

John 21 - “Life Again”

SO, in order to understand the context of John 21, we need to go back to Luke again (Luke 5:1-11). That’s why we need to be familiar with all of the gospels, to get a more complete picture of the story of Jesus’ life and ministry. Remember that Luke 1-4 prepares us for the ministry of Jesus by introducing the prophetic expectation of His coming (including introduction to John the Baptist), His actual arrival, His baptism and His temptation in the wilderness.

QUESTION: Do you ever feel like you’ve been through a similar journey as Jesus – Receiving Jesus + Baptism + (then comes temptation) = “sort of” PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY?

Having gone through these things...now Jesus prepares for His life travels by selecting disciples to go alongside Him. That’s what we should be doing as well. WHO ARE YOU BRINGING ALONG as you are ministering?

Luke 5:1-8

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ² and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. ³ Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.



⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

⁵ 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.” ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

The same thing happens in **John 21:3-6** where the disciples had returned to Galilee (where they were appointed to go with Jesus at the beginning) and were fishing and caught nothing all night – BUT Jesus tells them to cast their nets into the sea. Notice that the Sea of Galilee is also called Lake

Gennesaret and Lake Tiberias (if your translation calls them by this name). This was to remind the disciples that this IS the SAME JESUS who called them into service at the beginning of His ministry.

NOTE: IF THE MULTITUDE OF FISH WAS TO REPRESENT THE MULTITUDE OF SOULS THEY WOULD BE USED TO SAVE...(for they were fishers of men – **Matthew 4:19**), THEN WE SHOULD BE EXCITED TO EMBRACE OUR ROLES AS DISCIPLES TODAY!

I called this “Life Again,” because the disciples were now back to their original lives, but this time, they have:

- A real life context
- A real life definition
- A real life expectation

To pursue real life with...

What does this mean? Let’s use our own lives as an example of what happened in their lives. The whole story of the gospel is about being “born-again.” **2 Corinthians 5:17** says: “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” This is why we say the Bible is a book about CHANGE – leaving a previous state of being and embracing a new state of being. When Jesus told Nicodemus – “you must be born again (**John 3:7**), He was telling him that his earthly life gave him temporary existence, but in order to live for all of eternity, he would have to be reborn spiritually. That’s really the message that each of us should be sharing with everyone we meet (like Nicodemus who was asking questions about real life):

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

NOW MOVING FORWARD...After we are finished in John, we are moving to the book of Acts (where Jesus is giving ministry moving - forward instructions (MOBILIZING MINISTRY = ministry in motion, not ministry in memorial).



Everything pertaining to the ministry, crucifixion and resurrection = MISSION COMPLETE

21:1 After **these things** Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*.² Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, **"We are going with you also."** They went out and immediately got into the boat, **and that night they caught nothing.**⁴ But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.⁵ Then Jesus said to them, **"Children, have you any food?"** *Reminds you of Jesus feeding the multitudes – John 6:9*

They answered Him, **"No."** *They should have known by now – "Oh yea of little faith (Matthew 8:26)"*

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. *→ Luke 5 again*

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.⁸

Incidental details really validate Scripture

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.⁹ Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."
→ Fish and loaves imagery again – full net of fish. Reminders of the multiplication expectation of ministry

¹¹ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.¹² 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.**

¹³ Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

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

This is after the resurrection. This teaches us a great deal about what things will look like when we are raised to LIFE. Jesus is almost “interviewing” Peter.

¹⁵ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love Me more than these?”

Jesus wasn’t setting up a competition between the disciples but establishing and identifying some leadership criteria. This speaks to the relationship with Christ a leader must have. You cannot impart to others what you don’t possess (or seek to

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

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He said to him, “Feed My lambs.”

Again, keep in mind from John 14 that “love” = obedience (keep my commands). This kind of love is not just an emotional appeal in relationship but a commitment to live in accordance with my commandments.

¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love Me?”

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He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?”

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

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Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.” ¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.”

Without getting too involved here...Jesus asks Peter 3X what looks like the same question but when you study it closer in the “original” language, there are some subtle differences that make a BIG difference in the meanings. Just like last week, the little word for “worm” in the Hebrew Psalm 22:6 (*tola*), carried a BIG meaning, the subtle differences in the Greek words for “feed, tend, sheep, lambs,” say very different things. They only look like they are saying the same things. In the Greek, these are quite different questions. Lambs are young sheep. Tending sheep has to do with the guidance, protection and ruling over them. Feeding the sheep means the nurturing of them with sustenance. The sustenance God is referring to is really the word. THIS WHOLE SECTION IS KIND OF A PASTORAL JOB DESCRIPTION. Jesus was asking Peter if he was willing to “PASTOR” His people – both the young ones that need milk and the older ones that will need meat (whose issues in life will be quite different). Jesus was asking if He was willing to protect his flock in the process of spreading the gospel. God’s people will need constant nurture, protection from heresy, counsel for healing and guidance to ensure a successful journey and mission. The 3X would kind of reverse the 3X Peter denied Him and give Peter a refreshing second chance because he truly did love Jesus and was truly committed to Him.

¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, **when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished;** but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

Ministry will not be easy. REAL PROSPERITY in ministry is that God will supply your need for the ministry assigned to your care – not to fulfill the pleasures of your own heart.

You will be taken captive!

The Beloved Disciple and His Book

John – this is not to say that Jesus had favorites, but that there are bona fide differences in each of our relationships with Jesus!

²⁰ Then **Peter**, turning around, saw **the disciple whom Jesus loved** following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” ²¹ **Peter**, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?”

²² **Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.”**

Peter... just worry about your relationship with me. Take your eyes off of others’ situations in comparison to yours. Worry about the assignment I have given you! You don’t know what I’m doing in and through them. THAT IS OFTEN WHY WE HAVE SUCH PROBLEMS WITH GRACE!!! WE ARE SECRETLY WORRYING ABOUT OTHERS GETTING AWAY WITH “MURDER!” (and being distracted)!!! **God can use every one of us in differing but very important capacities. Let’s do the work assigned to us!**

²³ **Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?”**

We are to do our JOB of evangelizing, witnessing and discipling. That should keep us busy enough to stay out of God’s way and interference with His Plan (Jeremiah 29:11(GNT)) – “¹¹ I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.” LET’S HELP GOD FACILITATE HIS PLAN AND NOT WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT FIGURING IT OUT! How can we do that?

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

This is just a portion of the works of Jesus. We should be concerned about what He wrote specifically to us and not what other words were “left out!”

APP: Jesus gave us a glimpse of what resurrection life will be like. When we combine this information He shared with His disciples with the promises in **Revelation 21**, we will strengthen our understanding of what eternal life will be like and be more motivated to share the blessings of eternity with everyone entrusted to our prayer care. We are ready to learn something about the amazing ministry of the church in the books to follow. DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH UNDERSTANDING ABOUT CHRIST TO MAKE A DECISION TO "BE CHRIST" in the world?

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN TO INTENTIONALLY EVANGELIZE, WITNESS AND DISCIPLE OTHERS IN PREPARATION FOR THE KINGDOM?

How will you accomplish this in the **different arenas of your life** - Remember from the Marriage and Single's Conference materials:



Emotional
Health
Spiritual Life
Fitness
Nutrition
Finance
Marriage
Relationships/Friendships

Family
Creativity
Legacy
Career
Mental
Community
Personal
Intellectual

Recreational
Social
Hobbies
Calling/Passion
Education
Other (areas of importance)____
