

**John 21: 1-14; “I am Going Fishing”, An Easter Devotional given after the
Easter Breakfast held at Reformed Baptist Church of Tama
on April 17th, 2022, by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

We see here that this is the third time that Jesus showed Himself again to His disciples after He rose from the dead. Each of His “showings” of Himself had a special meaning for those disciples to whom Jesus revealed Himself. When John says that this is the 3rd “showing”, he is speaking of this in terms of the small group of Christ’s disciples who were gathered together in days following Christ’s resurrection from the dead. In the first meeting on the evening of the Resurrection Day He appeared suddenly to them in the room in which they were gathered. At first they were terrified and frightened, but Jesus said to them – Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? They thought that they were seeing a spirit, but He bid them look at His hands and His feet, and said that a spirit did not have flesh and blood as He did. (Luke 24: 39)

This gave them great joy! And so too, we should have great joy this morning realizing that our Savior’s resurrection was a bodily resurrection. We were raised spiritually with Him that day, we are presently seated in the heavenly places with Him; but we will be raised bodily from the dead when He returns in His glorious 2nd Coming. John mentions this same first “showing” in John 20, verses 19-23, when Jesus came and suddenly stood in their midst, and said to them – Peace be with you. And He not only spoke this peace to them, but He also said – “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And so, He breathed on them, and said to them – Receive the Holy Spirit. He recommissioned them to their great work of preaching His word and laying the foundation of the New Testament Church; that great work that He had called them to.

The 2nd meeting that John mentions concerning the disciples being gathered together was when Thomas finally came to be with them eight days later. He had not been there at that first meeting. And he had fallen into great doubts as to whether Christ had really been raised from the dead. Before Thomas came together with the other 10 disciples, they told him that they had seen the Lord, but he had not believed their report. He said that unless he saw in Christ’s hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and put his hand into His side, that he would not believe. And so in this second meeting Jesus came and the doors were shut and He stood their midst and said – Peace to you! And then He specifically addressed Thomas in relation to his own words and then told him not to be unbelieving but believing. And Thomas confessed Him as His Lord and His God.

We are given encouragement by the benediction which Jesus pronounced that day that those disciples are blessed who have not seen, and yet they have believed, in His resurrection. He is alive! And He is alive forevermore! But here in this 3rd “showing” Jesus chooses to reveal Himself only gradually on the particular occasion of Peter’s telling the other disciples that He was going fishing. Peter was a natural born leader, and when he told the others that he was going fishing, the others said that they would go too. There were six other disciples besides Peter, and they most of them we know were previously employed as fishermen when Jesus first called them to follow Him. They said – We are going with you also. Let’s not just sit around waiting, let’s do something.

So they immediately got into the boat, and that night, it says in verse 3, they caught nothing. But when the morning had come, and things were beginning to clear, they noticed a man standing on the shore. It was Jesus, but they did not know that it was Jesus. He calls to them, from some distance away, and says to them – Children, do you have any food? And they said – No. So he tells them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, and that they would find some fish. And so they cast, and it says that they were not able to draw the net in because of the multitude of fish. John immediately drew the right conclusion; that this was the Lord, and he said so to Peter.

Now, this leads me to say – Have you drawn the right conclusion yourself; that when you have success in anything that you endeavor to do as a disciple of Christ, that it is “the Lord”? I mean, in both your physical work and in your spiritual calling in relation to the Lord’s cause and kingdom? It was not wrong for Peter to want to do something that he was already familiar with, and to go fishing. It was not wrong for the rest of them to follow his lead and go with him. But that night before, they caught nothing! Therefore, we of all people, we as disciples of Christ, we should conclude that without Christ’s blessing and help, we can not really accomplish anything. But when we follow Him by doing what He commands, He will give the results which will prove to us our constant and continual need of Him to succeed in what we are doing; at least in a way in which He will be pleased with us.

Do you see Christ in everything; in relation to everything that you are doing? It is only those who see Christ in everything who are seeing things aright. To Him belongs all power and all authority in heaven and earth. In Him was life, and His life is the light of men. He is the Fountain of life. He gives to all men their natural abilities and puts them in various circumstances according to His will. He is the One who has called us to be His disciples and He is in the process of equipping us to serve Him better. When the disciples dragged the fish to shore, they counted them and there were 153 large fish, and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Truly amazing to them. It should be to us. Great results are from Christ alone. Even the means that they used, of the net, that net was not broken.

The Lesson that we should learn this morning is that the Lord knows how to establish the results that He is looking for. And the results that He gives will be a blessing to us. And I want you to see that it was not simply the determination of Peter and the others to catch fish. Their efforts had to be blessed by Christ. This is how Christ wants it. It is what we have us to learn. He will not only supply our needs, but He will provide for us an abundance. And He will bless us and refresh us in regard to our work, time and time again. This is shown by the fact that as soon as they had come to land, they saw that Jesus had kindled a fire for them, and had fish laid on it, and bread. He was ready to encourage them with a meal, and had fish cooking on the fire. And He also asked them to bring some of the fish which they had caught.

This was meant to be a picture to them, and to us, of the fellowship that we have with our Risen Lord as we live and labor for Him. He is telling us that even though He is now in heaven and we are here upon the earth, that He is cognizant of our work, and He will encourage us in our work according to the gifts and abilities that He has given to us, and according to the eternal purpose of the Father to see the results that He has ordained. Let us rejoice and be glad in this work of worship and service and our attempting to become fishers of men. Let us be glad that the Risen Christ is looking out for our welfare and will bless us in ways that only He can.