

## Monday, May 4, 2009

In the six weeks between His resurrection and His ascension back to heaven, the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared many times to His friends, and in our journey at Calvary Church I've been trying to help us look at a chronology of these events, seeking to understand what they accomplished and what they mean for us today "living in the shadow of Easter '09". We've looked at two Emmaus road travelers and how their sense of lost hope was healed when they met the risen Christ (Luke 24); and Thomas mired in his skepticism was healed to a man of determined "followership" who went all the way to India to tell people about his risen Christ (John 20); and Matthew who was a living disappointment (as a tax collector with the name Levi) found new purpose in life as he was "co-missioned" by the risen Christ (Matt. 28:18-20). So how has the risen Jesus Christ affected your life in these three weeks since Easter '09?

This weekend we considered John 21, a powerful story with special focus on Simon Peter. While all the disciples except John had fled the night Jesus was betrayed, taken from the garden to trials, beaten severely and finally crucified . . . only one (Peter) had not once but three times verbally denied that he knew Jesus. I suggest you re-read John's account (John 18:1-27), he was there! Luke's account adds something special that Peter probably told him when he recounted the event for Dr. Luke (Luke 22:60-62).

We don't know the amount of time between John 20:31 and John 21, nor do we know for sure if Matthew 28:18-20 fits in between or after John 21. The disciples are in the Galilee area because it's home for them. Peter is married (Mark 1:30) and has a family to feed. It appears, in their uncertainty about what to do with the rest of their lives, now that Jesus was no longer with them daily . . . they began to return to their "pre-Jesus" lives . . . fishing was for most of them, their profession. Because night fishing on Galilee was often most productive and private, it was a very good option for these men trying to figure out how to live meaningful lives after Easter! Is that you too? For Peter, the deep shame, guilt and failure he felt must have been nearly overwhelming . . . he needed a deep healing! What about you?

## Tuesday, May 5, 2009

How do you deal with disappointment? Empty nets after a long night of back breaking, net fishing is major disappointment for 7 professional fishermen! My guess is frustration may well have run high that night, and possibly tempers from time to time, as Peter and his friends threw and drew the nets, over and over through a long night of no results. Can you imagine their conversation . . . Jesus was their common unifying factor. Prior to Jesus, some of them may have known each other (Peter, Andrew, James, John), but it was their several months with Jesus that drew them together as a "band of brothers". That night, I believe, the biggest question they wrestled with was "now what"? I'm sure you noticed, each time Jesus appeared, He seems to have disappeared without any "rendezvous" plans for His next appearance, thus they may well have felt they'd never see Him again. Clearly Peter is the influential leader, probably by personality, confidence and perhaps with this group because he was so often center in whatever Jesus was doing. I wonder how many times in that night one of the other six asked, "So Peter, what do YOU think we should do? Peter, what are your future plans?"

As I write this in the early morning, there is a thick fog outside my window, perhaps similar to that early morning on Lake Galilee (John 21:4). That could that be why they did not recognize the lone figure who called out "Friends, haven't you caught anything?" No empty boat fisherman likes that question. Ask Joe Kurtz or Bruce Sandstrom or Dan Nevala or any of our other Calvary men who love to fish. Worse yet is some "wise guy" on the shore who gives unsolicited suggestions when your answer is a sheepish "no", right? But this was no "wise guy". This was the unrecognized, resurrected Jesus . . . the Creator of every fish in the lake! (Col. 1:15-17)

Compare John 21:6 with Luke 5:1-11, what do you see? Why is John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) the only one who recognized the figure on the shoreline as Jesus? Consider the other four times John uses that phrase to depict himself (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20). Do they give you some idea as to why John says "It is the Lord"? Would you have recognized Him?

## Wednesday, May 6, 2009

When is the last time you did something "impetuous", maybe even ridiculous? Consider what Simon Peter did when John recognized Jesus on the shoreline (John 21:7) that early morning! Why?

We have no indication Peter and Jesus have had any private time in the previous appearances of Jesus to His disciples (Luke 24; John 20 or Matthew 18). We know it is several weeks after Passover week, thus Peter has been 'stewing' over his denial of Jesus for many days. Could it be his desperation to reconcile with Jesus was his motivation for such an outrageous act? Do you remember King David lived in a similar pain of failure for almost one full year before the prophet Nathan challenged him with his sin of adultery and murder associated with Bathsheba? (2 Samuel 11,12) When was the last time you lived with unresolved shame, guilt, failure for a long time? If it's where you are today, I urge you . . . jump overboard, like Peter, and rush to Jesus and get things right between you and Him, and then if needed go to any other person who may be affected by your issue. Few things are more debilitating than living with unforgiveness or unresolved shame, guilt, failure. Remember 1 John 1:9! Consider reading Psalm 32, David's Psalm of thanksgiving after he reconciled with God!

