

John 21:1-14 (NIV), 1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. 6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

43-21-01-Let’s Go Fishing!

Christ’s presence, human effort, discipleship, evangelism

John 21:1-14

Because Jesus is risen, we can never go back to business as usual.

INTRODUCTION:

–John’s Gospel *wraps up* with a ‘*fishing story*’ that makes a statement:

HOM.idea. For Peter, *business as usual* used to be done in a fishing

boat. [**Joseph Addison Richards** in his poem, “**The Master of My Boat**” recaps it:

I owned a little boat a while ago / And	followed Him—new life began in me. /
sailed a Morning Sea without a fear, /	Mine was the boat, / But His the voice, /
And whither any breeze might fairly	And His the call, / Yet mine the choice. //
blow / I’d steer the little craft afar or	Ah, ’twas a fearful night out on the lake, /
near. / Mine was the boat, / And mine the	And all my skill availed not at the helm, /
air, / And mine the sea, / Not mine a care.	Till Him asleep I waken, crying, “Take, /
// My boat became my place of nightly	Take Thou command, lest waters
toil, / I sailed at sunset to the fishing	overwhelm!” / His was the boat, / And
ground; / At morn the boat was freighted	His the sea, / And His the peace / O’er all
with the spoil / That my all-conquering	and me. // Once from His boat He taught
work and skill had found. / Mine was the	the curious throng, / Then bade me let
boat, / And mine the net, / And mine the	down nets out in the sea; / I murmured,
skill / And power to get. // One day there	but obeyed, nor was it long / Before the
passed along the silent shore, / While I	catch amazed and humbled me. / His was
my net was casting in the sea, / A Man,	the boat, / And His the skill, / And His
who spoke as never man before; / I	the catch, / And His my will.]

–Peter gave *his will* to Jesus. So have we. But is it a *temporary deposit* or a *lifetime investment*? God often shows us which by the results of...

I. Our Projects without Christ’s Guidance—v.3, “I’m going out to fish,”

Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

- A. They had left their boat and nets for 3 yrs. *Past experience* led to *human initiative*. *Past skill* led to *persistent effort* all “*that night...*”
- B. Yet “*they caught nothing*” – When Peter gave Jesus his *life of fishing*, *business couldn’t continue as usual*. All had to be connected to the King!— **John 15:5**, I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

TRANS: **Warren Wiersbe** said, “*The difference between success and failure was the width of the ship! We are never far from success when we permit Jesus to give the*

orders, and we are usually closer to success than we realize.” Success was just a short distance away— John 21:4-7 (KJV), *But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, **Children**, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, **Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. Working on the right side of the ship makes a big difference between our projects without Christ's presence and...***

II. Our Prospects Under Christ's Direction

A. Christ's resurrection changes everything, and should change us:

1. Back then, He “stood on the shore,” calling to them (Now, He's on the *the heavenly shore*, calling to us, still sailing *the sea of life*.)
2. The “disciples did not realize that it was Jesus” (Often, we don't either.)
 - a. They were focused on a night's frustrating work. (We often get focused on frustrating problems that distract us from Christ.)
 - b. They weren't expecting a surprise appearance. (When Jesus *shows up*, it reminds us of His promise: “I am with you always!”)
3. He called to them, “Friends” [NIV] but literally, “Children” [KJV], a reminder— Mat 18:3, And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

B. Jesus confronts our ‘*as-usual*’ lifestyles with *reality* [lit, “*You don't have any fish, do you?*”] (He's after *honesty* [“No,”]; He wants us to be aware of the need, before He supplies; aware of weakness, before He strengthens; aware of failure, before He leads us to success.)

C. Success was in obedience, bringing a miracle **as a reminder**...

- a. **that God** never stops being a God of miracles;
 - b. **that they** needed His guidance for a bigger ministry to come;
 - c. **of their original decision** (after a *similar* miracle)— Luke 5:11, So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.
2. Success isn't a “*large number of fish*,” but an ability to recognize in the midst of extraordinary circumstances that “*It is the Lord!*”

TRANS: They *knew* the fishing business. But Jesus said, “I will make you fishers of men.” Fishermen catch *living fish* that *die*. Disciples are to catch people “dead in trespasses and sins” to make them *alive in Christ*. **We can't return to business as usual, now that Jesus is risen! We have...**

III. A Past and a Future in Following Christ— v.9, *When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.*

- A. This scene held significance for Peter, easily reminding him of a “*fire of burning coals*” in a courtyard where he betrayed Jesus 3 times.
- B. When Jesus said, “*Bring some of the fish you have just caught*,” His words may have had prophetic significance about the future:
 1. Their *full net* foretold their *future success* as “fishers of men”— John 12:32, But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all** men to myself.
 2. The Church's “*net*” will stretch to hold the catch [“*even with so many the net was not torn*”] (Despite tribulation, troubles, or trying times, the Church will stay intact, until *the last soul is caught*.)
 3. We will take to Heaven only *memories* and the *souls* we helped bring to Christ— “*Peter...dragged the net ashore...full of large fish.*”)

CONCLUSION:

—Someday in Heaven, Jesus will say what He said to the disciples in v.12, “*Come and have breakfast.*” While we await that day, we can't go back to the old life. Peter tried it. *Business as usual* didn't work anymore.

[“**Peter's Cloak**” is a poem I wrote to try to show the difference:

Back in his fishing boat, back with his nets, / Peter, the boaster-denier, forgets... / Or tries, as he fishes for catches that fail / Like canvas that droops after wind leaves a sail. // But stripped of his cloak and entirely bare / To labor in sunshine and warm morning air, / With naked skin wet by occasional spray, / He feels readjusted to fishing today. // Those three years with Jesus are almost a dream: / The trials, the teachings, the traveling team, / The healings, the miracles, all of the signs, / Seem distant, as once more they pull in the lines. // Again, there is nothing, no fish in the net, / The same as all night, since the evening sun set. / But then from a stranger on

shore comes a cry, / “Throw out on the right!” So they give it a try. // The fish that are caught are too much for their boats. / “It must be the Lord,” is what one of them notes. / Those words jostle Peter, reminding him when / Christ promised to make him a “fisher of men.” // He stares at his friends with their tawny bare skin, / And then at the catch which they try to haul in. / No shame to work nude with a net in your hand, / But preachers must dress to catch people on land. // So Peter jumps into the water with haste, / But not without tying his cloak round his waist. / He swims to his Master who stood on the shore, / And rarely goes fishing for fish anymore.

Because Jesus is risen, we can never go back to business as usual.