

I love the northern shores of Galilee, the land of Naphtali. Jesus, Peter, and John did too. After the resurrection, Jesus' first command was to tell the disciples to go to Galilee and meet Him there. (Matthew 28:10) They didn't leave though. They stayed through the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was the Day after the Feast that Jesus appeared to the disciples the second time to convince Thomas. (John 20:26) It seems that the disciples were fearful of leaving, even after Jesus appeared to them and pronounced the shalom of God upon them. Jesus would only be around for 40 days, and they were wasting it hiding in Jerusalem. I think, and please understand that this is just my opinion, Jesus was eager for them to get it together and eventually get to Galilee. He longed to share with His friends what He had accomplished on their behalf. He was longing to show them the scars of His love for them and commission them to take the good news to the world.

Finally, they obeyed and returned to their favorite, familiar surroundings. The shores of Galilee were much busier then than they are now. Nineteen ports with breakwaters dotted the shores. Capernaum had a good-sized port with a shoreline street that was only recently discovered. A little further southeast, and there was a nice shore of smooth pebbles. Ancient rock steps that led off a limestone rock are still there to this day. A spring flows into that bay, attracting the fish in the lake to feed. The adjacent little bay to the southeast is called the Bay of Parables because it is thought that Jesus taught some of His parables there. (Luke 5:1-3) This may have been the very area where Jesus met the men mending their nets and called them to be fishers of men. (Luke 5:10)

It was three years since that first miraculous catch. So much had transpired. The things they had seen! The many times their hearts were overwhelmed! There were the fears, the joys, the lessons, the mysteries, and then what seemed to be the end of all only to find out it was more wonderful and mysterious than ever. Now they are back where their lives were changed, but He didn't appear.

The first verse tells us Jesus is going to appear again, but the Greek word for "appear" (phaneroo) is more than just to be visible. Some translations use the word "manifest". Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words tells us: *to be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character*. Keep in mind that this what is about to happen. We're about to see again the true character of Jesus as we saw Him when He washed the feet of the disciples. (John 13:3-5)

Seven of the disciples grew impatient waiting. The four others had probably gone to visit family since they were from the area. Peter, James and John had been partners before in the fishing business (Luke 5:8-10), so they decided to make a little money while waiting for Jesus. <sup>3</sup> "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. The time to fish on Galilee with shallow nets is in the night when the fish come up to the surface and can't see the net. By fishing at night, you could avoid the heat of the day and bring fresh fish to the morning market. They cast the nets over and over and over again, but didn't catch a single fish.

**Commented [notes1]:** 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."  
Matt 28:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"  
John 20:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, 2 he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.  
Luke 5:1-3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."  
Luke 5:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.  
John 13:3-5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."  
Luke 5:8-10 (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. I've been on the lake early in the morning four different times. One of those times I was able to convince the pilot to take us to this approximate spot. The boat tourists go out in sits quite a bit lower than the boat the disciples would have been in which explains the reluctance. Every time you go out, a man will show you what it was like to cast a net. That particular time, the man was shocked to pull in some fish. He said it was a first for him.

I've also stood where I believe Jesus was standing on the rock above those ancient steps. There is a little church there called Peter of Primacy. Several times I was amazed to see a boil of fish about a stones throw off the shore. I think it is the warm spring water that attracts them.

Jesus was again incognito. It seems He is only recognized when He wants to be recognized. It may have been the dim light of early morning combined with the distance that caused them not to know, or it may be He didn't want them to know yet. He called out to them, "Hey kids, No fish huh?" That is a more literal translation than the NIV. I love the set up. Jesus is being playful! Don't you love it! He's conquered death and hell, redeemed His own, and now back in the old stomping grounds, He's teasing His dear friends. He knows what is about to happen.

They think He's just looking to buy some fish so they take the bait. (pun intended) "NO!", they answered. Malcolm Muggeridge has said that *"failure is the most creative phenomenon of life...Christianity, from Golgotha onwards, has been the sanctification of failure."* Ian Hunter, *A Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), p.224 I say, "Amen!"

Jesus is about to do the coolest thing. You see, three years earlier He approached Peter on that same shore. Peter let Jesus use his boat as a pulpit. I'd like to be more like Jesus. (I mean, I prefer a boat to a pulpit.) Then Jesus had Peter push out onto the lake to fish, to reimburse him for the use of the boat. Peter complained that he'd fished all night and been skunked, "But alright, whatever You say." The nets were suddenly bulging with fish. They had to get another boat to come help. Suddenly, Peter was overwhelmed with a sense of his sinfulness in the presence of Jesus' holiness. He fell to his knees before Jesus and asked Jesus to go away from him. (Luke 5:8) That was when Jesus called him to be a disciple. We are about to see history repeat itself in a most profound way.

