

The Mission of the Church

John 21:1-14

November 12, 2023

1. Fishermen without Fish (1-3)
 - a. Jesus' appearance to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (1)
 - i. This is Jesus' third appearance to His disciples.
 - ii. This appearance is out in public on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee).
 - b. The disciples' futility (2-3)
 - i. Peter led 6 of his fellow fishermen on an overnight fishing expedition (1).
 1. Peter
 2. Thomas
 3. Nathanael
 4. James (Son of Zebedee)
 5. John, the Beloved Disciple (Son of Zebedee)
 6. 2 others
 - ii. Peter announces that he's going fishing, and his fellows decide to accompany him.
 1. Nothing in the text implies that Peter has abandoned his mission.
 2. The emphasis of the text is not on Peter's reasoning, but on the result.
 3. They fished all night and caught nothing.
 4. John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."
2. Disciples without Jesus (4-6)
 - a. The Disciples' Lack of Perception (4)
 - i. Jesus appeared on the shore just as the morning was dawning.
 - ii. The disciples were unaware of His presence.
 - iii. The disciples were lacking more than fish, they were lacking an awareness of Jesus' presence.
 - b. Jesus' Address to His Disciples (5)
 - i. Jesus calls them by their new identity, children.
 - ii. Jesus confronts their condition, their lack of fish.
 - c. Jesus' Miraculous Solution (6)
 - i. Jesus gives a command and a promise, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."
 - ii. The disciples obeyed and were immediately rewarded.
 - iii. The miraculous catch of fish illustrates Jesus' power and authority available to the disciples to accomplish their missionary mandate (cf. Luke 5:4-10).
3. "It is the Lord!" (7-8)
 - a. The Response of James and John (7)
 - i. John is the first to recognize Jesus.
 1. John, the Beloved Disciple, had the closest relationship with Jesus of the twelve.
 2. It is no surprise that John was the first to recognize the presence of Jesus.
 3. John then announces Jesus' presence to the remaining disciples.
 - ii. Peter is the first to respond to John's announcement.
 1. Peter had a strong desire to be with the Lord.
 2. He wrapped his garments around himself and jumped into the Sea to swim to Jesus (about 110 yards).
 - b. The Response of the Remaining Disciples (8)
 - i. The net of fish is so heavy that the disciples had to drag it to shore.
 - ii. When Jesus performed this miracle the first time, the disciples were able to fill 2 vessels; this time the catch was so great, they had to drag it behind them to the shore.

4. The Symbol Laden Meal with Jesus (9-14)
 - a. The Prepared Meal (9)
 - i. Jesus prepared a charcoal fire; the last time a charcoal fire was mentioned was the night of Jesus' betrayal, abandonment and denial. Now Jesus offers His disciples an opportunity to renew their fellowship with Him not just as disciples, but children of the Father.
 - ii. Jesus prepared a meal of cooked fish and bread. Jesus is demonstrating His love for them and His sufficiency; He is the answer to their inadequacy.
 - iii. The lesson He is teaching them is that toil on our own is futile, but awareness of Jesus' presence and obedience to His commands leads to intimate fellowship and fruitful service.
 - b. Cooperation in the Meal (10)
 - i. Jesus expected His disciples to contribute to the meal.
 - ii. Jesus expects His disciples to participate in His work.
 - iii. Jesus is ultimately inviting His disciples to participate in His resurrection power continuing His work in this world.
 - iv. In this last meal with His disciples, Jesus is illustrating the way His disciples would minister to others through a relationship with Him.
 - c. The Miraculous Catch (11)
 - i. Peter is once again the first to respond to Jesus command and dragged the net to land.
 - ii. The net was full of 153 large fish, yet the net wasn't torn.
 - iii. In this miracle, Jesus is demonstrating His all-sufficient power that's available to His disciples as they seek to continue Jesus' mission in this world.
 - d. Jesus' Gracious Invitation (12-14)
 - i. "Come and dine" is Jesus' invitation for fellowship, friendship, and companionship with Him.
 - ii. No one questioned Him; instead they quietly enjoyed His presence.
 - iii. Jesus then served and nourished His disciples just as He does today as we gather together (cf. 14:18-20; Matthew 18:20).

Conclusion:

1. Are you cultivating an awareness of Jesus' presence in your daily life?
2. Are you cooperating with Him to accomplish His mission through your life?
3. Are you seeking companionship with Jesus?