

John 21: 1-14; “Children, Have You Any Food”, A Devotional Given at the Easter Sunday Brunch at Reformed Baptist Church, by Pastor Paul Rendall, on April 9th, 2023.

It is very evident from these verses that I have just read to you, that the Lord Jesus, after His resurrection from the dead, had some very important things to teach His disciples about their walk with Him now that He was raised from the dead. His spiritual Presence would be with them, and He would go before them in all that they would do for Him. In this particular “showing” of Himself as the resurrected Christ, He wanted to teach these disciples that it was He alone who could grant them success in their future efforts in the ministry. But He also wanted to do this in a way which would show them His particular love and care for them individually.

This incident took place at the Sea of Tiberias where Jesus showed Himself to Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee who are James and John, and 2 other disciples who are not named. Seven men in all. It appears that these men were all men of purpose and action. They were men who were not just going to sit around. They wanted something to do to provide for themselves and others. They knew that life was going to go on after Jesus’ resurrection. And they knew that they should consciously study to be diligent in regard to their work.

The only work that Peter knew was fishing. And so, being a natural born leader, he took the initiative, and he said to them – I am going fishing. And they said to him – We are going with you also.” So they got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing it says. Now, I want you to see that even though Peter and the other men had many things that they needed to learn in the past under Jesus’ immediate instruction during the 3 and half year earthly ministry, they still had many things that they needed to learn in the future in relation to their being led into their future work for Him.

Here they were fishing for fish, something that Peter and the sons of Zebedee were very familiar with. But Jesus was going to have them to become fishers of men in the future. The principle that Jesus wanted to teach them, and what He would teach us as well, was that in all matters of concern in our life, we must remember that we need Him and His working to have success. Whether it is our concern for the basic matters of life such as food, or the spiritual matters of ministry such as seeing people fished out of the waters of sin, and brought to Christ, Jesus is the One who goes before us. He is the One who provides for our needs and grants us success.

He wants us to see, that all things that we truly need, are always coming to us from Him. So Peter and these men, once they had decided to go fishing, immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. Evidently, they fished all night, because we see here, that when morning came they were bringing the boat in, and Jesus was standing on the shore waiting for them. He says – “Children, have you any food?” And they answered Him – No. He does not in any way reprove them for this; that somehow they should not have gone fishing on their own.

No, but He wanted to show them that it would only be by His blessing of their labors that they would have success. I wonder if you and I have really thought about this in terms of our desires for success in providing for ourselves, living the Christian life, or seeing success in ministry? It is essential that we do so if we would not become discouraged. Jesus addressed them as He had at a number of points before, as “children”. The reason that He addressed them in this way was to show them that they still had something to learn from Him.

You and I should not be reluctant to see our need to learn more about our dependence upon our Lord who goes before us. Christ was right there waiting for them on the beach when they were returning without having caught anything. And after He asked them whether they had any food, and

they answered, "No", then He said to them – Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. So they cast the net and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish that they were catching! Who was this stranger on the beach that He should speak to them in this way, and that they should see such results at the first cast of the net? Well, John knew. He said to Peter – It is the Lord! And when Peter heard that, he put on his outer garment it says, because he had removed it. And he plunged into the sea.

He not only wanted to look more presentable for the Lord, but I think he wanted to cover up his having the thought that he could go fishing and catch anything without asking the Lord's blessing on it! How important this really is, may not be apparent to us until we fail at what we are trying to do! Now, I know that it is possible that the Lord will continue to bless any person who knows Him in spite of the fact that they have not sought His blessing on their labors. But that is simply because the Lord is essentially good, and He is always faithful to teach us and lead us into understanding the truth of His word better.

The Lord gave Peter and these men success here, not because they deserved it. He didn't give them success because they had labored hard on their own and caught nothing, and he felt sorry for them. He gave them success because He wanted to teach them all real success in living the Christian life is something which only comes from Him! He wants You to ask Him to bless you in regard to everything that you need. In this case it was food, and everything that you desire to do for Him. That is, winning other people to Christ; seeing souls saved and added to the church.

Now, I also want you to see how gracious the Lord was to them in terms of providing for their needs when they got to the shore and they were dragging the net, with the fish in it, up onto the beach. Verse 9 says that as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. The Lord Jesus had made a meal for them. He had gone before them in preparing the catch of fish, and also in preparing a meal to satisfy their hunger. He was saying – I want you to join me for breakfast. Bring some of the fish which you have just caught, to have breakfast with Me.

This having breakfast with Jesus was a very great privilege which was given to these disciples. He had given them this great catch of fish; 153; and although there were so many, and so large, the net was not broken. This shows us the miraculous nature of what Christ does through the gospel when it is preached. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation and it will not be something that will lose its power to save all through this Church Age. And so, He now invited them to dine with Him at a breakfast which He had prepared for them. Yes, He the God-Man would have them to dine with Him over that which He had given to them in the first place.

He was trying to tell them, and He is trying to tell us, that He will be providing for all the needs of His servants who are laboring in His work in this world, casting the net of the gospel, and hoping for a catch. He will be going before them, and giving them all the good results which He has ordained that they shall have. And they should rejoice in all that He gives, and have fellowship with Him over the good results which He gives. It tells us that we should attempt to be faithful in regard to the mission that He has entrusted each of us with. And we should speak with Him in fellowship and prayer, having a joyful heart for all that He has done for us. Jesus being raised from dead, ate and drank with these disciples at this special morning meeting which they were not expecting.

And we too, should realize that the Risen Lord Jesus Christ is present with us here this morning as well. He is having breakfast with us here by His presence and His blessing upon the food of His word which He has given us now, so that we might be refreshed together as a church. He would have us to look to Him with joyful expectation for all that He will do for us to provide for our needs and make us fruitful in His service in days to come.

