

JOHN 21:1-14
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 21 as we continue our in-depth study through the Word of God.

We have covered the death and resurrection of Jesus over the last several weeks, and we concluded our study last time with these words from John, “**And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**” John 20:30-31.

That would have been a great place to end this Gospel but if John ended here, we would not see the unconditional love that God has for His men and specifically for Peter.

Remember where Peter was at. The Lord warned Peter that he would deny Him, but Peter thought he knew better and said that he would never deny the Lord. Well, he denied the Lord three times and the rooster crowed, just as the Lord told Peter. And in Luke chapter 22, listen to what took place. Beginning in verse 60 we are told, “**But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying!’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.**” Luke 22:60-62.

That look by Jesus broke Peter because Jesus looked at Peter with love and compassion and Peter knew he blew it. He thought he was done. How could God ever use him again. He was a defeated man with no hope.

Not only that, but now they have crucified the Lord and yes, he saw the risen Lord but I think this event in his life, this denial of the One he said he loved so much was too much for him.

And as we will see, he kind of throws in the towel and will go back to fishing for fish instead of fishing for the souls of men, to bring them into the Kingdom of God!

We will be finishing up our study here in the Gospel of John next time as we will see the restoration of Peter.

This morning we are going to focus on – ***UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!***

And I believe it is this love of Jesus for Peter and for us that encourages us to go on, to jump right back in you might say. And then, next week we will see Jesus reassure Peter in what he was to do, that God has not forsaken him but Peter will be used in a powerful way!

Here is a quote from a website about love. It said – ***“Lack of love in this world is the only problem.”***

Okay, it is a problem and in these last days and it is getting worse as the love of many is growing cold. This lack of love is a symptom, the problem is a turning from God and when you turn from Him we see the results not only in our nation but in this world.

Also, and this is interesting to me, because what is love? Let me share what this website had to say and then I will show you what the Bible has to say regarding love and truly what it is all about.

We are told,

Ignorant of love, humans are a cancer on the planet. We destroy. We use up. We suffer.

Enough. The only priority in this life is that we learn to love. In love we create. We provide. We enjoy.

Most humans do not know what love is. Love's energy and wisdom has been lost in this world. We have it upside-down. Everything that doesn't matter has been made to matter; yet it still doesn't matter because love is still all that matters.

Love is not what you find or get from anyone, it is what you are. Love is not a feeling or an arrangement, it is a way of being in truth.

Forgive yourself. Forgive it all. There's nothing wrong with you. There's nothing you need to become other than what you are: love. Be that.

Love does not come to you, it comes from within you. Let go of all that is blocking the love flowing from within. This is success. We continue tomorrow and each day after that.

- <http://bit.ly/3LNoOd2>

Now you may be thinking, ***“What is wrong with that? We are to love ourselves and whatever I want to do is okay, I am just being myself and from that I can express my love to others!”***

What is wrong with that is that this is not found in the Bible and thus, it is not of God. This is contrary to what the Scriptures tell us what love is about.

You see, the love that God calls us to express is **AGAPE** love or unconditional love. It is not based on me; it is based in the Lord and that love that He instills in our lives, and it is that love that He pours into our lives that should flow from our lives to others.

We are to love the unloving. We are to love those who hate us, who spitefully use us. Our love is not based upon us, but upon God and what He desires for our lives.

And that is what we will be looking at this morning as Jesus shows His men, some of them who are gathered together – **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!**

And I realize that this kind of love is hard, or I should say impossible if we try to do this on our own. The reason being is that *AGAPE* love is not a natural love. A natural love is loving those who love you and care for you.

But this kind of love is supernatural, and it can only come from God as I have said.

We all have read and seen the stories of the brutality of the Germans against Jews as well as many others, especially those who were hiding Jews.

In saying that, let me share this story with you because you will see what *AGAPE* love looks like, how it is manifested in our lives.

We are told,

When I think of drawing on love's source, I think of Corrie ten Boom.

Her family had all died in the Nazi concentration camps.

Their crime?

Hiding Jews in their home. Somehow Corrie survived.

The war had ended, the camps had been liberated, and Corrie was speaking in various churches, sharing about God's love and faithfulness, even in the midst of horror.

