in setting a snare usually figured on catching the bird around the neck.

Jer. 50:21 - God says I have laid a snare of thee. Those who were disobedient were going to be trapped. They were going to be caught.

Hosea 9:8 - a fowler snare is in all his ways. Therefore in the Bible, we find that this is an important principle which points out man's dangers. And that life has many perils to it.

Now this Psalm talks about Cod's protecting care. He says that here is a shelter of the most high. The shadow of the Almighty. Now the shelter sometimes designates the temple. In a figurative way. The shadow, sometimes was found as the expression of the shadow of wings to cover. This was applied to the one true God. The evils from which God would protect his faithful ones.

So we have coming to us out of the Psalm, the snare of the fowler. He plots against one's life - and these by evil men. This is mentioned in Psalm 124:7 - 141:9. The terror by night had to do with the arrows that fly by day. Such as a sun stroke. So the plan of evil men and the pestilence that stalks in darkness. The destruction that waits for noon day. All of these were going to be snares to a man.

And speaking in terms of this, I remember a story that Will Rogers told.

It was about some funny things in life that happened to him. He said that he went down fishing one day, by the river - he said he heard some noise over in the leaves and he went over to investigate. And low and behold, there were two snakes. One of them had swallowed the other ones tail. And the other one had swallowed his tail. And I said, outloud - now what is going to happen. If they both keep on swallowing long enough. I went back to my fishing and after awhile, I returned to look at the snakes. Then with that drawl he said, surely ~~not~~^{enough} they were both gone.

Now those snakes were not taken in a snare - but Will Rogers illustrated for us something that we have in our text here. And it is something that we do not want to miss.

Down in Chattahoochee, Florida, on the edge of the Eastern Standard Time Zone, out just beyond there to the West is Marianna. Which is in the Central Standard Time Zone. And if a man came to the station to buy a ticket to Marianna - he walked up to the ticket window and said, what time does the next bus leave for Marianna. The prompt reply was 12 o'clock. What time does it get there - the ticket agent answered, 12 o'clock. The man pushed his cap back and scratched his head, and said, boss, would you mind dragging that through again. I must have missed something. What time did you say the bus leaves from Marianna. Restraining a smile, the agent said 12 o'clock. What time did you say it would get there - again he said 12 o'clock. The man shifted from one foot to the other and looked bewildered. The ticket agent asked him, do you want a ticket, to Marianna. After a moment the man said, "no sir". I don't believe I do - but if you don't mind I'll hang around awhile. I want to see that thing take off.

Now as we get into this text of the snare of the fowler, and before we take off on it - I want to first of all mention to you the author of this text. Now this was David speaking - the son of Jessie. He was a natural born poet. You can read

the book of Psalms and see what God was to David. He was a charming, wonderful personality. You can hear him talk about God.

Let's cite two or three verses - the Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer.

My bulwark and the horn of my salvation and my high tower.

The Lord is my stay. The Lord is my light and the Lord is my strength. He shall hide me in his privillion in the secret of his tabernacle, shall he hide me. He shall set me upon a rock. When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. The Lord is my shield. Thou art my fortress. God is my defense. My refuge in the day of trouble. Thou has been a shelter for me - a strong tower from the enemies. I will trust in the covert of thy wings. The Lord is my shepherd - keep me as the apple of the eye. Hide me in the shadow of thy wings. How wonderful are these pictures that David talks about God.

Now, turn your thought with David to the pictures that he had about the Devil. And he gives us one that is no more graphic of the Devil - anywhere in the world to be found, than in this text. David represents him as a bird ^{catcher} ~~pecker~~. He represents you and me. Unthinking bird, caught by the snare of the fowler.

Now I have selected this figure tonight in the hope that it will help you and perhaps may save some of you from the Devil's snare.

When Jesus spoke to people - he gathered from the scenes about him, the figures of the things that were close to the ordinance. He talked about the shepherds and to the shepherds. He said, I am the good shepherd and my sheep know my voice. Now everytime a shepherd spoke to his sheep after that, the sheep responded to the shepherd's voice. And that preached the sermon of Jesus to him again.

