

Sermon Series: Book of John
Sermon title: P.S.- A Miraculous Catch of Fish
Scripture reading: John 21:1-14
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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When writing a letter in English, we will often introduce an additional remark at the end of a letter, after the signature. This is indicated by the little letters **P.S.** Does anyone know what it means? It means *Post Scriptum*, literally 'after writing'.

Statistically, they say that if you really want to make sure that people read something, you'd better put it there. People usually read the P.S. and skip the middle.

We have been taking a look this fall at the miracles or signs that Jesus performs in the book of John. Jesus does these signs to reveal his glory and give testimony to who he is.

We come today to the final sign that Jesus performs in the book of John, and we might add, the only sign that he performs after his resurrection. It's a '*Post Scriptum*' of sorts because John could have concluded his gospel with John 20:31.

John 20:31- These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

But there are some unanswered questions and some loose ends that John needs to tie up after Jesus's death and his resurrection in chapter 20.

Some of the questions are:

What about Jesus? Is he *really* alive? John wants to give us more evidence.

What about Peter? The last time we see Peter before the resurrection, he is warming himself beside a *charcoal fire* and there he denied Jesus 3 times. Will Jesus and Peter be reconciled somehow? Will Jesus forgive him for denying and disowning him?

What about the disciples?

What kind of life are they to live now?

These are answered in John 21 in his P.S.

Let's pray.

I will admit that when I started studying this passage, I believed I knew what the meaning was, but I was wrong. The reason is that we often think a text means it what others have told us what it means.

I thought this sign was about FISHING.

It's not.

It's about FEEDING!

I thought it was quite simple...Jesus catches a lot of fish and he's showing them that THEY will catch a lot of fish in the future.

But, we have to do the hard work of reading things in context.

Let's dive into the text and you'll see what this text is all about.

I. THE FISHERMEN RETURN TO FISHING.

1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. **2** Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. **3** Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

There's been a lot of debate about what verse 3 means. **Is this return to fishing temporary, just to get a bite to eat or is Peter saying, "I am going back to my fishing career."?**

3 years before, Jesus had said, "Follow me and I will make you fishermen for men" and he had left his nets to follow Jesus.

The reason it seems that he has gone back to fishing as a career is because of what we read in chapter 21. Now remember, there is no page break here after verse 14...we should keep reading.

John 21:15 says, "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" "These" does not mean here the other disciples but the fishing stuff....the nets, the boats and the fish.

So, Peter...and it seems these other disciples follow his lead, are struggling with what to do with their lives now that Jesus has been raised.

Jesus appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days after the Resurrection. Verse 14 says that this is the 3rd time he's revealed himself.

The first and second times that John records seem to happen on day 1 and day 8.

We don't know when this appearance of Jesus happened. It could have been day 39! We can't be too hard on Peter for going back to his job if he hasn't seen Jesus again for a month. We would've probably done the same.

So, they went out and fished all night but caught nothing at all.

This wasn't the first time this has happened, but it will be the last time.

Peter and the other disciples have received a call but in a time of uncertainty, they seem to retreat back to their old familiar profession.

We might add, this is a human tendency that we all have. Go back to Egypt. Go back to fishing. Quit the ministry or calling that God has given to us and go back to what we are comfortable with.

But Jesus is going to confront them in the most loving way.

II. JESUS FEEDS THE FISHERMEN.

4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus said to them, **"Children, do you have any fish?"**

They answered him, "No." **6** He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to

haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. **7** That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. **8** The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. **10** Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." **11** So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. **14** This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Picture the scene.

It's just barely light outside and there's some fog still on the water. You're tired and hungry. You fished all night and caught not a single fish.

There's a person on the shore, probably not that uncommon. He yells out to you, "Boys, don't you have a little bite?" [That's what it means]
You yell back, maybe even frustrated..."No!"
And for some reason, he says, "Cast the net on the right side and you'll find some." You roll your eyes and maybe because you're tired you sling the net out there as far as you can.
And the net instantly fills up with big fish.
This triggers your mind! "This has happened before when we first met Jesus." "It's the Lord."
Peter does a very 'Peter' thing and dives in and swims.
We read the story. I don't need to go on.

What's happening here?

Hungry fishermen catching nothing.
The carpenter from Nazareth is better at fishing than the professional fishermen.

He has fish and bread on the *charcoal* fire before they even bring the boat and fish to shore. Where he got them we do not know.

He cooks them breakfast.

He serves them on the beach.

Jesus provides abundantly for them. 153 to be exact.

The main point of the story isn't about fishing.
It's about **feeding** the disciples!

Through this sign of the miraculous catch of fish and feeding the disciples, Jesus is showing them that he cares for them and will supply their every need.

Jesus had just told them in **John 20:21**, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

The Father sent Jesus on a mission to catch men for the kingdom and feed them the truth. The Father provided everything that Jesus needed for the mission and Jesus was 100% dependent on his Father.

In the same way, Jesus is reassuring the disciples that he will take care of them as they continue the mission.

What was their mission?

To be fishermen for men!

But their getting ready to get a second task.

III. THE FISHERMEN WILL FEED OTHERS.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

The disciples of Jesus have 2 jobs now.

Fishing and Feeding.

They will not only soon turn the world upside down by their sharing of the gospel but they will spread the teachings of Jesus everywhere they go. And we know the gospel today because of their obedience in fishing and feeding.

Fishing for men and feeding sheep.

Casting nets and Cooking meals.

Share the gospel and Shepherd the flock.

Evangelism and Discipleship.

But in both of these tasks, they will need to remember that Jesus will take care of them and they must be dependent on him in every way. Because as Jesus said in **John 15:5** says, "Apart from me, you can do nothing."

A few points of application for us are obvious.

I think there are a couple of words of encouragement for us in this text.

I. If we have quit on the Lord, he calls us to come back to him.

You may be like Peter. You may have really messed up. You may have denied the Lord or you may have had a ministry that God called you to but you've retreated and gone back to what's comfortable.

It's quite simple. Be like Peter and swim as fast and hard toward Jesus as you can! Don't believe that lie that says, "I'll gradually come back step by step."

That's just a stupid lie. Dive in! Immediately. Don't wait on others or the boat. Come now!

We do that. We say things like, "At the first of the year, I'll get back in my small group." Or, "I'll start reading my Bible on Monday." "I'll start teaching....such and such...date." "I'll do it....I'll just do it later."

You likely won't.

Stop being so practical and reasonable and just dive in. Come back today. Start that ministry today. Get back in your small group today. Start reading your Bible **today!**

II. We are not alone in our fishing and feeding.

Jesus promises in Matthew 28:20 that he is with us always, even to the end of the age.

Just as he cares for the disciples on the beach and loves them and feeds them and reassures them, he does the same for us.

Sometimes we act like that it's all up to us!

The only work that is required of us is to cast the net and feed the sheep.

We don't make the fish get into the net and we don't make the sheep grow.

So, take courage Christian!

It's really not about you.

If you feel like you don't have much to offer the Lord, you are right! He does the heavy lifting.

We have this treasure in jars of clay on purpose..to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [2 Corinthians 4:7]

So, don't be discouraged!

Jesus the carpenter is better at fishing than the professional fishermen and....he's better than you are!

Keep casting the net. Even if you've fished all night and caught nothing.

Keep feeding sheep. Don't give up!

He'll never leave you nor forsake you.