

Monday, APRIL 19, 2010

In the weeks following the single greatest event in human history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the risen Jesus appeared multiple times in several different settings, to many people. Consider I Corinthians 15:1-8. This weekend we looked at John 21, one of the most detailed accounts. The sons of Zebedee, of course are John and James (Mark 1:19). Likely Andrew (Peter's brother, John 1:40) and Philip (note John 1:43,44) were the other two unnamed disciples of Jesus who went fishing that night.

Night net fishing is normal at certain times of the year on Lake Galilee. These disciples were professionals, yet came up empty, as they had at other times (Luke 5:5). Have you learned it is in your "empty net" times that you are ready for God to do what only God can do to help you? How's your attitude when your nets keep coming up empty? What would need to change in your heart in order for you to see your empty nets as the growing potential for the risen Jesus to step into your situation with His full understanding and unlimited power?

Look closely at vs. 5 and 6. Notice His call to "Friends". Look back at John 15:4-17..."I call you friends". Question: do you consider yourself a "friend" of God? Consider James 2:23 and Isaiah 41:8. Do you recall Is. 41:9,10 are the verses I told you God gave me for our recent Haiti trip when I went down to encourage Haitian Pastors and leaders as they continue the recovery process from the terrible earthquake devastation? Does God use you as one of His friends, to refresh others? Remember Barnabas was called the "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36)... are you?

Do you also notice when Jesus told the 7 fishing disciples where to find fish, they didn't need to move the boat?! May I suggest the risen Jesus brought the fish right under their boat! As you reach out to Jesus in your 'empty net' situation, don't be shocked if He refreshes you right where you are. Do you have a place and regular pattern of time alone with the risen Jesus so He can refresh you, renew your friendship? Where...when...and what have you experienced recently?

Tuesday, APRIL 20, 2010

Which voice is the one which stirs a flicker in your heart? In a crowd of people, can you distinguish the voice of the one you love, and whom you know loves you? Why does that one voice touch your heart more tenderly than any other?

An early morning, a long night of empty net fishing, weary bodies, tired minds, frustrated hearts...and a voice "friends, haven't you caught anything" (John 21:5). Why was it "the disciple whom Jesus loved" who recognized the voice from the shoreline (vs. 7)? Would you have recognized Him?

John referred to himself by that interesting phrase, 5 different times in his Gospel. Consider them each and see if you can discern why: John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20. What was this unusual relationship John had with Jesus? It began, you may recall, with Jesus' invitation to him "come and see" (John 1:35-42). While John doesn't name himself there, there is little doubt it is him. Note too his response when Jesus first invited him to "follow Me" (Mark 1:16-20). Consider how important it was for John to be able to write "*we have heard Him, we have seen Him with our eyes, looked at Him and touched Him with our hands...and we proclaim Him to you.*" (1 John 1:1-4).

As you can perhaps tell, John is one of those guys I'm looking forward to meeting personally when we get to heaven. How about you? So...why was John the only guy in the boat who recognized the figure on the shoreline? And why do you suppose Peter was the one who jumped overboard and swam to shore? (don't say the others couldn't swim) Do you suppose it had to do with what happened in the courtyard of the High Priest a few weeks before, on that terrible night before Jesus was crucified? Consider John's account in John 18:12-27. From all we can tell, even though Jesus had appeared to the disciples at least twice before (John 20:19-23 & 20:24-29) Peter and Jesus had not yet had any lengthy conversation about those denials. I suspect John 21 is at least 3 weeks, possibly even a month after the resurrection...can you imagine Peter's turmoil? What would you have said to Jesus? Might He be waiting for you right now, for a long overdue conversation?

Wednesday, APRIL 21, 2010

We live in the lakes region, thus it should be easy for us to consider John 21. Do you have a favorite spot along the lakeshore or even out on the lake? That morning, as the men sat around the fire with Jesus, do you suppose they remembered other times with Him? Consider Mark 1:16-20, when four of these disciples first followed Jesus. Or Luke 5:1-11 when Peter was asked by Jesus if He could use his boat for a "platform" while He taught the people...and then the private fishing trip they took together which changed Peter's life. Or Matthew 14:22-36 when Jesus walked out on the lake surface, in the middle of a storm, to help the men in their swamped boat. How about one more? Luke 8:22-25. What do you see as common in all these lake related accounts with Jesus? Can you understand why I suggest the morning breakfast with the risen Jesus on the shoreline of Lake Galilee (John 21:12-19) was filled with memories?

