**Livin’ the Life**

**Assurance of Jesus’ Presence and Power**

John 21:1-14

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We are coming to an end of our series in the Gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises. We have been looking at Jesus’ resurrection appearances, seeing that Jesus vindicated himself by resurrection convincing even his weakest disciples and greatest doubters so that they see and believe. Today we begin looking at the last resurrection appearance, John 21:1-14, in a message entitled, Assurance of Jesus’ Presence and Power. The passage can be which can be divided into four sections. The first section,1-3, the disciples fish all night and catch nothing; 4-6 Jesus tells them to fish on the other side of the boat; in 7-8 John realizes that it is Jesus on the beach; and in 9-14, Jesus shares a meal with the disciples.

**A Night of Futility (1-3)**

Now, John describes the resurrection appearances as, Jesus having revealed himself to his disciples (1, 14), this time by the Sea of Tiberias, another name for the sea of Galilee. The disciples have now seen Jesus a couple of times and commissioned them to continue his mission (20:21-23). But the disciples are still uncertain. So much has happened. They had traveled with Jesus for a few years and things were going great but the crowds started dwindling and then the Jewish leaders killed Jesus. And they have been hiding for fear of their own lives. Then Jesus starting showing up alive, resurrected from the dead. But he has told them that he is returning to the Father. How can they continue without him?

So they go to Galilee, their old stomping grounds. John mentions seven disciples (2), some of whom are not part of the twelve so this group represents the larger group of disciples or the church. Peter decides to go back to what he knows, fishing. Maybe he is returning to his old life before Jesus but we don’t know for sure. The rest of the group want to go with him so they fish all night and caught nothing (3). It was a night of futility. Throwing the net out and pulling it back in all night long.

**A Morning of Fruitfulness (4-6)**

As the sun comes up over the horizon, Jesus shows up on the beach but the disciples do not recognize him. He asks them if they have caught any fish knowing full well that they have not and they tell him so. Then tells them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they will find fish (4-6). They do and catch so many large fish (153) that they cannot haul them into the boat. Jesus can say something will happen because he makes it happen. He created and sustains everything (1:3) and is Lord over all (Eph 1:21-22), including fish!

**The Message in the Miracle (7-8)**

If you are familiar with the gospels, you will notice that this miracle is identical to one Jesus performed at the beginning of his ministry, when he first these same disciples to follow him (Luke 5:1-11). But There are two differences that I want to highlight. The first is Peter’s response to Jesus and the second is Jesus’ response to the disciples. After the first miracle, Peter fell down at Jesus' knees, begging Jesus, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, oh Lord. Jesus responds and tells him to not be afraid. Peter recognized the miracle as a demonstration of God’s presence and power and because he was in God’s presence, he feared he would be judged as a sinful man. He recognized that it was dangerous to be in God’s presence. True knowledge of God leads one to understand his holiness and our sinfulness. Then Jesus told him that from now on he will be catching men and he and the others left everything and followed Jesus (Luke 5:8-11). Now look at John and Peter’s response to this miracle. After the miracle, John recognized that it was Jesus, and so he says, it is the Lord! When Peter heard John, he tucked in his tunic and leaped from boat and swam to shore while the others brought the net full of fish in by boat (7-8).

Instead of being fearful of the Lord Jesus, Peter threw himself into the water and swam to the Lord Jesus. Why is his reaction so radically different? He no longer feared judgment because Jesus is both the Lord and the Lamb of God who secured the forgiveness of Peter’s sin by his death and resurrection (cf. 20:23). Whereas in the first miracle, he wanted to get away from Jesus’ presence because of fear over his sinfulness now he is driven by desire to be with Jesus. Notice something very important, Peter is excited about Jesus, not the fish. The miracle is not about the fish, it is about Jesus. Secondly, the first miracle convinced them to follow Jesus and catch men and while this miracle confirms that they are to continue following Jesus after he is gone and carry on his mission (20:21-22). What the disciples needed and what we need is assurance of Jesus’ continuing presence and power in their lives. Jesus will continue to be with them by his Spirit (20:22). The point is the same in both miracles, Jesus convinces his disciples that his presence and power will be with them to accomplish the mission he gave them. The cross did not disrupt Jesus’ mission, it secured and advanced his mission. The success of Jesus’ mission is dependent upon Him, not upon the disciples! The message in the miracle is that Jesus’ presence and power will continue with the disciples after he is gone.

**The Fellowship Meal (9-14)**

When the disciples get to shore, Jesus is cooking fish.  He serves them and provides for them through a meal of fish and bread. Jesus died to save the church and now he lives to serve the church.  Jesus asks them to bring some of the fish they caught. So, Peter drags the net ashore filled with 153 large fish yet it does not tear, another miracle. Then Jesus invites them to have breakfast with him. Jesus loved them, he wanted to be with them, and he wanted to serve them after they had been up all night fishing. Jesus’ presence and power is not just to accomplish his mission but also to enjoy Him. We are the branch and he is the vine (John 15:5-6). It is a picture of union they will have with him after he is gone. I can’t help but think that Jesus wants them to think of the feeding of the five thousand as he handed them fish and bread. He is the food that endures to eternal life (6:27). Whoever comes to me shall not hunger; whoever believes in me shall not thirst (6:35). Jesus is God’s provision for our souls to be satisfied with all that Jesus is for us and promises to be for us in the gospel. I died to save you and I now live to serve you. Eat of me, drink of me, fellowship with me. My words are food for your soul. The breakfast reminds us that the church finds its life in Jesus, his death and resurrection, the risen Lord himself is watching over us and caring for our every need with his presence and his power.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Described a time that you needed assurance about something or from someone?
2. What truth(s) in this passage or teaching struck you?
3. How do you think the disciples felt after a night of futility compared to the morning of fruitfulness?
4. Describe a time you obeyed God and he worked in a dramatic way?
5. How would you summarize the main point of the teaching in one sentence?
6. How does this teaching affect my relationship with God?
7. How is God speaking to you from this passage/sermon?
8. How is God asking you to respond and obey him?
9. How does this teaching affect Jesus’ command to make disciples?