<sup>6</sup> He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. It was déjà vu all over again. They couldn't get the net in the boat, so they would have to drag it to shore. Can you imagine the rush of thoughts that must have flooded their minds? "It has to be Jesus. He came just like He said He would and He is doing what He did when He called us. It can't be a coincidence!"

<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. Now I don't know if John is hinting that Peter is a little slow to catch on to things, or if Peter was just so involved in

**Commented [notes7]:** 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Luke 5:8 (NIV)

dealing with the net, but when his mind caught up with the fact that it was Jesus, he threw his outer cloak on and dove in the water. A fisherman would take their outer cloak off to fish, as it would get in the way. Jews wore two layers as we saw when Jesus' clothing was divided. (John 19:24) Impetuous Peter couldn't wait and realized he really didn't care about the fish anymore. To take the cloak meant he was ready to go with Jesus even if the others didn't make it back in time, otherwise he would have left it in the boat, as it was easier to swim without it. (John 13:37) So what if they just scored two weeks wages; Jesus was on the shore!

**Commented [notes8]:** 24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. John 19:24 (NIV)

The last time this happened, Peter wanted to get away from Jesus. You'd think that after the betrayal, he'd be reluctant to be alone with Jesus, but then maybe he wanted to ask for forgiveness. He certainly had more faith in the grace and mercy of Jesus after seeing Him deal with what his world called "sinners". He just wanted above all else to be with Him. (John 12:26) Do you? (Psalm 27:4)

**Commented [notes9]:** 37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." John 13:37 (NIV)

I wonder if our relationship with Jesus has progressed to the point that we have the same passionate desire that Peter had? Or are you still like Peter was after the first catch? Do you want Him to leave or are you running to Him because you know He is gracious and loving? The last time you sensed Him drawing near to you, did you get busy to avoid the encounter, or get still to hear His heart? (Psalm 46:10)

**Commented [notes10]:** 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. John 12:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. Psalms 27:4 (NIV)

The other disciples, "the kids" as Jesus called them, towed the net full of fish the hundred yards to the shore. <sup>9</sup> *When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.* This type of fire only appeared one other place in John; it was the fire around which Peter stood when he betrayed Jesus. (John 18:18) John noticed the coincidence and mentioned the word to take us back to that memory for what follows in next week's sermon.

**Commented [notes12]:** 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalms 46:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. John 18:18 (NIV)

Where did Jesus get those fish? He must have called them to the shore just as He called them into the net. (Psalm 8:6-8) And where did He get the bread? Maybe He turned the stones into bread. It would have been rebellion to do it at Satan's command (Matthew 4:3), but now, to feed His disciples at His Father's direction, it is obedience. I bet there was never a better tasting loaf of bread in all the world. It should have brought their minds to the bread of the Presence in the Holy Place. (Exodus 25:30) There sat Jesus, the bread that came down from heaven for the life of the world (John 6:32-33), God with us, our spiritual sustenance.

**Commented [notes14]:** 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. Psalms 8:6-8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Matt 4:3 (NIV)

The nets weren't nylon, but probably spun wool making them susceptible to breaking. The fact that a full net did not tear and lose some of the fish was miraculous. In Kent Hughes commentary on John he writes, *"Nothing, in a person or a group of persons, is beyond his power and grace. Serving Christ in our own strength, trying to do it our own way, is like going after Moby Dick with a pickle fork. But led and sustained by Christ's strength, the net will never tear."*— Preaching the Word, John

**Commented [notes16]:** 30 Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times. Ex 25:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." John 6:32-33 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. The invitation He gave when He first met them was an invitation to dinner, "Come and you will see" at 4PM. (John 1:39) This last meal with them was breakfast. They had the Last Supper with Jesus a few

**Commented [notes18]:** 39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. John 1:39 (NIV)

weeks before, and now they are having the Last Breakfast. This was Jesus' third appearance to them as a group.

Did it ever seem strange to you that Jesus would bother to cook a meal after His resurrection? To dine together was to spend time in fellowship, talking about life, sharing your hearts. It is no wonder then that when dictating a letter to the backslidden Laodicean church, Jesus said He was standing outside the door, knocking, wanting to come in and dine with them. (Revelation 3:20) Have you been dining with Jesus? The risen Lord wants to fellowship with you! I know it's hard to believe, probably as hard as it was for the disciples. You might want to ask just as they wanted to, "Lord, do You really want to spend time with me? Is it really You, the Lord of all creation?" He has prepared a table for you. Come and dine. King David found the table prepared by the Lord in the presence of his enemies. (Psalm 23:5; Isaiah 25:6)

It's all about love a love relationship between Jesus and us. That is where this was all heading. What were they doing out on the lake? Were they going back to an old love? Were they trusting in their ability to once again provide for themselves? Perhaps the miracle said something to them about God's ability to provide their needs if they abandoned themselves to obey Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

My mentor, Dennis Turner was jolly Englishman. He was converted in a Japanese prison camp in Southeast Asia. He first began his ministry under a mission umbrella, but when his wife left him with their two children because of her lesbian desires, the mission quit supporting him. There he was in China, called to mission work, but without support. He decided he had no choice but to trust the Lord for his support. Later, he was called to minister to the people group who led him to Christ, but also the same people group who horribly mistreated him. I met him when he came into my hospital room in a Japanese town in the Central Alps. He spent his days witnessing to the sick and dying in Japanese hospitals. He had a table prepared for him in the presence of his enemies, a love feast.