Have you noticed how many times Jesus seemed to "host" a meal with His friends? Consider Luke 24:30-32; John 6:1-15; Matt. 26:20-29 and John 21:12. Do you suppose Jesus understands how food, friends and open hearts and minds go well together? Is He demonstrating to us that spiritual nourishment is not intended to be classroom lecture, nor dry study but rather refreshing truth discovery? Maybe that's why Jesus loved to teach His disciples in the garden, or around the meal table, or on the hillside overlooking the lake, or out in a boat with them. This springtime season...take your Bible, get outside to a favorite spot and let Jesus talk with you, as He did with them. "Come have breakfast" was His invitation to tired, hungry friends who felt like empty net failures...and He refreshed them, because He is God who knew exactly the touch they needed, "at the point of their need", do you trust Him to touch you?

Why did Jesus ask them to bring some of the fish they'd caught (John 21:10)? Surely He could have provided more than enough for them. Do you notice Jesus invites you to bring who you are, what you have, for Him to work with? Do you?

Thursday, APRIL 22, 2010

Love is a strange word. Have you ever tried to define it to someone, or even to yourself? We are strangled in English with only one word...love, that tries to describe how we feel about food, a pet, our children, our spouse, our favorite athletic team, even God!!

The New Testament was written primarily in Greek. Fortunately Greeks in Jesus' day used FOUR words for love! Understanding these helps us understand the strange shoreline conversation between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15-19.

Eros is the Greek word for erotic, passionate love. The type of love reserved for marriage. Sadly this can go very wrong and leads to lust, pornography, adultery, prostitution and a wide range of sexual immorality. This word is not used in the New Testament.

Stergos is the Greek word for love between family members. Deep, compassionate, courageous love that binds a family together. Sadly it is rare today, and it too is not used in the New Testament.

Phileo is the Greek word for the care between friends. Friends enjoy each other's company but are not as deeply committed to each other as family nor as spouses. This is the word Peter used in responding to Jesus' question in vs. 15 and 16 of John 21.

Agape is the Greek love word for the type of love that holds marriages together over a lifetime. It is selfless love which is unconditional. It is sacrificial love, and the cross is the best example of the price this love is willing to pay. It is not sexual, not romantic. It is the deepest love that can bind two people. This is the word Jesus used when asking Peter if he loved Him in John 21:15,16.

Now...read John 21:15-19 and understand one more thing: Peter used "Phileo" each time he said "love". Jesus used "Agape" the first two times, then switched to "Phileo" the third time in vs. 17. How impactful is the conversation when you understand that? What was Jesus asking and what was Peter offering in response? Now...what about your love for Jesus?

Friday, APRIL 23, 2010

Imagine yourself sitting with John as he puts down his stylus after John 21:25. What does it mean, this smile on his face as he leans back in his chair remembering Jesus? I believe John 21 was one of John's favorite chapters to write...because it was so personal. Could I ask you to read it all again, from verse one, slowly...get in the boat with them, haul in the empty nets all night, experience the frustration of a voice on the shoreline telling you to try the other side of the boat, be awed by a net so full it nearly tears...who's the man on the shoreline? "Come have breakfast" He says...and you're famished!

After breakfast...Jesus asks Peter the deep question all the disciples are wondering. He denied Jesus, yet he was always so confident. Yesterday helped us understand his deep inner struggle with expressing how he really felt about Jesus. "Peter, let's take a walk..." I think Jesus said, even though John didn't record it. And as they walked along, just Jesus and Peter, having a reconciling conversation...John just couldn't sit by the fire. Why not? His "Agape" for Jesus urged him to follow, even at a respectful distance. Question: honestly now...how do you measure your heart for Jesus? Is it easy for you to get up early and spend time with Him or a struggle? Easy to open His Word and listen to Jesus speak to you or a chore? Easy to have long conversations with Jesus or quick to run out of things to say? Easy to worship, or...? Right now, I urge you to 'take a walk' with Jesus. Go outside and talk to Him as you walk...it's called "prayer walking". Yes, just have a conversation with Jesus. He's God, He's knows you better than you know yourself, and He'd love to take a walk with you...as He talks with you!

"Follow Me" Two little words...and Peter had heard them before (Mark 1:17 and Luke 5:10,11). Once Jesus had said "where I am going you can't follow now, but you will follow later." (John 13:36-38). That was His death walk to Calvary...and Peter did take that walk many years later as he died a martyr. Jesus' invite to Peter that day on the shoreline was not about death but life! Live your life to the fullest Peter...following Jesus daily! He did...and Jesus extends the same invite to you!



Pastor Doug Anderson

APRIL 19 - 23, 2010



THE CALL

HIS PASSION FOR ALL

RENEWAL

FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE, FROM
WOUNDER TO HEALER, FROM EMPTY
TO OVERFLOWING...IS
RENEWAL POSSIBLE?
WHAT IS YOUR
GREATEST NEED
AND HOW WILL IT
BE MET? WHAT IS YOUR
GREATEST POTENTIAL?



A Disciplemaking Tool
**DIGGING
DEEPER**



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