

# A Meal On The Beach With Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] So this weekend, so far on Saturday night and then this morning we've looked at passages where we've seen somebody have dinner with the king.

We saw Abram have dinner with Melchizedek, the bread and the wine, and then we saw King David offer a feast to Mephibosheth this morning. So we've been looking at passages that are all about the feast, about ultimately the Lord's Supper, whether that's looking forward to the Lord's Supper or looking back at the Supper that Jesus instituted.

And here at the very end of this passage that we just read, John 21, you saw Jesus invite the disciples after the resurrection to have breakfast on the beach and he gave them bread and he feasted with them.

And what I want to look at tonight, there's so much. If you've read through the Gospel of John, you'll know this, that John never wastes any words and that you can really say so much about every single sentence that John gives us.

So we're going to think about John 21 in a particular way tonight and that's through the lens of discipleship. And that's that whenever God brings you to the feast, to the Lord's Supper, like we celebrated this morning, he sends you out strengthened to be a disciple.

[ 1 : 19 ] And we even saw that in a small way this morning. But here we see that on display. We see the nature of true discipleship in these men in John 21 who go fishing once again.

And every single time at the end of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Jesus gives a commission. And it's right here, it's implicit, it's the commission of the disciple. And so we're going to see it. There's four elements of what it means to be a disciple here who's feasted with Christ who's been sent out.

And the four elements are this one, true discipleship is to know that you're an empty-handed fisherman. And then secondly, it's when you've been then encountered by Jesus Christ. And then thirdly, that you've heard the voice of Jesus.

And finally, you've been invited to breakfast. Alright, so let's look at that together. First, disciples are empty-handed fishermen. Now, to understand chapter 21, you have to say something about chapter 20.

Chapter 20 is when Jesus rises from the dead. It's an important chapter. And after Jesus rises from the dead in the back half of chapter 20, he appears to the disciples who are all huddled together in a room.

[ 2 : 45 ] And he does it twice. First, Thomas wasn't there, remember? And then the second time Thomas is there. And so we get the famous phrase that Jesus showed up to doubting Thomas at the end of chapter 20.

But I just want to highlight one thing that happens. And that's in chapter 20 verse 21. Jesus says to all the disciples that are gathered there, it's not only the apostles, it's the apostles plus others. And he says to them, Peace be with you, as the Father sent me now, I send you out. So immediately, Jesus commissions them and says, You have seen the resurrected Son of God, and you're my people, and now I'm sending you out.

And look, this is how strong of a commission it is. This is what he says, receive the Holy Spirit. That's his proclamation. And then it says, and if you go and forgive sins, they will be forgiven. And if you withhold forgiveness, it's withheld.

He's talking there to the apostles and the particular authority that they have. Now that is the very last commissioning moment in 20 before you get to chapter 21.

He has said to every single one of the disciples, receive the Holy Spirit, go out. You've seen the resurrected Jesus. It's time to get to work. It's time to be a missionary.

[ 4 : 09 ] It's time to be a disciple, a follower. And then you come to chapter 21. And the commentators will be a little bit divided on this, but most everybody thinks the same thing about what's going on in 21.

You get to chapter 21 and immediately you see that some of these disciples are now 95 miles north. They're back around the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberias. And Peter says, let's go fishing. And it gives you the hint of what's going on here, the tone of the text, because it says that they were together, these disciples. Thomas, Peter, the sons of Zebedee, including John himself who wrote this Gospel.

Most of these guys were there in Luke chapter 5 that we read earlier, this first encounter where Jesus is up in the same region and he meets with these guys in a boat and they're fishing. It's the same disciples.

And it says they were, quote, together, the same language it used at the beginning of 20 when the disciples were hiding. And it says they were in a room together, hiding. They didn't know what to do.

[ 5 : 25 ] They didn't know how to act after Jesus died. And now again, this time Jesus has shown up, he has commissioned them. He has said, get out there and be my follower, my disciple.

And the very next story is that what have these men done? They've gone home. They're back in their hometown. And that's not a bad thing, but what are they doing?

Peter says, I'm going fishing and they all say, okay, let's go fishing. And you see the point? It's saying that they've actually gone back to their day jobs. They were fishermen before Jesus called them to be his apostles amongst the twelve.

