

## Lighthouse Bible Church

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

John 21: 1 – 14 *Scripture Reading: Luke 5: 1 - 11*

**‘Depending on Self or on Christ’**

### **Stand – Read – Pray**

You may remember two weeks ago we finished up John Chapter 20 with Jesus, after His resurrection from the grave, appearing to Mary Magdalene, to all of the disciples, except Thomas, and then to all the disciples including Thomas.

And then as if to end 20 chapters of presenting Jesus for who He is, the Son of God, God in human form, the writer John in John 20: 30 – 31 tells his readers why he has written, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what he has; so that whoever reads **may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing they may have life through His name.**

Really, this would have been a fitting place to end the book of John because he did a masterful job presenting Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and showing examples of those who believed that received and did, in fact, receive everlasting life in His name.

But there are a couple of more things that the Holy Spirit moved John to write in order to bring this book to a proper conclusion. The first thing is Jesus meeting the disciples on the sea of Galilee and teaching them a profound lesson in depending on Him and not their own abilities or trades or occupations or talents.

And the second thing is Jesus meeting specifically with Peter to offer him complete unconditional forgiveness for his previous 3 denials of Him. As we look at Verses 1 – 14 we are going to see Jesus provide a vivid illustration of a spiritual truth showing His divine provision and empowerment for His own (living in the Spirit) over against the efforts and devices of them trying to live on their own in the strength (living in the flesh). *A very powerful truth for us today as well.*

Because if you think about it, we all live, as **Galatians 5: 16 – 17** says **warring against the flesh and the Spirit** and living according to which one we yield ourselves to. That is what the whole Christian life boils down to; a contrast between self, fleshly effort or spiritual effort or spiritual power. The more mature you are in your faith the more you obey the word of God and your obedience outweighs your disobedience. So let's look at it starting in Verse one.

**Verse One: after these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias and in this way He showed Himself.**

John says **after these things** which means there is a break from what happened with the disciples in Chapter 20: 26 – 29, where they were in Jerusalem in the closed and locked room, to what is happening in Chapter 21.

John says that **Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples ... and this is the way He showed Himself** to them at the Sea of Galilee or Tiberias. The way He manifested to them.

Remember how many times we have seen Jesus appear to people in His glorified body and they did not recognize Him until He manifested or revealed Himself to them; like the 2 on the road to Emmaus and Mary Magdalene.

Well, it is no different today; no one can know Christ apart from Him revealing Himself to them for them to know Him for who He truly is. No one seeks after God, but God seeks after them and reveals Himself to those He chooses.

By Chapter 21 the disciples, only 7 of them listed in **Verse 2** had left Jerusalem and headed for Galilee as they were told to do by Jesus in **Matthew 28: 10** and **Mark 14: 28, 16: 7**. But the interesting thing is, is that Jesus told them in **Matthew 28: 16** that He would **meet them**, in Galilee, **on a MOUNTAIN that He chose**. Look where we see them in our passage; at the **Sea of Tiberias** or the Sea of Galilee, which is about 60 miles north of Jerusalem.

The question is why are they at the sea when Jesus told them to meet Him on the mountain. Well, Jesus obviously didn't meet them on the mountain where they were waiting and so maybe, because they don't have the Holy Spirit yet and haven't seen Jesus in probably a few days or more, become discouraged, impatient to the point where Peter, the impulsive, impatient one, says at the end of **Verse 3: I am going fishing**.

Peter says, in essence, let's go back to the business of **fishing**, to doing what we used to do and what we have always done and what we know how to do best and that is **fishing**. He is telling them all 'lets go back to our former livelihood so that we can provide for ourselves because we're not sure where Jesus is right now or what's going on. They could only trust Him when they see Him and they haven't seen Him for a while so they are going back to what they know best. Sometimes we are like that too, aren't we.

And because Peter is the leader of the group, the rest of the group in Verse 3 says **we are going with you also**. So they go to the Sea of Tiberias or the Sea of Galilee, where they grew up fishing, most of them, and resume their former business as fishermen.

