

Breakfast Blessing On the Shore

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 21:1-14
Preached on: Sunday, October 11, 2015

It is once again my great joy and privilege to minister the word of God to you this morning. Would you take your Bibles and turn to John's Gospel, chapter 21, where we will be examining the first 14 verses. I have entitled my discourse to you "Breakfast Blessing On the Shore." That will become abundantly clear to you as we proceed this morning and I pray that each of you have prepared your heart to receive the word of the Lord today because this passage is rich; it is profound; it is very practical; filled with symbolism that we can all apply to our lives. And I might add that if you were a believer and your life is filled with chaos, you are confused, you feel like your life is going nowhere fast, then you need to listen very, very carefully.

I have talked with many believers who describe their life in this way. I remember one lady said this, quote, "My life is so out of control that I feel as though I am a rubber ball in a wooden box and someone is constantly shaking it." A rather vivid description. As I worked with her, it became increasingly obvious that the reason she was feeling that way is because she knew nothing of what it was to walk by the Spirit. She was walking by the flesh. I think of men who have come into my study utterly broken over the sham of their marriage. Hypocrisy that they have concealed for years. A disaster that could have been averted had they understood and applied the passage that we have before us today. I think of pastors that I have dealt with over the years who have compromised their life and their doctrine so that they could draw a bigger crowd. For years they operated by the power of the flesh, not the Spirit, resulting in churches overflowing with people who love the world more than they love Christ and, as a result, they find themselves as pastors exhausted, depressed, lonely, defeated. Once again, had they heard and heeded the passage that we have before us, by God's grace things could have been so, so different. So I pray that you will listen very carefully to this passage and that you will learn well from it.

Let me introduce it to you. You will recall that in John's Gospel he gives us a prologue in chapter 1 and in that prologue, the Holy Spirit presents to us the magnificent characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ as the self-existent, pre-existent, uncreated Creator of the universe who came to earth as the incarnate Word of God. And in the prologue we see Christ presented as the eternal Son of God before the Father sent him. Well, now we come to the other bookend of the Gospel, the epilogue in chapter 21, and here we see how Christ functions after he returns back to the right hand of the Father. Here we will see that he is indeed the sovereign Lord that is ruling over all of his creation in unrivaled majesty, but he also the compassionate Shepherd that is ever faithful to protect and to bless and provide for his own. Here we learn how deeply the Lord cares for us and how he wants to bless us, even though he's not physically present with us and we

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also will understand better how our lives can be just a disaster if we turn our back on the Lord and live merely for ourselves.

I wish to explain this passage under two very simple headings. 1. We're going to look at the fruitless results when living for self. In other words, we're going to examine and we're going to see a glimpse of the multiplied sorrows of a wasted life when we just spend it on ourselves. And this will be in contrast to 2. The fruitful results when living for Christ. That is, the multiplied blessings of those who, as Paul says, presents their bodies as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God.

So let me give you the setting here. We know that right as Jesus was resurrection from the dead, Matthew and Mark tell us that he commanded his disciples to leave Jerusalem and to go north up into the Galilee where they were from, to a mountain which Jesus had designated and he would meet them there. And as we study the Gospel records, we see that they did this very, very slowly, probably because of their weak faith, but we know geographically that this journey would have taken about a week. So this scenario that we're going to look at in John 21 takes place between 15 to 20 days after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and, I might add, that it was upon that Galilean mountainside that Jesus would eventually give his great commission to the disciples along with a group of more than 500 people as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15. There the Lord would assemble his faithful followers, those that were filled with confusion and fear and struggling with their own frailty and doubts and misgivings and he would then commission them to be his disciples to go and make disciples and there they would also receive the Lord's promise of his continual presence with them as they ministered to the world in his name.

But what happens here in John 21 is prior to that scenario and here the risen Christ is going to deal specifically with seven of his apostles and Peter in particular because he was the leader. And because John's Gospel is so filled with symbolism which, by the way, was highly valued in that culture, it is reasonable therefore to believe that the Spirit of God is speaking to all of us through the symbolism that is included in this eye-witness account that John has written because here in John 21, Jesus deals with two problems that really plagued his apostles at this stage of their life and ministry, problems that, frankly, plague each of us, and that is they were easily distracted and therefore defeated in their life and ministry. As we will see, these men led by Peter struggled with this. In fact, Peter was really in a very bad place spiritually at this point in his life and therefore in the second part of John 21, we will see how the Lord Jesus very skillfully like a surgeon, just kind of probes into his heart and exposes the issues of his heart with respect to the true nature of his devotion and love to Christ, a very heart-wrenching, crushing experience for Peter, and then we will see how he restores Peter to a place of true devotion and usefulness in service.