And now they're going back to being fishermen and the problem is not being a fisherman. The problem is that Jesus had just designated them as apostles to be sent out into all the world to be his followers that had the power to forgive sins, he said.

And they immediately go home and get back in the boat and catch fish. And that means that what they're doing is they're reversing course. They're not in it. There's no way here that they're obeying the commission that they've been given.

[ 6 : 41 ] Now look, these men are saved by Jesus Christ. He showed up to them in his resurrected body and said to them, you are my men. You're my apostles.

It's not an issue here that they don't know Jesus. Not at all. They are disciples. They're disciples yet after seeing the Christ in the flesh, in all of his glory, raised from the dead, they go straight down into the valley.

Have you ever been in the valley in the Christian life where the Christian life is peaks and valleys all the time? And there are times in the Christian life where you are walking in step with the Spirit, as Paul puts in Galatians 5, and you are in fellowship with God and you know it and you can feel it.

And then there's times where you can't get excited about the gospel. And these guys just saw Jesus in the flesh resurrected and they go back to their day jobs and completely disregard everything he just said.

And you know, that's the first thing that it means to be a disciple. You've got to wake up after you come to faith in Jesus and realize that it's about being a true follower is about over and over again, realizing I'm just an empty-handed fisherman.

[ 8 : 09 ] He saved me and I didn't catch any fish the next day. And I feel like although I was up here that day, I've gone down to the bottom again.

And this was the apostles. This was the apostles. And that is exactly where Jesus in some sense wanted them. You know, he needed them in order to grow, to get to a place where they could say, without Jesus I can't do anything.

I can't even get my day job done anymore. I can't even catch any fish. I'm completely empty. That I don't even as a Christian, even as a man who had seen the resurrected Christ, I still, I don't have the resources.

I still need the every hour. You know, I still need you completely. I'm empty. I'm an empty-handed fisherman. And we see that all throughout whether you're coming to faith, maybe tonight you're here and you haven't come to, you haven't professed faith in Jesus or you're right now.

The gospel is something that is really, is really striking you. The good news about Jesus in the heart. And in Acts chapter 9, Paul, Saul, were told about he, he was the verbs that get used in Acts 9.

[ 9 : 31 ] It says that he was breathing threats and murder against the church. And the verb that gets used there is the verb that's typically associated with a rabid wolf, that he was slobbering with anger and hatred for the people of God, for Jesus Christ.

And then a couple of chapters later, or sorry, that very chapter I should say, he gets knocked off his horse by Jesus Christ. And you know, you immediately realize that this man is the most unlikely convert that's ever existed in human history.

And that means if you're not a Christian tonight, there are no unlikely converts on the one hand. And if you are a Christian tonight, that discipleship is actually about saying, I'm an empty-handed fisherman.

You know, without Jesus I can do nothing. I need, I need the every hour. I've got to realize that I still, I don't even have the goods to follow Christ well.

And the apostles didn't either. As soon as they were commissioned, they immediately went back to their day jobs. They were empty, they were empty. And they had to realize it.

[ 10 : 37 ] And that's part of the path of daily and weekly discipleship. Now secondly, disciples then, true discipleship, people who have tasted the supper of God and have gone out.

We've got to know we're empty-handed fishermen. We need him every hour. And, but secondly also, there are people here who have been encountered.

So it says in John 21 verse 1, after this Jesus revealed himself to the disciples. Now that, that's not a normal word there, revealed himself.

This is the word that we will use to title the book of Revelation. So revealed the book of, John's book, Revelation, it's the same word in Greek, it's apocalypsis.

It's saying here that this is the third moment that Jesus unveiled himself after the resurrection.

[ 11 : 36 ] Where all of a sudden he peeled back the glory so that people could see who he really was. And you see this all over the place that before the resurrection in the Gospel of John, everybody misunderstood him.

After the resurrection in the Gospel of John, nobody can see him. And Mary, you know, remember Mary and John 20 at the resurrection, Mary Magdalene, she's there.

And Jesus Christ stands in front of her and she says, oh Gardner, you know, where is Jesus?

Somebody's taking his body away, but it was Jesus. And all of a sudden Jesus says her name and the scales fall away and he reveals himself.

And that means that there is something about the resurrected Christ where he has put on the body of glory and immortality and it's very difficult for us to see even when he's standing there in the flesh.

