

**Jesus, the Disciples,
a Boatload of Fish, Ruth
and You
John 21**

Thankfully, Marcus has gotten us through the cross, the burial and Jesus's resurrection. This passage continues to provide the particulars for Paul's claim in 1 Corinthians 15:4-8 that,

...he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

John is so excited to tell us how it happened that he blurts out verse 21
—

“After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias....”

And then continues,

“...and he revealed himself in this way.”

First: A Post Resurrection Day

a) The cast of characters

- 1 Simon Peter
- 2 Thomas (called the twin)
- 3 Nathanael of Cana in Galilee,

- 4 The sons of Zebedee (John and James)
- 5 And two other of his disciples (unknown)

They were together. It appears they were all fishermen.

b) Simon's resolve 3a

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

What do you do?

- 1 – Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene on Sunday morning
- 2 – He appeared to the disciples, minus Thomas Sunday evening
- 3 – He appeared to the disciples, plus Thomas eight days later

Then John summarizes the purpose of his book – John 20:30-31.

This is then, the 2nd week after the resurrection and the disciples don't know when they will see Jesus again.

What would you do?

- 1 – What you know to do
- 2 – What you like to do
- 3 – Anything to pass the time

Simon goes fishing and

c) The group's decision 3b

They said to him, "We will go with you."

d) The result 3c

They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

I don't want to spiritualize the passage but think about what Jesus did and then said –

John 2:1-11 – Jesus turned water into wine, a resurrection of sorts, proving his authority over nature and giving taste to blandness.

Matthew 26:29 - *I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

Until Jesus and the church are together, neither Heaven or Earth is what is supposed to be.

And so it is with fishing....fruitless....empty....

Their lives are joyless like those water pots before Jesus.

Their lives are empty, like those nets before Jesus.

Of course, the nets are empty. What a picture of life and its efforts without Jesus.

In the 'Connect' comments today I reminded our congregation that forever gives meaning to now. Only by connecting Jesus to our lives do we have

- Meaning – This is who I am.
- Purpose – This is what I should be doing
- Fulfillment – That was worthwhile.

This emptiness and fruitlessness is everything the resurrection is meant to solve.

Second: The Appearance of Jesus

a) Just as day was breaking 4a

Could it have been said any better?

When God said, *“And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light,”* Jesus was the ‘said.’

Hebrews 1:2c - *...through whom also he created the world*

John 1:4 - *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

John 8:12 – *I am the light of the world*

Revelation 22:16 - *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*

(Other languages don’t have this distinction, but in English, the Son is the Sun).

It’s not stretching the text too far to say that the disciples labored all night to no avail but things will change when Jesus shows up in the morning.

b) Jesus stood on the shore 4b

This is the shore of the Sea of Galilee which he has calmed before (Mark 4:35-41) and they recognized that he was God.

Mark 4:41 - *And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

- c) The disciples' ignorance 4c - *yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.*

Third: The Interaction

- a) Jesus's question – 5a - *Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?"*

Children = paidion = young child

It might not have been unusual for a man to address others like this.

- b) The disciples' response – 5b – *"No."*
- c) The challenge - 6a - *He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."*
- d) The response – 6b - *So they cast it...*

How humbling the night had been. How hard was it for skilled fishermen to take fishing advice from someone whom they didn't know?

Note: It is our sin that readies us for a Savior. It is our failure that makes us dependent.

2 Corinthians 4:7 - *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, **to show** that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.*

What does that look like? How's that working out for you?

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 – *(Well, in fact,) We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...*

That's how it's working out.

Our breaking is his blessing.
 Our emptiness is his filling.
 Our end is his beginning.
 Our darkness is his light.
 Our death is his life.

The disciples, *"We have nothing to lose..."*

Fourth: The Result

6c - *and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.*

How often do we misinterpret God?

Ruth 1:20-21 - *"Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"*

1 – Full? You didn't go away full. You left Bethlehem, the house of bread, in Judah, the land of praise, for Moab, whose name means, *"He is of my Father"* as a reminder that Lot's oldest daughter seduced her drunk father and had a son with him.

- *Elimelech* = My God is my King
- *Mahlon* = Sickness
- *Chilion* = Wasting

Oh no, you didn't leave full. Your household was sick and wasting before you left and then died in Moab as a result.

2 - Empty? You didn't return empty. Ruth is with you. Ruth, the mother of Obed who is the father of Jesse who is the father of David, Israel's greatest king and whose throne is the forerunner of Christ. Uhhh, no, you're not empty at all.

So, no, you won't change your name from Naomi (Sweet, pleasant) to Mara (bitter). Because God has not dealt bitterly with you. You may be bitter now but you will be sweet and pleasant soon enough.

In like fashion, Jesus has taken their fruitless toil and miraculously given them a boatload of fish.

V 6c - and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

Fifth: The Recognition – 7 - *That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"*

Well, of course, it is Jesus. Isn't that just like Jesus? It is just like him.

This event is typical of Jesus and typical of any interaction with him.

The world began with one man whom God turned into an almost innumerable number of people (Israel) and then reduced it again to one

man (Jesus) through him he has created a truly innumerable number of people.

No wonder we sing,

You give beauty for ashes,
You turn shame into glory,
You turn bones into armies,
You turn seas into highways,
You turn graves into gardens,
You're the only one who can.