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But it's important for us to understand that this would have been a very powerful passage to the first century saints and here's why: by the time John wrote this which was about 50 years after the ministry of Christ, Peter and his wife would have already suffered and died for their faith by way of crucifixion, just as Jesus had promised would happen to Peter. And we also know that in Jesus' farewell discourse, Jesus promised that suffering and possibly even death might be a potential or really would be a potential danger for all true and faithful disciples. So this would have been a real comfort to those saints that were struggling with persecution; that had heard or seen what had happened to Peter and so forth, to know that the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of what is happening in their life, is still actively and intimately involved and Jesus knew all along that this incredible scene that we are about to examine would be disclosed to his saints in that day and now here some 2,000 years later to all of us.

So here are the first 14 verses. The Lord deals with the first problem that the disciples faced and that was being distracted and when you're distracted from what God has called you to do, you will be fruitless in your ministry. No farmer will ever reap a harvest in the fall if he does not labor in the spring. So here we witness something truly astounding. Something that should speak to all of our hearts and that is this: in his great providence, God is orchestrating the events of their lives to bring them to a place where he can dramatically teach them the profound importance of trusting him, of obeying him, staying devoted to him, because only then will they be able to experience his power and his protection and his presence and his soul-satisfying involvement in their life come what may and I pray that each of us who name the name of Christ will grab hold of these things and embrace them with all of our heart, that we might enjoy all that the Lord has promised to give to us.

So let's look closely at the text beginning in verse 1 of John 21. "After these things Jesus manifested Himself again." The term "manifested" could be translated "revealed." You must understand that at this point, the Lord Jesus no longer existed corporally as he had before. He was no longer confined to a physical pre-resurrection body, pre-glorified body. He now has a glorified body and so he is appearing to them. He could make himself invisible and then he could make himself visible again in his resurrected body which, by the way, would have been a very strange extraordinary thing to behold and undoubtedly this evoked a great deal of reverential awe, perhaps even fear in those who saw him to behold the crucified Messiah that is now glorified. Can you imagine what you would think and experience when you looked at him?

So again as we come to verse 21, we see that, "Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias," also called the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes it was called

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the Sea of Tiberias because Tiberias was one of the prominent cities there on the east coast, or I should say the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. "And He manifested Himself," John say, "in this way." First of all, let's stop and think: obviously God is up to something here. God never acts capriciously. He doesn't just show up. He's up to something. He has a plan. Dear friends, you must remember that no matter what happens in your life, it is for a purpose. He is always up to something for your good and for his glory and that's what's happening here.

Verse 2, "Simon Peter," mentioned first because he's the leader, "and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee," which would be James and John, "and two others of His disciples were together." Now, we're not told who the other two were but they were probably Andrew and Philip who were very close to Peter, James and John. In fact, they are always mentioned in other passages of Scripture in connection with them. Now, by the way, we're not told where the rest of the apostles were at this time so these seven were together.

Verse 3, "Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will also come with you.' They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing." Now, it's important for us to ask and answer the question: why did Peter say, "I am going fishing?" Was he hungry after traveling for a week or is something else going on? Well, I would argue that given the symbolism that we see so commonly in John's Gospel, combined with the unique timing of the story and all that happens, I believe that there is something more that Peter is saying than, "Hey, let's have a time of recreational fishing." As we examine the overall direction of the epilogue, we see God at work in their lives. There is a flow here. There is a direction. There is a purpose. And I might add that regardless of the motivation for them to go fishing, there is nothing in the account that indicates that these men were on a mission to be fishers of men as Jesus had called them to do. Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them, they were certainly not Spirit empowered with boldness and determination and devotion like they were after Pentecost. You see a radical change in them after Pentecost when the Spirit comes upon them and while there is no evidence in the text that they completely abandoned their original commission, there is also no evidence that they were devoted to it and I would argue that what they were considering was returning once again to their old profession as fishermen.