The disciples couldn't even, on the road to Emmaus, he walked with two disciples and they didn't know who he was. He had to unveil himself. And here we've got the same language that Jesus decides in this moment that he's going to unveil himself.

[ 12 : 46 ] And that's the second thing about being a true disciple is that you actually, to be a faithful disciple, first you've got to know that you're still empty, secondly you've got to then have an encounter with the real Jesus.

You know, he's got to continually unveil himself before you. He's got to show up, he's got to show you who he really is. Now part of that is so contrary to what it means to be religious in the modern world.

So if you go to a place like Edinburgh, you go to a place like Glasgow, we see this all the time, it's not that most people in 2022 are atheists, it's that most people are religious and spiritual.

But what they mean by that is that it's never okay to actually say the God that they actually believe in. Now that's what it means to be spiritual in the modern world, it's to say, you know, I believe there's something, but I never am willing to say exactly what that thing is.

And then they follow that by saying, people follow that by saying, I imagine God to be like this. If God does exist, this is what I imagine him to be like. Now look, true discipleship is when over and over again you are actually knocked off your horse by the real God.

[ 14 : 09 ] Not the God of your imagination, not the God of your culture, but the God that shows up in the revelation that he's given us and actually removes the scales from your eyes and says, look, everything that you imagine about God, you know, whenever we think God must be like, we need to come against the word of God and be encountered.

We need to have the little idols, the little constructions that we've built in our hearts removed and cast away. We need to be encountered once again by the God, Jesus Christ, who unveiled himself before humanity.

And so being a true disciple, secondly, means coming back over and over and over again empty-handed and saying, I need to see him. I need to see what he's really like.

I need to have him cast away my idols, cast away my little images that I might be creating in my heart for who he should be and see who he really is. You know, the God of the Bible is, as one theologian recently put it, is undomesticated.

He can't be controlled. He can't be captured. He can't be captured in your imagination life. He comes and he sets the terms. He tells us who he is and how he is and what he's come for.

[15:29] And that is the revelation of Jesus. And this is what we actually see across the Bible every time. You know, when Moses was encountered by God on the mountain, when he was encountered by God on the mountain, what happened?

He had to hide his face. He had to hide in the cleft of the rock. He couldn't see the true God. And then when God shows up, when Jesus Christ shows up to Saul, he's knocked off his horse.

And that's when God unveils himself. You're knocked back. You encounter God as he really is.

Now, Peter here, I don't think John wastes any words, Peter here, when he sees Jesus, when he's out on the boat, it says that he put on his outer garment, that he had taken off his outer garment so that he could fish.

But you see what he does? He jumps into the water. Now, the last thing that most of us would do instinctively is if we're about to jump in the water, we don't put more clothes on.

You know, you don't put extra clothes on when you're going into the water. But Peter does. Peter puts his clothes back on, all of his clothes, so that he can actually jump into the water and swim towards Jesus.

[16:50] Why? Because Peter knows. Peter knows that the real God has unveiled himself. And that Peter, you know what he's saying? He's saying that he's undone before Jesus.

And that he's got to get dressed and he's got to put on everything he can because Jesus knows who Peter really is. He's exposed. You know, we expose to go into the water, but Peter covers himself because he's about to stand before the real God.

And Peter is the man who has just committed treason against Christ three times. And he knows that I'm about to stand in the presence of the living God, the judge of all the earth. And so he's covering up even as he gets wet.

And it's interesting here, there's a verb used in this verse for when he goes down into the water that shows up in the book of Jonah. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, in the book of Jonah, you remember Jonah was running from God and then God showed up.

And he brought the chaos to the water, to the boat. And what did Jonah say? Jonah said, it's me.

I'm the sinner in the midst of you guys. And I've got to dive down into the water. I've got to go down. And Peter does the same thing. He says, I'm exposed.

[18:09] I've committed treason against the Christ three times. And he goes, he clothes himself and goes down into the water. And he realized it. He knows that true discipleship is that when you encounter Jesus Christ over and over and over again in your Christian life, you're continually exposed.

He unveils the layers of who we really are, the idolatry, the sins, the indwelling things that we're struggling with. And we've got to put on our garments. We feel like we've got to put on our garments, but that leads us to the third thing, third of four. And that's this.

A true disciple is not only one who knows they're empty handed before Christ, who sees and comes to hear the living Christ, the real God is encountered.