When Jesus talked to the fishermen, he said the kingdom of Heaven is like a net that is cast into the sea. And it gathers everytime, when it is full and you pull it to the shore, he says - they sat down. And everytime the fishermen would pull the net to the shore, they would sit down and begin to sort the fish. They would cast out the bad ones and keep the good ones. It was preaching a sermon that Jesus preached to them. When Jesus preached to the farmers, he said, behold, a sower went forth to sow. When he had sowed some seed, some fell on the wayside. And the fowl got it. Some fell on the stony place and some fell among thorns. Others fell on good ground. Now as the farmer went out to sow his seed, and he noticed the seed bouncing on the hard ground, it preached a sermon to him. And he remembered what Jesus had to say. When Jesus talked to women, he talked about the busy household chores - and he talked about a little leaven - it leaveneth the whole lump. Now everytime a woman went to make up bread - and she had that bread in her hand, it preached a sermon to her. Jesus said to the people, ye are the light of the world. Everytime they would light a candle - they would think about that candle preaching. When he said, ye are the salt of the earth - everytime they used the salt it preached a sermon to them. Jesus touched the household everyday scenes of life. This made the gospel real to them. By example and by illustration.

Now as we come to this wonderful book tonight, the Bible, and get this picture. I think it will get real close to you. And it brings a few simple methods by which birds were captured and caught. And if you give your attention to it - you will see and be surprised, how much like a bird you have been. And how much like the bird catcher the Devil has been.

I. THE DECOY

This is the first method used by the Devil.

it is like using a China Egg as a

Base knob for a Nest Egg - ⁴Imagine a sitting hen sitting on a chair
" " - to be a decoy -
-6-

Quite often in homes you visit in, especially in this area, on the sea coast - you will find decoy ducks or birds that have been carved and are beautifully painted. We are all aware that on this Eastern seaboard, from the newspaper and from observation, that there are large flights of birds, ducks, and geese. They come down in large number. The water fowl are very interesting. Some of them can fly, for example, a swan can do 55 MPH. A canvass backed duck has been clocked at 70 MPH. And some of the geese coming down - fly from an altitude of 3,000 - 8,000 and they have been known to fly as high as 20,000 feet, above sea level in their migrations over long distances and long flights. And of course they fly in a wedge or a V formation. Especially the Canadian goose. Now if you should go down to Back Bay or to Marten, or anywhere along the seaboard of eastern shore. You will find decoys that have been used for the purpose of hunting, on the river. Now a man takes these decoys that are made out of wood. They resemble in paint and in shape and in color a living duck -- resting on the river. It moves as a duck moves. And it looks like a duck looks. It acts like a duck acts. And if you have ever been hunting, and you have watched these decoys float, and then hear the whistle of the wild duck's wings in the air, and see them circle about these wooden ducks. And at last, they are sure of themselves that they are safe. And then they light with a splatter around the wooden duck. And then you hear the bang bang of the guns. And you see the poor ducks bleeding, floundering, etc.

Now a man who has been duck hunting will never forget his first experience with this. And he will realize, how this decoy looks just like a duck. It has a head on it. It has color. They even put glass eyes. They make the decoy look pretty perfect.

Now a hunter never used a more (effective instrument) than a decoy for catching game.

Now if man does that, the Devil also has a decoy -- just like a man does to catch a bird.

Now the Devil's decoy is a nominal church member. That is, he has on a little paint, he has the appearance of a Christian, but he is spiritually dead. He is as dead as a wooden duck.

Now never did the Devil have a more effective agent than the nominal member of the church.

Now when I noticed - when you go hunting and you put the decoy duck out, he's completely under your control. You tie it out on a pond, or a lake, or river, or even the swamp. And this decoy duck is under your control.

So is the Devil's decoy. They are under his power.

Now the Devil sets his decoy out in the theatre. He stands out on the dance floor. He is out at the gambling tables. He is at the saloon counter. And they are in his power.