Then notice at the end of Verse 3 **they went out and immediately got into the boat and that night they caught nothing.** You want to know why? Jesus was teaching these seasoned fishermen who have caught many fish on this sea in the past, a lesson about not going back to their former lives after being called away from it by Him.

Remember in **Luke 5: 1 – 11** where Jesus says to them **do not be afraid from now on you will catch men. So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.** In **Matthew 4: 19 – 20** Jesus said **follow Me and I will make you fishers of men and they immediately left their nets and followed Him.**

We are going to see Jesus ask Peter in **John 21: 15** **Simon Peter do you love Me more than these?** Not these people, not these disciples. Do you love Me more than these fish you just caught, this fishing boat and nets that you have used for many years, these collectively together that have been a part of your fishing business; do you love these more than Me? Are you more committed to them than you are to Me?

Peter, do you love Me enough to walk away from your former livelihood and follow Me and become dependent on Me and not your own resources? Because at this very moment when Peter and the others go back to their fishing jobs it appears that they do love their fish and boats and nets and the fishing business more than Him.

It is that self effort that becomes disobedience that says ‘I am going .... Whatever’ because God has called you away from fishing to fish for men. Without praying, without considering Christ’s words, just doing what you want to do, acting in your own will, doing what you want, that is self will and disobedience toward God.

And we see the outcome of that kind of self effort at the end of Verse 3 **they caught nothing**, because as Jesus said in **John 15: 5 without Me you can do (what) nothing**. It is kind of like **2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7: 1 – 5** when David says to Nathan the prophet ‘I like in this nice place and the ark is put into a tent’ and Nathan says ‘do what is in your heart David’. Then that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan and said ‘no David won’t build My house, his hands are full of blood’, his son will do it’. He wants to re-prioritize their lives in a vivid illustration starting in Verse 4.

**Verse 4: but when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.**

After a full night of fishing and catching nothing, the disciples were heading back to shore and were about 360 feet from shore Verse 8 says, and **Jesus stood on the shore yet the disciples did not know that it was Him**. Then Jesus asks them in Verse 5.

**Verse 5: then Jesus said to them ‘children have you any food?** By the way that term ‘children’ is often used of an immature, young child, that doesn’t know better yet. Jesus asks the question and in the Greek construction of it would be like this: ‘you don’t have any food (or fish) do you?’ and the question expects a negative response, which He got. They said no.

It is like Jesus is rubbing it in. You are fishermen and have been out all night and have caught no fish?

And with what Jesus is about to do, we know that He did not allow them to catch any fish to show to them that they were no longer in the business of being fishermen but were to be about being fishers of men. Jesus was showing them that they could not make it on their own, they would fail, especially doing something they were no longer commissioned to do.

He showed His sovereignty in supernaturally not allowing them to catch any fish.

People today need to learn that same lesson. Some people say ‘I am successful, I have money, I have wealth and all that I need’. They are not different than the people in the church in **Revelation 3: 16 – 17** where they say **I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing and do not know that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked...**

Until someone recognizes their own poverty they can never experience the riches of Christ. Until someone experiences their own weakness, they can't experience God's strength. Until someone comes to the place of not being self dependent, they cannot come to depend on God. And that is what Jesus has just done with His disciples. He shows them that they cannot do it on their own but they can do it through Him.

Oh, they were busy, but it was busy not doing what the Lord wanted them to be doing. They were just busy. How many people are like that today. God has gifted you and equipped you to be a teacher or leader or to be involved in some ministry but you are too busy to busy things, that aren't bad in themselves, but if that is not what God has called you to, it is sin. Look at Verse 6.

**Verse 6: and He said to them ‘cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. So they cast and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.**

They had been fishing all night and were tired and who is this that is telling them to put the net on the right side of the boat and they'll find some fish. But interestingly enough, they obey His word and are not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

Maybe Peter was thinking about what the Lord had said in **Luke 5: 4 – 6** when Jesus said to Peter **launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master we have toiled all night and caught nothing, nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net. And when they had done this they caught a great number of fish...**

They cast their net on the right side of the boat and caught a multitude of fish. Why? Because Jesus supernaturally directed the fish into the net. He was teaching the disciples that you can try it on your own all you want but apart from Me you can do nothing, but with Me you can do all things. In your self-effort you will not succeed, in your obedience you will succeed.

