

## The Disciples Go Fishing John 21:1-14

INTRO: The first and final miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, while on earth, were performed in Galilee. The first miracle was turning water into wine at the marriage supper at Cana of Galilee; and the final miracle is the great catch of fish as recorded in verse 6 of this chapter.

The Sea of Galilee, also known as the Lake of Gennesaret and here called the Sea of Tiberias, the Roman name for the lake, was a place of blessed memories for the disciples. It is this sea over which the disciples rowed hard in the storm as Jesus slept. Jesus walked across this sea, and Peter left the little ship to meet Him. This lake is often stormy, but the Master of the sea stilled the waves by saying: "Peace be still." In this lake, Peter caught the fish which supplies the coin to pay the tax. Two thousand demon possessed pigs committed hogicide in this lake. On its shore, thousands were fed by the blessed Lord. And here once again, we find ourselves at the Sea of Galilee.

### I. VSS 1-3, SEVEN ON THE SEA

- A. Vs 1, "After these things," points to the six earlier post resurrection appearances of the Lord.
  - 1. "Jesus showed Himself." The word for "showed" is *phaneroo* meaning "to manifest."
    - a. He displayed His glory.
    - b. He proved His love, power, and majesty.
  - 2. "At the Sea of Tiberias."
    - a. The disciples were in Galilee because the Lord had left word for them to meet Him there (Mt 28:10).
    - b. Matt 28:16 tells us that the disciples did as they were instructed.
  - 3. "On this wise showed He Himself." This is added because of the rather lengthy appearance recorded here.
- B. Vs 2, Here we see seven disciples gathered together.
  - 1. Peter, who denied the Lord three times, heads the list; and Thomas, the doubter, is second. This surely speaks of grace and mercy of the Lord.
  - 2. We see Thomas right next to Peter. It seems as if he is staying closer to the assembly of the disciples than ever before.
    - a. Matthew Henry said: "It is well if losses by our neglect

make us more careful afterwards not to let opportunities slip” (Vol 5:1225).

- b. Every time we miss assembly of the saints, we miss the presence of the Lord revealed in a special way (Mt 18:20).
- C. Vs 3, Peter, as usual, takes the lead and says to the others: “I go a fishing.”
- 1. Years before the Lord had specifically called Peter to turn from fishing for fish to fish for men (Lk 5:11). Now it looks as though Peter is trying to break back into commercial fishing.
  - 2. Peter and the others are acting on the prompting of the flesh.
    - a. It is night time. This suggest that they are walking as children of night, not children of light.
    - b. The Lord did not appear to them that night. They were left to themselves.
    - c. They “caught nothing.” This suggests that God’s servants cannot expect blessings of the Lord when they choose the when and where of their work.
    - d. Every servant of God must learn that the words of the Lord are true when He says: “Without me, ye can do nothing” (15:5).
  - 3. They “entered into a ship immediately.”
    - a. They didn’t pray.
    - b. They didn’t stop to weigh Peter’s words. They acted upon the prompting of the flesh.
  - 4. The most unhappy men that I’ve ever known are men who left the ministry completely to go into the world of business; and men who have refused to forsake all and answer the call to the ministry.

## II. VSS 4-8, SEVEN SUCCESSFUL FISHERMAN

- A. Vs 4, The disciples, having returned to their worldly business, occupied with their bodily needs fail to recognize the Lord.
- 1. It is evident that the disciples were not expecting the Lord. He was near, and they didn’t know Him. How often is it that He draws near to us, and we know Him not because of our worldliness?
  - 2. The Greek word here for “know” and the Greek words in

20:44 are the same. Mary “knew not it was Jesus,” because of her preoccupation with death and sorrow. The disciples “knew not that it was Jesus,” because they had gone back to their worldly roots.

- B. Vs 5, Jesus calls out to the disciples as they row toward shore: “Children, have ye any meat?” “Did you catch anything?” Why did Jesus ask this?
  - 1. First, we know that He knew the answer already, so the asking of the question was for their instruction and good.
  - 2. The question would draw a confession of their failure.
    - a. Before God supplies our need, we must be conscious of our emptiness. We need to pray, “give us this day our daily bread.”
    - b. Before God gives strength, we must see and feel our weakness.
  - 3. Just as the Lord on the shore was concerned about the disciples, The Lord on the shore of heaven, the place where we who believe are bound, speaks to us in concern for us.
- C. Vs 6, The Lord, in omniscience, knew where the fish were. He is Sovereign of the sea.
  - 1. The disciples had confessed their failure; now the Lord could bless.
  - 2. When we lay aside our humanistic thoughts of self sufficiency and see how we need Jesus, He will fill our spiritual nets.
- D. Vs 7, This is just like Peter. John is the first to recognize the Lord, but it is Peter who is the first to jump into action. The boat was too slow for Peter.
  - 1. Peter had been stripped down to the loin clothe.
  - 2. He and the others had been working alone, men only; but now, he was about to meet the Lord and his dress was not appropriate.
- E. Vs 8, Can anyone doubt that John loved Jesus any less than Peter. Yet, John comes in with the boat instead of jumping overboard while still some way out from shore.
  - 1. Don’t criticize those who may not react just like you in spiritual matters.
  - 2. Thank God for the Peter’s, and thank Him for the John’s.

### III. VSS 9-14, SEVEN JOYFUL FISHERMEN DINING WITH JESUS

- A. Vs 9, Jesus cares for the physical needs of these disciples, and He still cares for us. Jesus knows these men are tired and hungry, and He provides for them (Psa 103:14).
  - 1. The fire of coals are the same type as those in the courtyard where Peter denied the Lord.
  - 2. The bread and fish would remind all those present that Jesus had fed the multitude.
- B. Vs 10, The emphasis is on the word “now.”
  - 1. The Lord wanted the disciples to see that the secret of their success was in the obeying His command.
  - 2. The fish in this catch symbolize the spiritual catch we can have if we obey the Lord.
- C. Vs 11, Peter was no wimp; he drew the net.
  - 1. When Peter denied the Lord, he was weak.
  - 2. When Peter obeyed the Lord, he was strong.
- D. Vs 12, “Come and dine.” What a wonderful invitation, an invitation to come near and partake of His provision.
  - 1. “Come,” a wonderful word of invitation to sinners.
    - a. John 7:37: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”
    - b. Mt 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
    - c. Rev 22:17: “The spirit and the bride say come....”
  - 2. The disciples are awed by the Lord, and their mouths stay shut.
- E. Vs 13, To share ones bread, in the culture of the time, showed the bond of friendship. What a friend we have in Jesus.
- F. Vs 14, This speaks of our Lord’s appearance to the disciples as a group. Christ is the risen Lord!

CONCLUSION: You are invited to “come and dine” with Jesus.

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