

4.28.19 ~ John 21:1-14, Jesus Appears to Some Fishermen.

Last week we studied the resurrection of the Lord, and His appearance to His disciples that first Sunday; first at the tomb to some women, then to Peter, then to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and then back in Jerusalem where the disciples were hiding, although Thomas was not there at that time. A week later Jesus appeared again to the disciples, this time all eleven were there.

Today we are going to look at the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples, although, this time there are seven of them in attendance.

Read John 21:1-5... Some time after the events of chapter 20, the disciples had departed from Jerusalem and traveled to Galilee, just as Jesus had told them to do, during the Passover meal, on Thursday night, before His arrest in the Garden on Friday morning (see **Mark 14:28**); Jesus also told Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, on Sunday morning by the empty tomb (see **Mark 16:7**).

In **John 21:1-3**, we find Jesus manifesting Himself to a group of His disciples, at the Sea of Tiberias [note: This is the Sea of Galilee, but by the time of John's writing it was commonly called the Sea of Tiberias, after the city of Tiberias, on the western shore, which had been named after Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1).

There are seven apostles in this story: Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee (John and James), and two others who are unnamed; but it is very likely they are Philip and Andrew who were often listed with Peter, James and John.

The disciples had previously been told by Jesus (**Matthew 28:10, 16**) to, "Go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me." "The eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated."

Did you notice, it says the eleven went to meet Jesus at a specified mountain in Galilee; but it would seem that at least seven of the eleven got tired of waiting, and decided to go catch something to eat.

In **John 21:3**, it is recorded that Peter said to the other six, "I am going fishing," and they said back to him, "We will also come with you." And they got into a boat (perhaps belonging to Peter, or maybe John or James). They fished all night and caught nothing.

It would appear that Peter and some of the others who had been fishermen when Jesus called them, were now going back to their former occupation of fishing, although they are not doing so good at it, in this instance.

In **John 16:32** Jesus said to His disciples, "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to *his own* home." The Greek doesn't

have the word *home* but reads *his own*; the same phrase used in 1Thessalonians 4:11, is translated "*your own business*," signifying that they would return to the way of life they had before following Christ, i.e., fishing.

Three years ago, these men had left their previous lives to follow Jesus, in order to become fishers of men (see **Matthew 4:19-20**; cf Luke 9:23), Jesus did not intend for them to return to their previous lives and occupations; for they had been called to take the Good News of the Gospel (Acts 1:8) as Christ's "witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." There really was no going back to their regular lives, after having received the calling and commission to follow Him.

John 21:4 tells us that after a long night without catching anything, these guys are heading back into shore as the sun is coming up, and Jesus is standing on the beach, but they do not recognize Him.

Here in **verse 5**, Jesus says to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" and they answer, "No." This was a mild rebuke for their not waiting on the Lord to come, instead of trusting Jesus, they took it upon themselves to get food, by going back to their previous occupation.

Read John 21:6-14... The Lord calls out to them to throw their net on the right side of their boat, and so they do; immediately their net is so full they could not pull it into the boat.

The disciple whom Jesus loved (John) recognized that it was the Lord, and told Peter, "It is the Lord." Impetuous Peter put his outer clothing on and jumped into the lake, he couldn't wait for the slow moving boat to make it to shore; he wanted to be with Jesus right now!

The other six disciples were in the boat, "about one hundred yards off shore," dragging the net with their heavy catch, because they couldn't get it into the boat. When they finally reached the beach and got out of the boat, they could see there was a small fire with some fish and bread cooking.

At this point Jesus tells them to bring some of fish they have caught, so He can add them to the meal He is already preparing; but the net of fish is still in the water, offshore. On hearing the Lord's command, Peter grabs ahold of the net and pulls it up on the land, and we are told that it is full of fish, in fact, 153 large fish. John (a fisherman by profession) is amazed (**verse 11**) that such a huge catch of large fish has not torn the net.

Jesus now invites the men to come and have breakfast with Him, and although they are still not absolutely sure it is Him, they don't ask any questions, for in their hearts they know it is Jesus.

It appears that they drew close to where Jesus was cooking, although they didn't take anything to eat; at least, not until the Lord took some of the bread and the fish and gave it to them. The resurrected Lord, still providing for these guys.

John tells us, in **verse 14**, that this is the third time that Jesus has revealed Himself to His disciples since He rose from the grave, i.e., this is the third time in John's gospel that we have a record of the resurrected Christ manifesting Himself to His disciples (see **John 20:19-20, 26-29**).

Jesus had told His disciples to wait at a predetermined location in Galilee, but at least seven of them got tired of waiting and went fishing, in order to provide for themselves, only to fish all night and catch nothing.

Jesus manifested Himself to these men, and then provided what they were seeking yet couldn't provide for themselves. The Lord demonstrated to His disciples that He was still taking care of them, providing what they needed; in fact, they were incapable of providing for themselves, apart from His provision.

1Corinthians 1:26-31, "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"

1Timothy 1:12-1, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."

Ephesians 2:3-5, "Among them [sinners] we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)," **8-10**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

It was not Jesus’ plan for His disciples to return to the lives they had before they began to follow Him. And although these guys were weak, dull minded, slow to learn and sinful, the Lord was going to use them to advance the kingdom of God; just like He uses you and me, when we draw near to God in prayer, reading, obeying, living out His word, as we proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior: Crucified, Resurrected, and Coming Again, to take us to be with Him in heaven, forever!