She writes in her best-selling book, "The Hiding Place":

"It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, a former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, [my sister] Betsie's pain-blanching face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. ‘How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein.’ He said. ‘To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!’ His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world’s healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.”

God is our source of love, and his supply never runs low. When you have trouble loving someone, whether friend or enemy, ask God for the love you need. He will surely supply it, for it is in his very essence and will.

- <http://bit.ly/3neCFyW>

I can be honest with you here. I have never had anyone do the things that were done to Corrie Ten Boom and then have to not only forgive that person, but also love them! Lord, help me to have that kind of love, a love that only you can give.

I think the key we can see here is that Corrie was willing to bring it to the Lord. She knew she could not love this man with her own strength, but God supplied her that love and she not only received it, but she also reached out to this man who abused her and loved him with the love of God.

That is – ***UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

I'M GOING BACK TO FISHING – JOHN 21:1-3

JESUS DRAWING OUT THEIR FAITH – JOHN 21:4-6

THE RESULTS – JOHN 21:7-11

FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS – JOHN 21:12-14

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 21 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we look at this topic –

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!

JOHN 21

VERSES 1-3

Here we see the disciples of Jesus gathered at the Sea of Tiberias or the Sea of Galilee. Why were they there? Why did they leave Jerusalem?

The disciples were waiting in this area because this is where the Lord told them to go and wait for Him.

We see this in Matthew 26:32 before His death and resurrection and we see the Lord instruct them that, “**. . . after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.**”

Also, after His death and resurrection we see this spoken of in Matthew 28:7-10, where we are told, “**But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’**”

And lastly, in Mark 16:7 we are told, “**But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.**”

So they are just doing what the Lord told them to do, wait there in Galilee.

Then what is the problem if they are doing what the Lord called them to do?

The problem is this, what Peter said, “**. . . ‘I am going fishing’ . . .**” John 21:3.

The problem we come across here is how did Peter say this or what did he mean by this?

Please understand that there is nothing wrong with fishing, that is not the issue.

The problem I have here is it seems that Peter got tired of waiting for the Lord. He became restless, anxious, not sure what to do now and thus, “***I am going BACK to fishing!***”

In other words, “***Guys, I can’t take this any longer. I can’t just wait here. I am going back to the old life of being a fisherman. I am done!***”

Why was this wrong?

Because of what the Lord told Peter he was to be. Yes, Peter was a fisherman, that was his old life. But, in Matthew 4:18-20 we are told, **“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”**

You see, no longer out on a boat catching fish, but out in the world catching lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

And as you read these verses it seems like Peter was in charge or they looked up to him because we see the others who had gathered with Peter; Thomas, Nathanael, James and John the sons of Zebedee and two others tell Peter, **“... ‘We are going with you also.’ ...”** John 21:3. Seven of the disciples of Jesus went fishing and some, back to fishing!

Did you see what Peter did here by his actions. He influenced these other disciples of Jesus to go along with him. To leave the ministry behind you might say and just go back to fishing!

We don't know what else Peter said to them, but like I have said, he did influence them. ***“Men, sorry, but I am going fishing. We had a great run, but it is over and let's get back to what we did before we met Jesus, back to our old lives and careers. I don't know about you, but I am going fishing!”***

And again, they were influenced to follow Peter's lead!

This is another reason I feel that Peter was not doing what he was supposed to be doing. Here are these fishermen, out on the Sea of Galilee, and they toss in their nets and **“... that night they caught nothing.”** John 21:3.

Think about this for a minute. It is not that they did not catch any fish, but not even a minnow! Can you imagine. That was your job and now you are trying to go back out and fish once again and you catch absolutely nothing in your nets! You won't be in business too long like that and it is no fun not to catch even one fish!

What is my point here?

My point is what happened that night *as they did their own thing*, they caught nothing!

They were not doing what the Lord had called them to do. And for us, we also can go down that path as we get tired for waiting or this happens and that happens and we drop out.

I have seen this over and over that when things don't go the way people want, they drop out, they stop doing what the Lord had called them to do. It was just too difficult, or this or that!