But it's also somebody who listens to the voice of Jesus. So you can see what Jesus does here. Jesus shows up. These disciples have failed the commission.

Peter, their leader, has committed treason against Christ three times. And the first thing Jesus says to them at daybreak, Jesus said to them, children.

[19:25] Now, it very literally is the word children. A lot of the commentators will say that it's a colloquial phrase in the Greek, in the original territory that to call out and say children is actually very similar to when you say, my friends are lads, lads come. It's like that. And so the very first word that these guys that have completely failed the commission as disciples, the apostles themselves, they stand exposed in the fishing boat.

They can't catch fish. Why? Because they're not supposed to be fishing. And the first thing he says is, you're my children. You're my friends. You're my lads. Come to me.

And Peter, trying to hide himself, jumped straight into the water. It's really interesting. We've got this moment in the story where Peter has dove into the water.

And he swam all the way to the shore and John and the other disciples are out on the boat. And we don't know what happens. We don't know what happens.

You know, there's this moment where Peter and Jesus are together again for the first time right after Peter had committed the threefold treason.

[ 20 : 53 ] But the one who's writing this book for us, John, where is he? He's actually on the boat out in the water. He can't hear. He can't hear the interaction between this man who has committed treason against the Christ, but has for the first time one on one stood before him again.

So we don't know exactly what was said. Now look, we read from Luke chapter five. And in Luke chapter five, Peter is fishing. And all night he can't catch any fish.

And Jesus in the morning says, cast your net on the other side and they catch, Peter catches so many fish that the boat starts to sink. And what does Peter say? Do you remember from Luke five we just read? He says, depart from me. I am a man that is unclean. He knows that just when Jesus said there are fish over there, he immediately realizes this is God.

He says, depart from me. I'm wicked. Now I don't know what Peter says to Jesus in this encounter on the beach. It's not recorded. But I bet it was something like depart from me.

I'm a man of unclean lips. I spoke treason against you three times while you were dying for me on the cross. And you showed back up. You rose from the dead and you came for me.

[ 22 : 27 ] And now Peter's there and you see Jesus has already said to him, child, friend, lad, he's already shown up and commissioned him as an apostle. That's already happened.

He said, no, no, you're in. You're already mine. I haven't let go of you. And yet at the same time, true discipleship is not only knowing I'm an empty hand of fishermen.

It's not only being encountered by the real Christ, not the Christ of our imagination, but the Christ of the Gospels. It's then knowing that even as a Christian, we still come before him day in and day out saying depart from me. I don't deserve what I've been given.

It's just to continually come and say, it's to come in repentance. And Martin Luther said it so well in 1517 when he tacked those 95th E.C.s against the doors of the castle in Wittenberg.

He said that the Christian life is from beginning to end all about repentance. That was the very first thing he wrote. And that's exactly what Peter's awakening to here is that I'm a disciple, I'm an apostle, and yet I can do nothing better than repent before the real Christ, the Christ who's encountered me here.

[ 23 : 47 ] Now that's not the only thing that Jesus says. He doesn't just say children. He says one more thing, and it's exactly parallel to Luke 5. He told them about how to catch the fish here. And they had caught 153, we're told so specifically.

And remember Luke 5? He had done the same thing. He had told them how to catch the fish. And here it is again after the resurrection, while they're disobeying him, fishing when they should not be. He still says, look, here's how you can catch the fish. They catch the fish. And I think, I think that there's such a deep connection between Luke 5 and John 21 that we're meant to see what's implicit here.

Because as soon as they catch the fish in Luke 5, and as soon as Peter bows down and says, depart from me. The very next thing Jesus says is now I'm going to teach you how to be a fisher of people. I'm going to teach you how to catch men.

He says, and here everything has happened exactly the same. And I think Jesus is trying to say to them again, remember what I said to you?

[ 25 : 04 ] I'm about to teach you what it's like to be a true disciple, to catch people, to be a fisher of people. You see, he's commissioning them all over again. He said, I sent you out already and you didn't go.

And now I'm telling you one more time, go and be a fisher of people in the world. He's commissioning them. To be a true discipleship is when you know that you, it's a life of repentance. It's a life of being empty handed before the King. It's a life of encountering the real Christ every day here. But then it's a life of going to be a fisher of people.