By the way, this is perhaps one of the most dangerous places for a Christian to be. To know full well what God has called you to do, what he has commissioned you to do, and to even agree with it in your heart and give lip service to it, yet demonstrate by your life that you really have no devotion to Christ. You come to church. You sing the hymns. You do the Christian thing, but in reality you are not devoted to Christ. You live for yourself. What a dangerous thing and, folks, may I say at the outset of our study here this morning:

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once you lose your sense of urgency for evangelism, you will devote your life to things that have no eternal value. It's the natural drift of the flesh. We never drift towards obedience and godliness, we always drift in the other direction and what you will find is you will become a spectator watching others build the kingdom of God, all the while convincing yourself that God is pleased with you. You will find yourself on the fringes of the church, feeling kind of frustrated when you have to come. You won't really want to be involved and you will absolutely be devoted to your own life and your own will and I believe this was the dangerous direction that Peter and the others were beginning to drift into.

"I'm going fishing." I think what he's saying there is, "I want to return to my former occupation as a fisherman. I think that's what I need to do. Maybe we all need to do this. That's where we feel confident, successful, safe." Here's why I would say this. I have several reasons. 1. Not only does there seem to be a lack of direction and devotion in their lives but it would appear that they disobeyed the Lord. The Lord had told them to go to a designated mountain but they're down here going to the sea. Secondly, in chapter 16, verse 32, Jesus predicted that they would abandon him. There we read, ""Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home." Now, the word "home" was added by the translators. The Greek text simply says, "His own," which encompasses all that a person has, all that a person does. In fact, Paul uses the term in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, the same phrase and there it is translated, "your own business."

So Jesus predicted that they would each be scattered and they would return to their own business, to all that encompassed their former life. Then thirdly when the Lord challenges Peter concerning his devotion and sincerity of love, he says later on in verse 15, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" "These" being a reference to the boat; to the net; to the fish; to all of the things associated with his profession, his fishing life that he loved and that I fear he was tempted to once again pursue. The Lord, I believe, is saying there, "Peter, are you willing to give up all of this to follow me and be a fisher of men?"

Then fourthly, we must understand practically that the kind of fishing they did in that day is far different than what we might think of in our culture. Their kind of fishing took a lot of preparation. They didn't start up the pickup, back it into the barn, hitch the boat up, throw some poles in, stop by the bait shop and go down to the lake. The text says, "They went out and got into the boat." Important little thing to look at here; the definite article we call it. The word "the" used in front of the noun "boat" indicates that this was a specific boat, probably one that belonged to one of them. I would argue that it was Peter's boat and you'll understand that in a moment.

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Now, think about it: they've not been fishing for 3 ½ years and the kind of wooden vessels that they had were not the kind of boats that you would leave just sitting in the water. They had to be dry docked and so if they're going fishing, they're going to have to do something to refurbish and to really prepare that boat so it is seaworthy with respect to its sails and the way they would treat the wood and so forth. It was most likely dry docked and so they would have to launch the vessel and that's no small task. These were very large boats, at least in our mind compared to the little boats that we see. In fact, there was one that was discovered in the Sea of Galilee during a drought in 1986. Maybe some of you have seen it. I have seen it. It is preserved there in a museum. It's 27 feet long, 7.5 feet wide and 4.3 feet in height. It would weigh several tons. Most of them had two sets of two oars and a square sail affixed amid ship and basically required a crew of four rowers and a helmsman that would steer the vessel with some oars in the back. They would also have to purchase nets. Theirs would have long since rotted or they probably were given to someone else, we don't know. But the point is: it would require a lot of work for them to go fishing. Much preparation. Too much for just a night of recreational fishing or to go out and to get some food.

Then, fifthly, in verse 3, we read that when Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing," they said to him, the others said to him, "We will also come with you." Well, bear in mind that that was quite a commitment. You must understand that Peter could not have gone fishing by himself. You cannot operate these vessels by yourself. You have to have a crew. He needed them to join him and the text says, "They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing." Was that the same day? We don't know. It could have been a different time. It probably was a different night but it was certainly at night because that's when they would fish.