And here's the thing. Because this also applies. As we step out for the Lord doing things in our own power, our own strength, according to what we want to do instead of what the Lord wants us to do, not doing what He has instructed us to do and not in His power, we won't catch any fish in a sense!

Another way to put it is that we will not be fruitful in our efforts.

Now before you get too discouraged here, let me explain. You can do things your own way and that is not good.

But you can also be directed by God and when you are you will be fruitful in your efforts. I know, I just said that. But hear me out. We may not see the fruit that we would like, but God will provide the fruit from our service as He sees fit and according to His timing!

The big thing years ago when I would go to conferences is that people would ask me, ***"How big is your church?"***

I always felt uncomfortable with that question and maybe because our church is not that big. But I just think it is the wrong question. They should have asked, ***“Is your church growing spiritually speaking?”***

You see, that is the fruit that is born as the Word of God is taught and the Spirit of God is working in people’s lives.

It is out of that we see that there is service for the Lord from the congregation because they are listening to what God is telling them!

It is also sad when we lead others in the wrong direction, as I believe Peter was doing here.

So Peter said – ***“I’M GOING BACK TO FISHING!”*** And in doing so he got the others to join him.

Now we are going to see the Lord step in and what do you think the Lord is going to do? What do you think the Lord is going to say?

“Peter, what is wrong with you! I told you to wait here and instead of doing that you are out on the boat! I can’t believe you. You are no longer the Pope!”

Sorry, He didn’t say that Peter was no longer the Pope because Peter was never the Pope. But also, as we are going to see, the Lord’s response is very interesting, not what we might think.

And what we will see is – ***JESUS DRAWING OUT THEIR FAITH!***

VERSES 4-6

Once again we see the love and compassion of Jesus towards His men. Now maybe you don’t see that yet, but I will show you what I mean by this.

First of all, the boys went fishing at night and Peter was a fisherman. That was his job before the Lord called him. So he must have been good at it.

But, as we read in John 21:2, “**... They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.**”

What a frustrating night. And now it is morning. As they are in their boat they see a man on shore, it was Jesus, but they did not know that. Not yet!

And listen again to what Jesus said to them. He said, “*What is wrong with you guys! I spent three years with you and now you are to carry on the work and look at what you are doing – FISHING! And you are not even good at it, you spent all night, and you caught absolutely nothing! What a sad group of men I have!*”

No, Jesus did not say that! What He said was, “**... ‘Children, have you any food?’ ...**” John 21:4.

Think about that. He did not call them “*Rebels*” or “*Backsliders*” or “*Former Disciples*”, but He calls them children, His children and that shows me how much God loves them and how much God loves us. We are His children and that is only accomplished as we come to Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. It is then we are adopted into the family of God!

That is what Paul tells us in Romans 8:15-17, “**For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**”

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts these verses here in Romans chapter 8, **“For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God. And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.”**

Paul is telling us that Jesus has allowed us to be adopted into the family of God, not a second-class citizen but as Paul said, **“joint heirs with Christ.”** Romans 8:17.

Imagine that! We are joint heirs with Christ!

Of this we are told, *“Under Roman adoption, the life and standing of the adopted child changed completely. The adopted son lost all rights in his old family and gained all new rights in his new family; the old life of the adopted son was completely wiped out, with all debts being canceled, with nothing from his past counting against him anymore.”* (David Guzik).

That is what God has done for us and thus, we can cry out **“Abba, Father”** and He will listen for we are His children, adopted into His family through Christ!

Now, as Jesus asked them this question, if they had any food, the answer they gave must have been a difficult one for them. Many of them were fishermen and yet they caught nothing, and they had no food to eat and thus, the answer – ***“NO!”***

That is an amazing statement because that is not how fishermen talk.

“I had a big one on the line, but he got away!”

“Lots of nibbles but nothing I was able to bring in!”

“You should have seen the one that got away!”

And the list can go on as we try to make ourselves look good.

But these men, they caught nothing, and they were honest. They saw that through all their efforts that had nothing to speak about!

Again, I love the response of Jesus here because what He is doing is – ***JESUS IS DRAWING OUT THEIR FAITH!***

What do I mean by that?