What's a fisher of people? What does that mean? Fishers of men as the KJV puts it. That's a phrase that we throw around, but I think it's really actually kind of difficult to interpret clearly. But when Jesus says it, go and be a fisher of men, a fisher of human beings. He's of course using a metaphor. He's in the context of fishing.

[ 26 : 03 ] And he's saying, as I've helped you bring fish out of the sea into the boat, so I'm sending you to do something like this. Now in that Greco-Roman mindset and the Jewish mindset, there was nothing more scary than the sea.

Actually, I mentioned this very thing to Heather while we were driving yesterday up by Ness, because as the wind was blowing, looking out on the waves, hitting the rocks at the very tip of Ness, we were talking about, oh boy, can you imagine being a pre-modern person looking out at that ocean and thinking I'm going to build a little boat and get out in that?

But that's exactly what ancient Near Eastern people had to do. And that's why Israelites were deathly afraid of the water. It's a motif across the Old Testament. And it's why all across the Old Testament we see salvation narratives happen through the water that God brings up His people underneath the waters of the Red Sea, that if you want to go to the Promised Land, you've got to pass over the Jordan River, you've got to go through the water.

If you want to be named publicly one of God's people, you've got to go under the waters of baptism and come back up again. Water has always been a sign of death. And boy, there's no place like Lewis to help you remember that, that when you look out of the ocean, you can see it.

Right now tonight, whether or not I can ride the ferry in the morning, it's because the waters are full of death. And when Jesus says, be a fisher of people, that that's true discipleship, you see what He's saying?

[ 27 : 33 ] In their mindset, to bring fish from the domain of death out onto the land is bringing them from darkness to light. It's bringing them from the place of the dead to the place of the living.

That's the way a pre-modern person thought about the water. And he's saying, go into the world and manifest Jesus Christ in word and the way you live your life to the point where you are helping people at all times move from the deathly sea to the living land, from death to life.

You're helping people get from Egypt to the Promised Land. That's the movement. That's what it means to be a fisher of people. And that's the third thing. We have to be people who are empty handed.

We need Jesus still. We have to be people who have seen the real Christ in the Gospels. We've got to be people who are full of repentance and then who go committed commission to be fishers of men.

Now let me close with this. Finally, finally being a real disciple is being invited to breakfast on the beach. The very last thing we see here is Jesus says, come and have breakfast with me.

[ 28 : 44 ] And he puts up a charcoal fire, we're told. And when they get there, the meal is ready, meaning that Jesus Christ has sat there, he's cooked.

I love to think of the resurrected Christ in all of his glory cooking for his disciples on the beach. And he says, now come and have breakfast with me.

There's so much there, but oh boy, is this the moment he says, I will not have this meal again with you on the night he was betrayed, the Lord's Supper, until I come again.

What did he mean by that? Well, I think he means until I will come again. You know, I will go to death and I will go down for three days, but I'm coming back. And I will have the meal with you again.

And here it is. He says that he broke bread for them. And he feasted with them. And that means, that means at least this, at least this, it means lots of things, but let me say one as we close.

[ 29 : 57 ] That Jesus Christ wants to eat the covenant meal. The meal that we saw David eat with Melchizedek, the meal of hesed love from this morning, the meal of steadfast love.

He wants to eat it and he wants to eat it with rubbish disciples. You know, they had messed up everything from John 20, the commission, they haven't followed it, Peter the treacherous, and all the other disciples that followed Peter to the boat.

And Jesus says, step one, come and eat with me. And you see, the meal, it's not for great people. It was for the rubbish disciples. It was him saying, let me strengthen you, let me remind you of resurrection power. Let me tell you once again who you really are because of what I've done, not because of what you've done.

You've made a mess of this already, but remember what I did for you. It's not their greatness. He calls them to breakfast when they're down in order to bring them back up and to send them back out to be true disciples, fishers of people wherever they might live.

[ 31 : 21 ] And that's exactly our call. So let's pray now and ask for God to give it to us. Lord, we ask that you would make us fishers of men, of men and women, boys and girls, that you would send us out from this place as people who yearn to help people move from darkness to light, from the sea to the land, from no hope to hope, from the know that they have against you to the yes that they can hear in Christ.

And so stir up your disciples in Carlyway and on this aisle for the sake of your glory. And we ask for this in Christ's name.

Amen.