

JESUS COOKS BREAKFAST

Lesson Scripture: John 21:1-14

Focus Scripture: John 21:1-14

Key Verse: Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. John 21:12 (NRSV)

JOHN 21:1-14 (NRSV)

1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way.

2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

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.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No."

6 He said to them, "Cast the net to 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 there were so many fish.

7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish 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, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many,

JOHN 21:1-14 (KJV)

1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 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.

7 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.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to

the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.


12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

KEY TERM

- **Fish** – (noun) A primary staple for food; (verb) a critical industry for sustainable livelihood, as Peter, James, and John were all fishermen. Fish became a symbol for ministry, first in terms of the great multitude of souls to be saved, and secondly to feed those who are hungry for the gospel. (Matt. 4:19; 14:14-16)



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follower of Christ may become despondent and return to their prior life. However, it also reassures the believer that Jesus will appear at times when he is needed the most. When the disciples return to their prior vocation of fishing, they catch nothing. A sense of failure and emptiness can be sensed in this portion of the text. Their lives seem to fall apart as they go back to shore. However, a

INTRODUCTION

This scripture lesson centers around Jesus' appearance to seven disciples along the Sea of Tiberias. Unlike the story of the two disciples traveling on the road to Emmaus, found in the gospel of Luke, several of these disciples are named. Yet the two stories have the similar theme of Jesus' unexpected appearance, after his resurrection, and their failure to initially

recognize him. This account compels the reader to recognize how easily a follower of Christ may become despondent and return to their prior life. However, it also reassures the believer that Jesus will appear at times when he is needed the most. When the disciples return to their prior vocation of fishing, they catch nothing. A sense of failure and emptiness can be sensed in this portion of the text. Their lives seem to fall apart as they go back to shore. However, a night of disappointment was transformed into a morning of extraordinary joy. From the shore, Jesus calls out to them and instructs them cast their net on the opposite side. The miracle that follows reveals it is the Lord. This testimony by John gives contemporary readers a reason to search for Jesus, even in their darkest hour. The gospel of John concludes with an encouraging chronicle of Jesus appearing to the disciples to

reinforce their true mission. They were called to be fishers of humanity.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The gospel writer, John, adds this concluding chapter to emphasize the fulfillment of Jesus' promises found in prior texts. This text also builds on the establishment of this new community of faith. The first section provides an account of Jesus appearing to seven disciples after his resurrection. Embedded in this account is not only the miracle of

witnessing the risen Lord, but also the manifestation of a miraculous catch of fish. The key members of this story are those who had a previous occupation of fishing. Nathanael, a disciple not frequently mentioned, can be found in the call narrative found in John 1:45-50. Because of Nathanael's honesty, Jesus noted him as a man without deceit. As the disciples launch out to fish, there

may have been some motivation to return to their prior life, which suggests an abandonment of their prior three-year ministry with Jesus. However, recognizing the difficulty in processing what they had seen over the past few days, it would seem reasonable to find an activity such as fishing to clear the mind. Their intentions would be divinely discerned and as such, Jesus appears on the shore. Their futile efforts to catch anything was an ideal environment for

witnessing a miracle. As they returned from their unsuccessful venture, they noticed a person on the shoreline. Like the story of the Emmaus Road found in Luke 24, the disciples did not initially recognize him as the Lord. Jesus calls them children (v. 5), illustrating his role with God the Father. He commands them to cast their net on the other side, resulting in an unimaginable catch of fish. Scholars believe that the need to establish an exact number of one hundred fifty-three large fish not only validates the catch as

miraculous, but also had a symbolic purpose. For instance, the number one hundred fifty-three is a sign of abundance for the church as well as fullness of the gifts of God demonstrated through Jesus. In the earliest days of the church, Augustine proposed a mathematical explanation where the number 153 is obtained when all the integers from 1 to 17 are added together. The sequential mathematical process can be considered a

means to illustrate divine interaction and control of time and space, a sign of God's continuous plan and order. There is also a correlation of the number seven, in which seven disciples were present, suggesting a moment of completion. The means in which Peter draws the fish to the shore without the net breaking indicates the miracle would withstand the challenges the believer faces. It also highlights how the fish are drawn

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to the Lord, just as Jesus stated in John 12:32. As the disciples arrive back to shore, Jesus invites them to breakfast, affirming the new community and the early church. Bringing the fish to Jesus is directing the disciples to continue to bring new believers to the community. Jesus giving thanks, breaking the bread and offering it to the disciples, is a reminder of renewed commitment to one's faith, and remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice for everyone's sins.

SANKOFA

*If the herders are lost
the sheep will get lost.
– African Proverb*

A person who is called to lead must remain focused on the vision and be clear of the direction in which to lead others. Those who are in positions of leadership are the primary players for not only their success, but the success and even the survival of others. What looks easy to others can be a tireless and thankless job, sometimes resulting in disappointing outcomes before achieving your goal. Jesus used the metaphor of a shepherd to illustrate the needed traits of a good leader. Herding sheep, for instance, may seem like a simple profession. However, sheep are unaware of the dangers surrounding them. Sheep are unable to navigate some terrains and frequently need help to find food

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and water. Sheep are also dependent on shepherds for sheering their wool. If their wool becomes too thick, it can become a health hazard, harvesting insects and disease, while also preventing their ability to run from predators. Shepherds are leaders of these animals. They ensure their sheep are protected, well fed, and have sufficient water. They shear the sheep at the proper times and use the wool for clothing and for a profitable income. If there is a drought, the shepherd must find other watering holes,

or develop a strategy for providing water for the sheep. Depending on the size of the flock, shepherds will need help. Therefore, the sheep dog is a common companion and helper to herd the sheep. And good shepherds care about their flock. They do not see the sheep as simply an economic commodity, but also as vulnerable creatures who depend on their shepherd. Finally, shepherds cannot afford to get lost,

confused, or discouraged. They must remain committed and steadfast in their vocation.