Listen to what He tells them, “. . . ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’” John 21:6.

Now there are some who try to figure out why the right side and not the left side of the boat. What kind of spiritual significance does this have?

For me, it is simple. They were casting their nets on the wrong side of the boat and Jesus tells them to cast their nets on the – ***RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT!***

Sorry, but I like that, but that is not really the answer. The answer is simple really. Jesus knows where the fish are at, and He is just directing them!

Now they don’t know that this is Jesus, not yet. This is only some man on shore who told them to do this, and they listened and did what this man told them to do!

And the result of their obedience, “. . . So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.” John 21:6.

Notice it was not just one or two fish. It was not many fish but so many that they could not even bring their net in, there were just too many fish!

Now think about this for a minute. I don’t know how big this boat was across, maybe some 4 feet or 6 feet across. So these multitude of fish were not that far away from them and yet, not one of them got caught in the net that night!

Here's the thing. When you are outside the will of God, a few inches or feet don't matter! They might as well be a million miles away!

But, when you turn back to the Lord, when you follow His directions, look at the fish or I should say fruit you will bring in!

Do you want to do things in the power of your might or His?

Remember what Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20-21, "**Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**"

God wants us to follow Him, not to do our own thing but to listen to His voice and obey Him. But it is not easy. Let me show you what I mean.

We are told,

You may remember the story of Jack. Jack was out jogging one day, and he was jogging close to a cliff.

Suddenly he found himself falling. On the way down, he managed to grab a branch, nearly yanking it out of the cliff.

When he caught his breath, he realized what a terrible jam he was in. He couldn't get up and letting go certainly seemed to be a poor option.

So he began to scream, "***Hello up there! Can anyone hear me?***"

In a moment, a voice returned.

"Jack, can you hear me?"

"Yes, Yes, I can hear you I'm down here."

"I can see you, Jack, are you alright?"

“Yes, but who are you, and where are you?”

“I am the Lord Jack, I am everywhere.”

“The Lord? You mean God?”

“That’s me.”

“God, help me, I promise that if you get me down from here, I’ll stop sinning. I’ll be a really good person and serve you for the rest of my life.”

“Easy on the promises, Jack. First let’s get you down, then we can discuss those.”

“I’ll do anything, Lord, just tell me what to do, okay?”

“Okay, let go of the branch.”

“What?”

“I said, let go of the branch. Just trust me, let go.”

There was a long pause, as Jack thought of the offer.

In a moment, however, Jack let out a loud yell. *“Hello, hello – is there anybody else up there?!”*

Yes it is not easy but the Lord is not going to call us to do something that is wrong or evil. He is drawing out our faith and many times that is a scary thing because we have to trust Him as He leads us to let go of that branch or whatever we are holding onto for safety!

These men, they worked hard all night and caught nothing and now, to put the nets out again, that just seemed foolish and yet they obeyed!

Pastor Chuck Smith, in teaching pastors about success in the ministry out of John 21, told them, *“Whenever the nets of ministry get so full that you can’t draw them in, you know there is only one explanation for it – ‘It is the Lord!’”* Absolutely!

We have seen – *JESUS DRAWING OUT THEIR FAITH* and they obeyed. Which will lead us to our next point – *THE RESULTS!*

VERSES 7-11

I like this because they did not take the credit for catching all these fish. They didn't say
"It is because of our great fishing skills that we caught so many fish."

What did they say?

They said, "**It is the Lord!**"

And that is always the case for our fruitfulness; it is the Lord and not us!

Remember what Jesus said in John 15:5 as He was speaking that He is the vine, and we are the branches. This is what He said, "**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**"

I think we all understand that theologically, but do we understand it practically speaking?

What I mean by that is this.

We do know what the Bible says but how do we live it out?

Do we say things like,

"If it wasn't for me nothing would get done!"

"I am the only one doing anything here!"

"The Lord really needs me!"

"It's a good thing the Lord saved me, or nothing would get done!"

I know, they do sound funny, but do we ever think like that? I think we do when we look at what we are doing and what others are doing or not doing.

I think we do when we start to become prideful in what we do, and we begin to look down upon others thinking that God needs us.

God does not need us, but He will use us for His glory, not our glory!

