

BIBLE STORY: BREAKFAST BY SEA OF GALILEE

John 21:1-25

Central Thoughts

- Jesus' resurrection from the dead guarantees the promise of resurrection to eternal life for all who believe in Him.
- Jesus has provided His ministers with all that they need in His Word and Sacraments.
- Jesus' ministers are dependent upon God's grace alone in the office of the ministry.
- Jesus ministers are called to love Christ more than anyone else in order to be faithful to Him.

Discussion Questions

Note: The Sea of Tiberias is named after the Roman Emperor Tiberius and is another name for the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a lake formed by the Jordan River 680 feet below sea level, 13 miles long, 7 miles wide, and 160 feet deep. Its waters are rich with fish. Peter and Andrew, James and John had made their living as fishermen on this lake. When Jesus called them to be "fishers of men" at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 5:1-11), they had fished all night and caught nothing. At Jesus' Word they let down the net and caught so many fish that the net began to break. On that occasion, Peter confessed his sinfulness and asked the Lord to depart from him. Now, at the end of Jesus' ministry and in His third resurrection appearance to seven of His Apostles, they again went fishing and had caught nothing. Jesus again instructed them to cast the net into the sea on the right side of the boat and they caught 153 fish. But this time the net does not break. The unbroken net is a sign that they were now ready to begin the work to which He had called them. They had been with Jesus for three years and they were now to begin to cast the net of the Lord's Word into the sea of this world to catch sinners and bring them into the ship of the Church for salvation.

What were the Apostles able to catch that night without Jesus' Word?

Nothing

What does this teach us about their ministry as Apostles?

They were totally dependent upon the Lord's Word and would accomplish nothing without it.

What did Jesus ask them as He stood upon the shore that morning?

"Children, have you any food (or anything to eat)?"

How did Jesus' respond when they answered "No!"?

He told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they would find some.

What happened when they cast their net into the sea?

They caught an enormous catch of fish so that they were unable to draw it in.

When Peter was told that it was the Lord who greeted them from the shore, how did he respond?

He put on his outer garment, plunged into the sea, and swam to Jesus.

How is Peter's response different from how he responded to the Lord at the first miracle of fish?

He knew he needed the Lord and was totally dependent upon Jesus for everything.

What did Peter and the Apostles do?

They dragged the net with fish to land.

What did the disciples find on the seashore?

Jesus had prepared a fire of coals with fish on it.

What does John emphasize in his testimony about the catch of fish in verse 11?

They caught 153 fish and the net did not break.

What do these details teach us about Christ's love for Christians and their future ministry?

Every soul that is brought into the church is known by our Lord and loved by Him (See John 10:14-16, 27-29) and the "net of the Lord's Word and Sacraments" are sufficient for the Church's ministry.

To what did Jesus invite them?

To eat breakfast with Him. He invited them to have fellowship with Him that would never end.

What did the Apostles' witness as a testimony that Jesus had conquered sin and death?

This was now the third time that they had seen Jesus risen from the dead.

Simon Peter is restored: After the disciples had eaten breakfast, Jesus talked with Simon Peter who had previously denied his Lord. He asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Each time Peter responded, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" and each time Jesus replied with a command to do the work to which Jesus had called Peter: "Feed My lambs. Tend My sheep. Feed My sheep." On the one hand, Jesus persistent questions hurt Peter because they reminded him of his sinfulness and how he had denied his Lord three times. On the other hand, by His renewed command to care for Christians as sheep of the Good Shepherd, Jesus forgave Peter and taught him that his ministry as a "sinful man" rested entirely upon the Lord's grace and forgiveness that had saved Peter and which was the only strength of His office as an Apostle. Jesus' first question, "Do you love Me more than these?" teaches us that love for Christ, even more than love for His sheep, is the most important priority for a minister and every disciple of Jesus.

What did Jesus predict in verses 18-19?

That Peter would die a martyr's death in service to His Lord Jesus.

What does Jesus' word, "Follow Me" mean?

It is the call to faith in Jesus and to follow Him even to death.

What did Peter want to know about John?

He wanted to know how John's life would end.

How did Jesus reply to Peter's question?

He taught Peter not to ask such questions because the life and future of all of Jesus' disciples is in the Lord's hands and that we are simply to follow Jesus by faith.

What did the church mistakenly believe based upon this conversation?

That John would not die.

How does John identify himself at the end of this Gospel?

He was an eyewitness of Jesus' death and resurrection who was called to testify to what Jesus said and did for our salvation.

Why did John write his Gospel?

That we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and believe in Him (See John 20:30-31).

Meditation on the Bible Story

In Jesus' third resurrection appearance He taught the disciples that they were ready to begin their ministry as His Apostles. They had been taught by Him. They had witnessed His death and resurrection. They were now prepared to be "fishers of men". He had given them everything that they needed. By the net of Christ's Word and Sacraments they would preach the Gospel and gather many into the ark of the Church. He taught them that every Christian is known and loved by Him. He taught them, through Peter's restoration to salvation and the Office of the Ministry, that they were totally dependent upon God's grace alone. No Christian becomes or remains a Christian by his own strength, and no minister becomes or remains faithful in the ministry by his own strength. They were totally dependent upon the grace of God that they proclaimed to others as the strength of their ministry. "Follow Me" is the call to faith. The Apostles, like Peter, would not only bear witness to Jesus by their preaching but they would also bear witness to Him by dying a martyr's death. Each apostle and every Christian can face future persecution and suffering for Jesus' sake, because He is risen from the dead and has promised them eternal fellowship with Him. The most important love for us, as Peter learned from Jesus, was to love Christ our Savior above all others.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, as You forgave and strengthened Peter to be Your Apostle and provided everything that the Church needed for the ministry, so teach us to rely upon Your Word and Sacraments for all that we need to preserve us in life and in death. In Your name we pray. Amen.



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