Although everyone is not a shepherd, everyone can learn from them, whether in the position of a leader or follower. As a leader, be determined and committed to the work you have been called to do. When uncertain times come, seek the Lord, and obtain advice from wiser and


more experienced people. As a leader within the church, you have a calling. Whether you are clergy or a lay person, officer, or member, young or old, your assignment is connected to the greater mission to fish for souls. And as a follower, listen and learn from those who lead. Whatever your role may be, have faith in the Lord, and follow the guidance found in God's Word.

CASE STUDY

The AME Church evolved out of the Free African Society at the end of the 18th century in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Society was a response to the discriminatory practices against black Methodists by a white Methodist fellowship. When white congregants objected to Richard Allen praying at the altar rail, the wheels were set in motion. St. George Church became the place for Richard Allen's unique calling to advocate for spiritual freedom and social liberties. Even during the early years of the Free African Society's existence, the organization surpassed its immediate purpose. The group evolved to include religious, social, and intellectual aspects. The first religious gathering was documented about nine years before the African Methodist Episcopal Church's official organization. While oppression was less severe for free

blacks in Philadelphia than in many other cities, the strong discrimination of white Methodists served as the catalyst for the new congregation with Richard Allen as pastor.

The founding document of the church was worked out between Allen and white Methodist leaders. Church hierarchy was a primary component of the agreement. Allen's congregation was initially planned to remain a part of the Methodist Church, while becoming a self-governing unit. A level of oversight by church hierarchy



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was expected, and the hope was to create a system of checks and balances between white authorities and black leadership. However, tension ignited after the membership at Bethel Church grew from 40-400 between 1794 and 1810. The growth threatened the white Methodists' authority. Their desire from this point was to impress upon this new dynamic community that there were still limits of their

independence.

Eventually, the agreement between the Bethel congregation and the white Methodist church broke down. White Methodists threatened to prevent church meetings and used other tactics to discourage Bethel's self-governance. By 1807, Richard Allen obtained legal support and wrote an African supplement to the church's founding document. The

document stated even stronger claims of independence, but still maintained that Bethel was an equal member in the Methodist Conference. Meanwhile, Bethel's membership continued to grow because the church was known for its advocacy for black rights and its opposition to oppression. On the flip side, the tactics of Methodists became more extreme. There were obvious signs they resented and even feared the church's growth. A group of them went as far as to create an inaccurate circular stating Bethel's baptisms and marriages were invalid.

But God had a different plan. Legal action went as far as the Pennsylvania's Supreme Court to address Bethel's legitimacy as an independent church. Although the Bethel congregation lost the initial lawsuit, a second and more direct legal challenge was launched

in 1816. Richard Allen had the legal right of self-determination as a pastor, leading to the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

By 1906, the AME Church had a membership of half a million congregants, exceeding the combined total of the two other predominantly black American denominations. This made the AME Church the largest major African American denomination of the Methodist traditions. The struggles of church growth

continue to be real in this modern society. However, when the church focuses on the main mission of drawing souls to Christ, all things are possible.

LIFE APPLICATION

The story of the disciples meeting Jesus after his resurrection is an uplifting testimony of victory and hope. Like the disciples, we face tragedies and disappointments. Life can become

frustrating and confusing. The disciples also experienced these challenges, but their calling would still become clear. They were selected, chosen by Jesus, to share the gospel with the world. Therefore, every believer is also reminded that life will have difficulties and even failures. However, the Lord is still guiding each of God's children to lead others to Jesus. The Lord will provide everything we

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need, even when our nets are empty. And the Lord will bring us together to share in the joy of his resurrection. Those moments of fellowship are reminders that we are collectively blessed as God's children. Give thanks for the signs of hope and look for every opportunity to see Jesus directing you along the way.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the fellowship between believers so important to the body of Christ?

2. What can the church do to incentivize others to gather together more often?
3. How does the church motivate people to build larger communities of faith in this post-pandemic era?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Closing Hymn or Song of Praise: AME Hymn #576 – “We Gather Together”

Closing Prayer: Almighty God our Father, dear precious Lord Jesus the Christ, and to the sweet Holy Spirit, we thank you this day for your blessings of grace and mercy, and your tireless faithfulness in our lives. We pray for continued strength and direction to share the gospel with others.

Through you alone, others will be drawn to Jesus, and many will understand and believe in the message of salvation. We pray, Lord, for renewed strength. We pray that we do not grow weary in well doing but instead we continue to cast our nets, and even move our nets when directed by you. We pray for the fellowship of all believers that brings unity and harmony among us. We pray to see Jesus in our midst and to obey his commands. We pray for your power to move and guide us today and every day hence forth. This we pray in the name of our risen savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Written by Rev. Dr. D. Melynda Clarke

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

April 17-April 23

Monday	Matthew 10:28-42 (Jesus Brings Danger and Conflict)
Tuesday	John 18:13-27 (Peter Denies Jesus)
Wednesday	Ezekiel 18:13-27 (Repent, Turn, and Live)
Thursday	2 Corinthians 7:1-11 (Godly Grief Produces Repentance)
Friday	Psalms 51:1-9 (O God, Blot Out My Transgressions)
Saturday	Psalms 51:10-19 (Create in Me a Clean Heart)
Sunday	John 21:15-25 (If You Love Me, Follow Me)