We have no record of what Jesus and Peter talked about while the other disciples rowed the boat and full net toward shore, but I suspect it was a powerful exchange! What does it tell you about Jesus . . . that He had breakfast waiting for these hungry and weary men who had worked all night with no catch? Do you believe He has that same level of sensitive interest in your life? Think back over the Gospel accounts . . . how often did Jesus meet practical, felt needs of people, and NOT focus on spiritual issues? True Christianity is very practical, very compassionate. Jesus cares about EVERYTHING in your life . . . because He loves you very much. What of their child's life does a parent not care about? What need or pain of a child does a parent overlook if they are a loving parent? "Bring some of the fish you have caught" . . . Jesus loves to involve us in what He is doing! He uses resources He has given us to accomplish His purposes! Get it!

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Sometimes English is a very limited language. John 21 is a good example. Jesus and Peter have a life changing conversation and English simply doesn't work!

"Simon son of John"! Remember when your mother called you by your full name . . . first, middle, nick name and family name!? What did it mean? Jesus used Peter's full name only a few times (John 1:42; Matt. 16:17). Was He reminding Peter He knew all about him? Was He taking him back to the beginning of their relationship?

"Do you truly *love* Me more than these"? (John 21:15) More than what or who? The large catch of fish, the friends on the beach, the hillsides and towns which were home to Peter? The word "love" Jesus used here is "Agape love" . . . the deepest, most intense love that would lead a person to give their life for another. Peter's answer uses "phileo love" . . . a friendship love, much more casual, certainly not at the level of self-sacrifice to death. Was Peter being honest? Was he intimidated by his memory of failure and Jesus' sacrificial death?

You'll note Jesus repeats the question a second time, almost word for word, only this time no comparison, but still using "agape love". Notice please, Simon Peter responds again using the "phileo love" word. How much time passed between the two questions we don't know . . . but enough to cause Peter deep reflection, I'm sure. How do you describe your "love" for Jesus Christ? Respect, deep interest, fascination, affection, what word would you use if Jesus asked you the same question?

Finally, Jesus asks a third time, only this time He too uses the "phileo love" word, and drops the word "truly". Notice John's editorial, "Peter was hurt . . ." Clearly Peter felt deep conviction as he remembered the garden, his failure, Jesus' agony. His response to Jesus acknowledges his refusal to pretend as he again uses "phileo love" in his response. Do you sense his longing to be strong, be reliable, be restored in his own confident relationship with Jesus? May I invite you to write here a declaration of YOUR answer to Jesus' questions:

Friday, May 8, 2009

Remember when you last had a "life changing" experience? Peter's encounter with Jesus on the shoreline of Lake Galilee (John 21) changed his life forever! The "mission" entrusted to him by Jesus was clear, even though using sheep herding language:

1. "Feed My lambs" . . . care for the young, fragile ones, was a task a helper or apprentice shepherd would handle while the main shepherd watched over the flock. It's a starting point.
2. "Take care of My sheep" . . . was the role of a shepherd in protecting the sheep from harm, leading them to pasture and good water. It's responsibility.
3. "Feed My sheep" . . . was the role of caring for the wounded, injured, elderly, weak, special needs sheep in the flock. The shepherd often kept these closest to himself as they were more vulnerable. It's compassionate, competent, consistent leadership.

Can you understand what Peter was hearing from Jesus as Jesus restored him first to relationship with Jesus and then began reinstating him to his significant missional role?

John 21:18 was powerful for Peter. John gives us a little editorial, indicating he wrote at least this portion of his Gospel account after Peter had already been executed, years after this shoreline encounter. (John was the last of the Apostles to die, in about 95 AD.) Peter had been carefree and strongly individualistic as a young man, living his life according to his agenda, but now as he accepted Jesus' "co-mission", Peter would live "followership". Daily Peter would follow Jesus' Lordship and lead others in doing the same. His priority would be Jesus' agenda, not his own, epitomized in Jesus' direct invitation "follow Me". Please look back to Luke 5:1-11, the first time Jesus invited Peter to this lifestyle. Now, after this shoreline breakfast, was Peter ready to finally live a yielded, passionate life of "ambassadorship"?

And what about you my friends? Has the risen Jesus healed your wounds and called you to a re-orientation of life purpose? And how are you living your response to His invitation?

  
Pastor Doug Anderson

May 4 – May 8, 2009

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