And we will talk about that a little more in a minute as we talk about the breakfast that Jesus had for His men.

But first, as this all takes place, John says, **“It is the Lord!”**

I think John remembered what took place early on in the ministry of Jesus. We see this in Luke 5:1-11 where we are told, **“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”**

So here was a similar encounter. They fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus tells them to go out into the deep waters and cast their nets in. And even though it was another long night of fishing, and they were in the process of cleaning their nets, they obeyed.

And as they obeyed the Lord their nets were full, enough to fill two boats with fish!

Both Peter and John were involved in this, with the other men who worked with them.

They saw this and now, Peter and John are witnessing the same events and all John can do is say

- **“It is the Lord!”**

Now Peter, he just put on his outer garment and jumped into the water so he could get to Jesus as soon as possible. That is devotion! Keep in mind that they were about 300 feet from shore at this time. (John 21:8)

So who is right in what they did here?

Was it John who remained in the boat as they were bringing it to shore?

Or was it Peter who jumped into the water to get to Jesus even faster?

What I like here is that neither of them was wrong in how they handled this situation.

What do I mean by that?

Keep in mind that the body of Christ is made up of people who jump in and others who take the boat in, a variety of different people working in a variety of different ways for the Lord.

You see, they both came to the Lord, but in different ways. A good lesson for those of us who like to try to make people like us, God uses a variety of different people in a variety of different ways and that is how a healthy body will function.

And that should just make sense. Our body has many different parts that have different things that they do and yet, they all work together for the betterment of the body. That is what the body of Christ is like or should be!

Now we are told that in the net they had one hundred and fifty-three fish. That is a lot of fish to drag in.

In fact, Tenney tells us, ***“One hundred and fifty-three fish plus a wet net would probably weigh as much as three hundred pounds, or more. The observation of the exact number of fish and the fact that the net did not break reflect both an eyewitness account and a fisherman’s perspective.”***

Now what is this all about? Many have all kinds of ideas of what this one hundred and fifty-three fish is all about.

One author had this to say, ***“The Bible gives the exact number of fish in the net - one hundred and fifty-three. Many interesting explanations have been offered as to the meaning of this number: (1) The number of languages in the world at that time. (2) The number of races or tribes in the world, toward which the gospel net would be spread out. (3) The number of different kinds of fish in the sea of Galilee, or in the world. There is no doubt that it speaks of the variety of those who would be saved through the preaching of the Gospel - some from every tribe and nation. The fishermen knew that it was remarkable that the net had not broken. This is further evidence that “God’s work carried on in God’s way will never lack God’s resources.” He will see that the net does not break.”***

And there are all kinds of ideas out there, but the truth is that all we know for certain is that one hundred and fifty-three represents the number of fish in the net. The many allegorical interpretations of the number warn us against creating hidden meanings in the Biblical text.

All I can say for certain is that when God works, He fills our nets overflowing you might say, or He does exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think! (Ephesians 3:20)

So Peter gets to shore first and then the others follow along. And as they get there we are told, “**. . . they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.**” John 21:9.

Not a bad breakfast!

I like that, the Lord prepared a meal for these tired and hungry fishermen. He does fill our hungry hearts!

One commentator had this to say about what is taking place here. He wrote, “*All night long the disciples had been looking for fish - when all the while, Jesus had it right at hand, freshly grilled, ready to eat. Jesus had their breakfast all ready - broiled fish and bread. We do not know whether the Lord caught these fish or whether He obtained them miraculously. But we do learn that He is not dependent on our poor efforts. Jesus had called these men into full time ministry (three and a half years ago) but here they are worried about providing for themselves and their families - so they leave the ministry and try to provide their own food – ‘Seek first the Kingdom of God. . . .’*”

It is true, the Lord does not need our help. He does provide for us. And He can do far better than we could ever do.

You see, as you read this you can clearly see that Jesus had the fish cooking on the coals and bread for them to eat.

But we need to also read what took place here.

In John 21:10 we are told, “**Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.’**”

I like that and I think our Lord is very gracious because He is the One who enabled them to catch these fish in the first place. They caught nothing all night until that morning Jesus told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat!