In **Genesis 22: 18** it says **in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have OBEYED My voice.** Jesus said in **John 14: 15, 24** **if you love Me you will KEEP My commandments.** The last book of the Bible, the book of **Revelation 22: 7** **blessed is He who keeps the words of this book.** From beginning, to middle to the end, obedience is always the way of blessing and far better than self-effort that brings no good results at all. *He doesn't need us but He uses us.*

Notice in Verse 6 that Jesus tells THEM to cast THEIR net into the sea. He could have told the fish to swim ashore or jump into their boat, but He uses these men, He worked through the efforts of these men to accomplish His will and when they tried it on their own they failed but when He used them and their efforts, they succeeded. The same for us today, God works through us and our obedience to accomplish His will and provide for our needs.

**Verse 7:** **therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter ‘it is the Lord’.** Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it) and plunged into the sea.

The disciple whom Jesus loved was the writer of this book, the Apostle John, he always called himself that; and why not? Peter heard this and puts his outer garment back on and jumps into the water heading for shore to see if it is truly Jesus. He doesn't even wait for them to row in, he jumps in and swims to shore. Then verse 8 says:

**Verses 8 -9: but the other disciples came in the little boat for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits, dragging the net with fish. Then as soon as they had come to land they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid on it and bread.**

Peter abandons the fishing boat and net full of fish to be with the Lord and the rest come dragging in. And when they all get to shore they see **a fire of coals and fish and bread laid on it.**

Jesus, who created the universe, who walked on water, who fed 5000 with 5 loaves and two fish, is now feeding these 7 hungry men. He was meeting their need of physical hunger because He cares for them just as He was showing them that He could meet their spiritual needs as well. Jesus says in:

**Verses 10 - 11: Jesus said to them bring some of the fish which you have just caught. Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land and full of large fish, 153 and although there were so many, the net was not broken.**

Jesus tells them to bring the fish on shore and Peter was able to drag the net out of the water and then they separated the fish and there were a total of 153, which gives you an idea of how heavy it would have been and that John was an eyewitness to how many were caught.



**Verse 12 – 13: Jesus said to them come and eat breakfast. Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him ‘who are You’ knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them and likewise the fish.**

Jesus invites them to eat breakfast and they appear to be somewhat reluctant because they thought it was the Lord but they did not want to ask Him who He was because they concluded that no one else could have done what He did with directing the fish into the net.

So, because of their reluctance, Jesus, it says, came to them and took the bread and fish and fed them. What a beautiful picture of His love and care for them in providing for them, and subtly saying to them that they could not provide for themselves apart from Him. Then John ends by saying in:

**Verse 14: this is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.**

According to John’s chronology, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples; twice in the locked room with the disciples and now here at the Sea of Galilee. And again, it is John’s eyewitness testimony of Jesus being **raised from the dead.**

One writer says this: “If you're struggling with your own self-effort, if you're struggling in the flesh and maybe doing some things that in themselves are good, but you're disobedient to God and you don't have time in your life to pray and you don't have time to teach your neighbors, your friends, your children.

You don't have time to love. You don't have time to really fellowship with others, to study, to serve Christ. You don't have time to go to the world with the gospel. You don't have time to give or money to give. You don't have that which it takes of dedication, to minister your gifts and use your abilities. Then I say you are disobedient even if you're involved in the church, you're disobedient. *John MacArthur GTY John*

Closing prayer and Lord's Table

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Galatians 5: 16 – 17

Verses 1 – 2:  
Matthew 28: 10, 16, Mark 14: 28, 16: 7

Verse 3:  
Luke 5: 1 – 11, Matthew 4: 19 – 20  
John 21: 15, John 15: 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7: 1 – 5

Verses 4 – 5:  
Revelation 3: 16 – 17

Verse 6:  
Luke 5: 4 – 6, Genesis 22: 18, John 14: 15  
John 14: 24, Revelation 22: 7

Verses 7 – 14:

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