

John 21:1-25

Teaching Points

Here we are at the end of our three-year small group study of John's Gospel. The final verses in this final chapter remind us that John wrote these stories to provide only a sampling of all Jesus said and did. No single book could begin to capture the full reality and power, majesty and glory of the Son of God. John's purpose was to enable the readers to comprehend as well as possible the truth about the God-Man, Jesus the Christ, and to urge us to believe in Him (see 20:30-31).

The resurrected Christ is the focal point of this final chapter. Chapter 20 focused on the implications of the resurrection for faith. Chapter 21 centers on the implications of the resurrection for the mission of the church:

Implication #1 – When we submit to Christ and obey Him, even when it seems illogical, miraculous things will happen (vv.1-8).

The miraculous catch of fish in verses 1-8 recreates Luke 5:1-11, a similar miracle that launched the mission that took place during Jesus' earthly ministry. The post-resurrection period, the age of the Spirit, is launched by another miraculous catch of fish. Jesus will leave the disciples, but there is work to do. Jesus told the disciples in Luke 5 that He would make them "fishers of men" and He will do that even after He ascends to His Father.

Discussion Questions: What circumstances surround this catch of fish that make it so incredible? Did it "make sense" to the disciples to let down their nets one more time? How could Jesus know there were fish on the right side of the boat? What does that teach us about the mission of the Church?

Thoughts: *The disciples had fished all night and caught nothing. Only the Lord could know (from the shore!) that there would be fish on the right side of the boat. The Church is called to obey Christ even when we might be tempted to despair. Like the very first miracle of John's Gospel, turning water into wine in Cana (chapter 2), the lesson is that the Lord can do all things even when we can't begin to comprehend His purpose and His power. The obedient Christian and the submissive Church will see Jesus at work.*

Implication #2 – As we engage in His mission, let us rest assured the risen Lord Himself is always caring for our every need (vv.9-14).

Picture this: The glorious risen Lord Jesus had breakfast prepared for His disciples! Hear His precious invitation, "Come and eat." Let us never lose heart, but rather rest assured that the risen Lord Himself is watching over us and caring for us. Is there work to do? Yes. Will it be difficult to obey at times? Yes. Costly? Yes. But as we go out representing Christ, we do so knowing He lives in us and we live in Him (John 15). We enjoy fellowship with our Savior by His indwelling Spirit and He guides and empowers us in our mission.

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Implication #3 – The mission of Jesus in the age of the Spirit cannot be accomplished without a Church that is well-fed (vv.15-17).

What a beautiful and profound passage where Jesus reinstates Peter. If Peter truly loves Jesus, what will he do? He will care deeply for His flock and take care of them well. Three times the Lord tells Peter to care for His sheep using the words “feed” and “tend” which picture the basic care necessary for sheep to grow—for the Lord’s people to grow. Jesus will soon ascend to His Father’s right hand, but not before He emphasizes the need for His Church to be well-fed, well taken care of by Peter and the Apostles.

Discussion Questions: What about today? Who is to “feed” the Lord’s “sheep”? How important is it to have faithful Bible teaching in the Church? What is the point of it?

Thoughts: See 1 Peter 5:1-4 where Peter tells the elders to shepherd the flock of God and to serve as overseers with integrity. Pastors/elders are given this responsibility. And there are others gifted in Christ’s Body to teach. And each one in the Church is to exercise the gifts given by God for the edifying of the Body. Without good Bible teaching, the Church might grow in numbers, but not in depth and maturity in Christ. The point is that we must know the truth, rejoice in the truth, and bring this Good News of Christ to others.

Implication #4 – The mission of Christ demands our all. We must follow Him no matter what (vv.18-23).

Now that Peter has been reinstated and commissioned, Jesus tells him that he will pay the ultimate price for being His disciple. Jesus prophesies Peter’s death (v.19). By his death, Peter will glorify God. As the world hated Jesus, so it will hate Jesus’ followers. As Jesus gloried His Father through His substitutionary death on the cross, so will Peter glorify the Father through his death in the service of King Jesus. If the Lord asks us to give our lives for Him, it means we will not only share Christ’s suffering but His glory as well.

In light of such a prophecy, what does Jesus command Peter to do? “Follow Me” (vv.19,22). Like Peter, let us always keep our eyes on Christ, the focal point of our faith. Let us trust Him and love Him. There are no easy lives when we follow Christ, but there is no boring one either! Our lives will count for something and when we are followers of Christ, that something will matter.