And the Lord does the same with us.

What do I mean by that?

Think about it. All that we do for the Lord He is the One who has enabled us to accomplish those tasks or those things. And we give Him the glory and honor that is due Him. But we will be rewarded in the end for our faithful service to Him! God rewards us for what He enabled us to do, and I see that here with these men!

Think about when your kids were young, and they wanted to buy you a Christmas present. And you would give them some money and they would buy the present and wrap it up and give it to you with pride. But like with the Lord, they were just giving back to you what you have already given them!

You see, Jesus didn't need their help when it came to catching fish, but He accepts their contribution.

Thus, when it comes to serving the Lord, He doesn't need our help, but He still directs and accepts our service for Him. And we just give back to Him what He has given to us!

We also see Peter go and grab the net and drag it on shore. I think Peter was a strong man, fishing was heavy work.

But I don't think his strength was the point being made here. Remember, the whole group of men couldn't pull that net in and yet Peter did!

How can that be?

Because the Lord said to them, "**Bring some of the fish which you have just caught**" and Peter was obeying the Lord, who gave him the strength to accomplish this!

The Lord does the same with us. He calls us to do some work and it seems impossible with the resources that we have and yet, as we obey He gives us what we need to finish the work without being broken!

Remember, as Peter pulled that heavy net filled with fish in, the net did not break!

Look at – ***THE RESULTS*** of obeying the Lord we see here and in our own lives. He does exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think!

And what this brings us to is – ***FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS!***

VERSES 12-14

Before I deal with – ***FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS***, I want to talk about what it says here in John 21:12, “**... Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, ‘Who are You?’ – knowing that it was the Lord.**”

We see once again this very strange idea that they did not recognize that this was Jesus as they looked at Him. There was something that was different. Think about it, they spent some 3½ years with Jesus and they don’t recognize Him, how can that be?

And it is not only here that we see that.

Mary didn’t recognize Him at the tomb until He called out her name!

The disciples who were on the road to Emmaus didn’t recognize Jesus until He broke bread with them!

We saw in John 21:4 that the disciples or Apostles didn’t recognize Him!

Now here again is that strange idea that they did not recognize Jesus by His appearance here in John 21:12. You see, there was something about the appearance of Jesus that they didn’t recognize Him after His resurrection!

Why is that?

I believe it is that in His resurrection body, Jesus still bears the marks of the beatings and the crucifixion.

He told Thomas to touch the wounds in his hands and the wound in His side!

Why didn't those who were Jesus' closest followers recognize Him after His resurrection?

It is as Revelation 5:6 tells us as John turns and sees Jesus, "**And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain . . .**"

Keep in mind that prior to His crucifixion Jesus was so badly beaten He did not even look like a man anymore! And John tells us that when He saw Jesus, He looked like a Lamb who was slain!

So I believe that the reason that they did not recognize Jesus was because He still bore the marks of the beatings and the crucifixion in His resurrected body!

And yet, it says, "**. . . Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?' knowing that it was the Lord.**" John 21:12.

How did they know if they didn't recognize Him?

Maybe by the miracle of the fish that He did! Maybe by His voice because the sheep know the voice of their Lord and they follow Him!

Now, to the other point I want to bring out here and that is this – ***FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS!***

Think about all Jesus could have said here, all the instructions that He could have had for them, and what does He tell them?

He tells them, “... **‘Come and eat breakfast’** ...” John 21:12.

Let me ask you this.

Did Jesus die so we don’t have to go to hell?

In the broadest sense that is true, but that is not really the main reason He died for our sins.

Did He die so that we can work more and more and more and more?

No, He didn’t die so that we can work ourselves to death even though we do serve Him, and the work can be difficult, draining at times.

Then why did He do what He did for us?

The answer is really simple if you think about it.

The reason Jesus died for us is so that we can have – ***FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM!***

Do we take that time to fellowship with Jesus or are we too busy reading this Christian book, on this Christian website, looking at this, studying that?

That is a question you will have to answer but what about just spending time in His Word and praying and listening to what He is telling you.

Let me share this with you regarding Koinonia or this fellowship that we can have with God through Jesus Christ. Remember, it was our sin that separates us from God and only Jesus can take away those sins and restore that fellowship with Him.