Now I have noticed that a decoy duck is not afraid of anything. The voice of a hunter does not alarm him. While every living duck flutters and flies around - the decoy just swims and says I am safe here and nothing is going to hurt me. Now there is no surer test of the decoy than this - and there is no surer test of the Devil's decoy than to hear one say "the drink will not hurt me", the "dance will not hurt me", "the filthy theatre will not hurt me", "the gambling cards will not hurt me", a "drink now and then does not hurt me".

Now the only reason that they do not hurt you is that you are dead.

You are like that decoy duck. You are just as dead as that piece of wood

floating on the water. And the Devil simply uses your church membership as a performance. Your outward likeness to a Christian is just a snare and a trap. And will bring you to death.

Many years ago, as a boy, I watched the hunters come in with their decoys and all the ducks that had been killed that day. And they piled them around. Now it would be an awesome picture to see what all the hunters had accomplished that day. Think of the broken wings, the broken legs, the bleeding heads, the ruined eyes, the lost feathers. That is a tremendous amount of destruction.

Now the great judgement of God, when he gets the Devil's decoys and they are gathered around him -- the gamblers, the drunkards, those that have ruined characters, all that have been blackened with sin. He has used you and made you sit at his wine table and made you drink punch from his beautiful bowl with sparkling glasses. The record of the Devil's decoy. Christ's greatest enemies were his professed friends who were untrue.

Those in His day who were the worst enemies were the Pharisees. They were like wooden decoys - sitting out here. Judas furnishes the only recorded example - he kissed the Lord in public. It is the only example who paraded his love for the poor. His desire to take even the offerings of the Master to increase the funds for the poor. Today there is not a species of sin whose counterpart is not in the church. Somewhere I mean among church members. Too often, in our church in some of the organizations, there are those who want to help the poor. And yet they are used of the Devil. They would defraud the public. They are cheats. Now we all ought to get down to business when it comes to the church. And to Christ's need of money. And we ought to give it like loving children.

Think of a picture like this. Here is a 4th class saloon on a back street.

It is black, it is dirty, and it has a pine table. It has a greasy deck of cards. It has a bottle of liquor and a little pile of coins and around that table sits four or five gamblers who drink from the bottle. Gamble with the cards and pile of silver. Now take another scene. Here is a so-called Christian home. Everyone of them have their names on a church record. They have a beautiful carved oak table. There on the table is the pile of cards. And there are a group of well-dressed people and some of them perhaps are officials in the church. And there in the center is a beautiful cut glass vase. And they are playing for that vase. Now in the sight of God and in the laws of our land, one of these pictures is as much gambling as the other. Both crowds should be arrested and brought into court - just like the man in the back alley shooting crap.

One judge, one time instructed a grand jury to do just exactly that.

Whether it is in the better circles of life, or whether it is in the old saloon, all of these have a tendency to lead people into vice. Brilliant lights, the light music, etc.

Now take another pictures - here is a big saloon on Main Street. The music is going, the lights are bright, the glasses are rattling, the laughing is ringing. And here are the words - SALOON. Here is another picture - a large building. It has easy chairs, reading tables, writing tables. It has a library in it. And here are some young men, middle aged, and old - some are church members. Church officials. Now this is the picture - it is a social club. And on one floor is a dance hall. Another is a library and reading room. And here is a game room. Here is a big buffet where eats and drinks are served. This building is a social club. Now it could not have been built without church members. It cannot be maintained without them.

Now I fear the latter, more than I fear the former. Now my son and your son,

your daughter may not go into that saloon down on Main Street - but he might follow some church member into this social club. He will pay his dues. And he will graduate from there to the saloon.

I wonder if you get the picture. Here is a place brilliantly lighted, floors are waxed, orchestra has been employed. And here is the smell of whiskey, on every other man's breath and every other woman's, wine. Here is immodest dress. Here is unholy passion. The building is beautiful. And some of the heads in the families of the churches are there. Supper is over, the music starts. It is a select party. It is a private thing. And there is your precious daughter. Now she is not going to stand on the sidelines.

devil put his wine out to David → he will not drink myself -

Let us all put these worldly amusements together. They do either what? -- good or harm.