What God leads you to do, He will provide for you to do. The nets won't break and there will be fish on the coals. It may be with a conventional mission support system, it may be by making tents on the side (Acts 20:34), or by generous people who want to participate in your ministry. It may be that your ministry is a witness to those you work with in a secular job. It may even be miraculous support like the ravens that fed Elijah. One thing Peter and the disciples just learned is that provision comes from God. Provision is not the issue; a love relationship with the Giver of all good things is what we are seeing in this chapter. (James 1:17)

We never again read about Peter going fishing. Peter had a much greater calling than just fishing. God was calling him to move on. Is there a distraction in your life that God is calling you to move past so that you can be all God called you to be?

Whatever you do, however God provides for you, your calling is much more than the physical work you do. You are where God has placed you to show people what Jesus is like. (1John 4:12) The income is not the main thing. To so many people, the

**Commented [notes19]:** 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.  
Rev 3:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Psalms 23:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 6 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines.  
Isaiah 25:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.  
Phil 4:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.  
Acts 20:34 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.  
James 1:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.  
1 John 4:12 (NIV)

income is what their job is all about. How sad! How meaningless! Not many people on this earth know about Dennis Turner, but he's famous in heaven. There are a lot of Japanese in heaven to whom Dennis is a hero. He's a hero to me, a hero of faith. (Hebrews 11:13) He laid down his nets (he was a thread salesman) and followed Jesus. (Matthew 4:19-20)

We are all a bit like those disciples. We know the Lord has risen. We know He has said He will meet us (Matthew 18:20), but we get tired of waiting. We get impatient waiting for the big revelations. We are like the children of Israel, tired of their daily manna, and wanting meat, not in God's good time, but right now! (Numbers 11:4-6) Just doing what we know Scripture commands isn't exciting enough for us. But wait a minute! Isn't Jesus the Word made flesh? Isn't He meeting us each time we read the Word? We want something that thrills our flesh; Jesus wants a daily time of dining together. We want a quail under glass, and Jesus has another healthy fish sandwich (or a daily supply of manna). We want excitement, which is a sign of spiritual immaturity, and Jesus wants faith that believes without seeing. (Hebrews 11:6) Maybe the problem is that we haven't let Him be the spice in every day. Life without the spice of Jesus can get pretty bland, so we want a fix of excitement. Is Jesus without the thrills enough for you?

Jesus stands on the periphery of our life and calls, "Hey little one, don't have anything for Me, do you?" You've fished all night and don't have anything. You've labored all your life and don't have anything that would impress Him. In fact, you wonder if you aren't in for a rebuke because of the ways you've denied Him, but then you remember how gracious He was to Peter, and Mary Magdalene, to that wayward teen, to that criminal, even to that IRS agent name Zacheus, and you know He'll be the same with you. It's His nature!

You don't have anything to give Him. That's the point. He is the One who has the miraculous breakfast for you. This is the true nature of Jesus, a servant. He, again, revealed His servant nature that we are to take upon ourselves. (John 13:14-15)

He invites you to come and dine. It can be a whole new day with a whole new direction and meaning in life. What are you going to do? Sail off or jump in the water ready to go wherever He leads? I'm divin' in, cloak and all, ready to go! You can tow the fish or sail off, but Jesus is here, and I don't want to be anywhere else but by His side. Ordinary fish sandwiches never tasted so good, for the One that serves them is so wonderful. He serves them up every day if your eyes are open to see, and your heart is open to receive. (Luke 12:37)

That was His last meal with them, a breakfast. This day is passing. It's almost time for supper! One day the supper trumpet will sound and we won't linger on this boat of life. We will dive into eternity. He has prepared another meal for us, a great feast, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We'll probably hear Him say, "Hey little one, don't have anything for me, do you?" We'll lay at His feet the fish that He called into our nets. We'll realize that without Him (John 15:5) we didn't accomplish anything. Then we'll pull up a chair to that great table and dine with Him, forever. (Revelation 19:9)

**Commented [notes26]:** 13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. Heb 11:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. Matt 4:19-20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matt 18:20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost-- also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" Num 11:4-6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb 11:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13:14-15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes32]:** 37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. Luke 12:37 (NIV)

**Commented [notes33]:** 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes34]:** 37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. Luke 12:37 (NIV)