We are told,

The Greek word translated “fellowship” in the New Testament is ***koinonia***, meaning “partnership, sharing in common, or communion,” and the essence of partnership is agreement or unity of purpose.

Fellowship with God is, at its most basic, agreement with Him in all things. The New Testament assures believers of this partnership. Not only do we have fellowship with God the Father, but we also have fellowship with His Son and the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 1:3).

To have fellowship with others, there must be a oneness of the heart, something that links two people together: “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). At the very heart of fellowship, there must be like-mindedness. Two in fellowship must have like wishes and like desires, which is why Paul exhorts believers to not be “unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Believers have true fellowship with one another because of the Holy Spirit who indwells all believers (John 14:17). Through the Spirit we have true fellowship, unlike any relationship we can have with those who do not know Christ.

Fellowship with God is only possible through the blood of Christ. Before we are saved, we are at enmity with God (Colossians 1:21). But Jesus reconciled us to God through His death on the cross (Romans 5:10). When we repent of our sin and trust in Christ, the result is that “now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

It is important to know that fellowship with God comes *exclusively* through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6), yet throughout the ages man has attempted to devise other paths to God through false religions or to live in such a way as to merit His approval. We cannot have fellowship with God if we reject His Son (1 John 5:10-11), dispute His foreordained plan of salvation, or attempt to find another path to His presence.

Scripture identifies some things that are at odds with true fellowship with God: the “mind governed by the flesh” that does “not submit to God’s law” (Romans 8:7) and “friendship with the world” (James 4:4). God is light, and light cannot have fellowship with darkness: “If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:6-7).

Those in fellowship with God are trusting in Christ. Their sins are forgiven. They are filled with the Spirit. They believe that in all things God deserves to be glorified. They spend time in Bible reading and prayer in a pursuit of “spiritual wisdom and insight so that [they] might grow in [their] knowledge of God” (Ephesians 1:17, NLT).

God’s Word, the Bible, is all that we need for fellowship with Him. We glorify Him by submitting to His will and obeying the commands contained in His Word. “But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear him” (Psalm 103:17).

May we enjoy the harmony, contentment, and joy of the fellowship God has provided us with. May we follow the example of Enoch, a man who, throughout his long life, was known for “walking in close fellowship with God” (Genesis 5:24, NLT).

- <http://bit.ly/3zbdkc4>

I pray that you see the importance of this fellowship with the Lord because this leads to how we manifest the Lord in our lives, what we do and what we say. A life that is not in fellowship with God will be seen in what they do and what they say, and it will not be good, not at all!

I don't know where you are at this morning with the Lord. Maybe you have given up and you just feel like – ***I'M GOING BACK TO FISHING!***

But don't give up. Our Lord is calling out to you and wants you to return to Him. Just keep in mind that all that you are going through – ***JESUS IS DRAWING OUT YOUR FAITH!***

And when you allow Him to do that in your life – ***THE RESULTS*** you will see will be amazing. You will be fruitful in your walk with Him.

And it leads to – ***FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS!*** Spending time with Him in His Word and allowing Him to speak to you!

I will close with this because this one thing I am going to share with you will lead to what we will be looking at next time and I think it is born out of this fire that Jesus made.

Think about Peter, the last time he saw Jesus was when he warmed himself by the enemy's fire and denied His Lord, prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

But here is another fire and I am sure all those memories came flashing back to him.

Spurgeon put it like this, ***“They ate the bread and fish that morning, I doubt not, in silent self- humiliation. Peter looked with tears in his eyes at that fire of coals, remembering how he stood and warmed himself when he denied his Master. Thomas stood there, wondering that he should have dared to ask such proofs of a fact most clear. All of them felt that they could shrink into nothing in his divine presence, since they had behaved so ill.”***

I am sure they all examined their hearts that morning, but for Peter, was there any hope for him to be restored? I don't think he felt like there was! But remember, the Lord never gives up on us and we will see that with Peter as the Lord will restore him!

And the Lord will never give up on you! Remember that! ***HIS LOVE FOR YOU IS UNCONDITIONAL!***