They either promote Christianity or worldliness. Next, they gather with Christ, or they scatter abroad. Now they are for Christ or against Christ.

What I am trying to say is, that you need not take the advice of the Devil's decoys. Be not drawn into places of death, by their example. Don't you follow some dead wooden church member who has no spiritual life in him. Now David said, God will deliver you from the snare of the fowler.

II. THE BATE

I want to take another method by which the bird is captured. The animal is trapped by the use of bate. Not only decoy but by bate.

I read the story of some men on a boat, who were watching some gulls fly along and follow the vessel, picking up bread and objects thrown to them. So a man tied a bait to a long string. And a little stick as a float. He threw it around his head a few times and dashed it over into the water. He tied the end of the string to a post on the vessel. In a little while, a long winged, graceful gull flew down. He swallowed the bait. Lifting himself on his wings he started away. The cord soon held him fast. The man pulled him in - and he saw the gull break its wings, ruffle it's feathers against the vessel. At last, he fell out on the restless waves and was easy prey for anything.

Now when you think of that story, you think of what the word gull means in the dictionary. Mr. Webster says, it is to deceive - to trick, to cheat. And that is what it is to be gulled. Now you think you are going to get something and something gets you.

How often have I seen the Devil's gull rope. How often has I seen his bait. How often have I seen some unfortunate bird fastened by the cord. The cord he could not break.

I've seen young men - they have taken their first glass. You watch the sparkle in their eyes - the flush in their cheek. You hear the music. As he starts off - he acts as if he has found the prize. But then I have seen them with their blurred eyes, bloated face, trembling form - ruined by drink.

I have had them to weep and I have seen them in a pitiful condition look into my face and say, if I could quit - if I could just quit.

The wing of his ambition was broken. His feathers and his pride disarranged. He had fallen out on the restless waves of time. He was easy prey for anything. He had bit the Devil's gull rope.

I Timothy 6:9 - They that will be rich will fall into temptation. And a snare - and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men into destruction and perdition.

It is the story over and over again. I have seen a young painter with his over-alls. He fell to bad company. He began to play for fun. And finding money - and drink. And he said "goodbye" to his paint job. And then he breaks the laws of God, the laws of men. And then all has gone to waste - his family, his life. Quite often this leads to a disbute and quite often death comes to him. The poor fellow. He had bit of the Devil's gull rope. Be honest. Be sober, young man, be sober.

Writ real Delish to Bert Simpson & Clipped him & his Power -

I read of a man in Tenn. who went back to visit one of his boyhood friends. Who had gone into a dry goods business with another man. This was his ambition. He said, I am going to be honest, I am going to be faithful, and he went to work with a man. And he said, I am going to one day own part of this business. What an ambition for a young man. Years later his friend came to visit him. He had a beautiful home - a model Christian home, he had prayer in his home, a beautiful yard. And his friend said to him - I am so glad to see your beautiful home. And I am glad to find that you are still in this dry goods store. And he said, thank God there is not a dirty dollar in that home. And we are happy in it. It takes an honest dollar to build a happy home. It takes an honest business to build a happy life.

III. THE THIRD METHOD IS BY A TRAP.

Now I've talked about a decoy, and I've talked about bate. Now so many things that come to mind about bating, birds, and animals - and setting out decoys. But

now the Devil also has a trap.

I'll never forget the first trap I ever set. As a boy, I guess I spent all night thinking about it. And then getting up early the next morning and then going to that trap. And seeing that there was a rabbit in that trap. It is very interesting, to set a trap. You have to be very careful that birds can be fooled very easily. It has to be covered. The timbers you use have to be covered. But there is tremendous excitement when you discover that it's down. It's as trapped. If you never saw your trap down - you don't know how a boy feels in such a race. When he reaches the trap - pulls away the grass, and discovers there is something in his trap and slipping it into his hand and pulling the bird out. A beautiful stripped headed bird, that's nervous. That is really pitiful to look upon. But hoping for freedom. And yet in your heart - you feel some sympathy for that bird. You felt like you wanted to turn it loose. And hear it buzz through the air once more.

Now I've seen this over and over again - as the Devil sets his traps in the saloon. And he invites people to come in and to be snared.

Rom. 11:9 - Let their table be made a snare. And a stumbling block and a recompense unto them. Paul was talking about those who paid no attention to the Scripture. To the Word of God. He said let this become a snare and a trap. And so here is a trap.

Now you go look into these drinking places and these beautiful high-class places and they will have some woman's picture on the wall. Or some sporting pictures on the wall. Not a single picture of a drunkard's home, a drunkard's family, or a drunkard's tragedy, or a drunkard's flight.

Now wouldn't you like to go and hang pictures in the saloons of this country.

What are the pictures you would put - the wreckage that the saloon makes. Why not hang some of these. When did the saloon ever make a woman smile. It made her weep from time and memorial. When did it ever place her in a yard and a beautiful home. It has turned her out homeless. When did it ever make her long for purity. It causes her to gather among the thorns.

In Nashville, Tenn. there was a saloon once that was put out of business and it was turned into a mission chapel. And there was a lamp on one side. It said who hath sorrow, who hath woe, who hath redness of eyes. On another, who unto him that giveth his neighbor drink - woe unto him. And on each side was figured with Scriptures of warning. As you go inside the little chapel was covered with water colored paintings - life size. Drawn to life size.

The first picture you see was a picture of Sam Jones, the preacher. And he was the man who led that man to Christ. So he put his picture on the first wall there in the chapel. Another picture of some women rolling barrels out while the angels were waving victory. The man said that is the picture of the woman's temperance union. Rolling the infernal stuff out of the land and Heaven is rejoicing. The women need to fight on, pray on, and toil on about this. There was another picture on the wall - it was a man lying sprawling on the floor, with the blood gushing out of his heart. Above him stood a man with a bloody knife in his hand. With a demons face. The man said, that's a tragedy that occurred in this saloon - and on, you can see the awful pictures. Til you come to the last one - it was a poor ragged forelorn looking fellow, with a great serpent coiled about him. And that is the poor drunkard in the coils of the awful serpent. Now that picture ought to be in every saloon in the country. It ought to be in every beer tavern where the young men and young women go - they would run for life. But they go for gay laughter, brilliant lights, music, and hellish passion and rage. And they watch the theatre uncover the sins of the lives of the performers. And show things - if

we could show them up like God sees them, I think we could de-populate some of these places. The Devil covers his traps.

Now in some places they have a method of catching birds in a net. They had a long net with wings - it is like the Devil's snare. These long wings that extend out on each side. And the birds are driven in. And people go with crowds. They go to the city - they belong to the clubs. They go with the circles and with the groups. They have a leader. They want to be with their leader.

Did you ever see the birds on a cloudy rainy day - they stick so close together. And they stay there - they will not flutter until the very end.

I Timothy 3:7 says lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil. Now Timothy was giving advice to the bishop of the church. The leaders of the church. He was challenging them not to be caught in the fowlers snare. And then he continues on to give the same lecture to the Deacons in the church.

Devil and ~~Reproach~~ wife set a trap for Joseph + Joseph's Kid -

Ecc. 9:12 - For man also knoweth not his time as the fishes that are taken in an evil net. And as the birds that are caught in the snare. So are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon him.

I hope that we have tried through this message to challenge you to watch out for the decoys, the bate, and the trap, of the fowler -- the Devil. He will snare you.

I close with this stanza from Amazing Grace. You, perhaps have sung it many times.

But the third stanza goes like this --

| Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

This is what David had in mind in this Psalm - that God would bring us through the Devil's snares and help us to be victorious. In fact, he says, surely he will deliver you. Now, it is up to you. If you want God to deliver you - then, place your life in his hands.