So my point is: it would require a lot of preparation to go fishing, much more than what you would do to just satisfy some boredom or catch something to eat. And I might also add that the type of fishing they did would always anticipate a rather significant catch that would require a lot of work to prepare and to take to market. So we have to understand the culture that was going on and how they fished in that day so I believe it's fair to assume that what Peter is describing here is far more than a fishing expedition. I believe he is describing a desire to return to the former profession that he enjoyed. A profession where they could provide for themselves because, after all, Jesus is gone. He has appeared and then he is gone and, "What are we going to do? We're afraid. Can we really trust him or shouldn't we provide for ourselves? Why don't we do something safe? Why don't we do something we're good at?" Unlike serving Christ.

I think that's probably what they're thinking, so they're drifting back to their old way of life where Jesus had first found them. I might add that, again, remember, Peter's heart is

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still struggling over his recent failures, his inadequacies. Undoubtedly he remembers the way he had denied his Master and the Lord later on is going to restore him, so it's easy when you're struggling with spiritual failure to naturally want to drift toward something where you feel competent, where you feel safe. There is a great lesson here to be learned, dear friends. Men, you especially need to hear this: spiritual failure tends to drive us to areas of perceived competency and safety rather than driving us to repentance and renewed dependency upon the Spirit of God. Like flowing water, our flesh will naturally seek the path of least resistance. Only those who truly love Christ will go against the flow of this world. Or to say it even more practically: only the husband truly committed to Christ will stand up to his wife who is unsubmitive and try to shepherd her and love her.

So it is with this understanding that we can better see what the Lord is up to here. He is about to expose them, to convict them, to comfort them and to commission them. Before we move on, I believe there is also another lesson that we can learn here, all of us, men and women but, again, I think especially of men. If you have been placed in a position of spiritual leadership whether it's in the church or you men with your wives, your families, you must bear in mind that we have a grave responsibility to walk faithfully and fearlessly with Christ because as soon as we get distracted, we will begin to slide down a slippery slope that will lead us to defeat. Our lives will be fruitless. We will be miserable and we will bring others down with us. Men, please hear me: if your love for Christ grows cold, you will unwittingly begin to love him from greater and greater distances. Your heart will be distracted with things that offer some fleeting pleasure or things that give you some internal relief but in the end, your life will be a disastrous disappointment. Your marriage will be a disappointment. Your family will be a disappointment. When you begin to turn your back on Jesus, dear brothers and sisters and the things of God are no longer a priority in your life, you are headed for defeat. You will grieve, you will quench the Holy Spirit and you will become spiritually impotent. The fruits of the Spirit will no longer be growing on the vine of your life and you're going to drag others away with you and bring the whole lot of you to a place where you do not want to be. Jesus is concerned about this with his disciples. Oh, dear brothers, we need to guard our heart, not only for our own sake and for Christ's sake but for those who follow us.

So, first we see, 1. The fruitless results of living for self symbolized in this passage. Verse 4, "But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus." Now, obviously they were not expecting him, nor did they recognize him. If you've ever been on a lake, certainly on the Sea of Galilee, you will know that early in the morning there is quite a dense fog; there is a lot of mist. It would be hard to see anyone, especially someone 100 yards away as verse 8 tells us. But more importantly, we must understand that no one could recognize the risen Lord unless he

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chose to manifest himself to them and how precious now to see the Lord compassionately drawing himself near to those dear brothers to do some great work in their heart and life.

So notice verse 5, "So Jesus said to them, 'Children, you do not have any fish, do you?'" Children, by the way, could be translated like the British would say it, "lads," or in our American vernacular, "'Guys, boys, you do not have any fish do you?' They answered Him, 'No.'" Now, as I put myself in this situation, I think, you know, they had to have wondered at least three things. First of all, who is that guy on the shore so early in the morning yelling at us? Secondly, how does he know that we have not been successful? Isn't that fair. I'm sure that's what they're thinking. Then, thirdly, why is he trying to rub it in? "You do not have any fish, do you?" I mean, what fisherman would appreciate that kind of a comment after he has fished all night long and caught absolutely nothing? It's as if someone saying to you, "You don't know what you're doing, do you?" Trust me, folks, that would not be well received by a fisherman. I've been there. You probably have too.

But isn't it interesting that they do not respond in anger. They do not even dismiss him. Why? I believe they suspected in their heart that it just might be Jesus. Here's why I would say that: imagine what had happened a number of months earlier in that very same spot. Peter and the other men had Jesus climb into Peter's boat. Luke 5 tells us specifically that it was the boat that Peter owned and that's probably the same boat that they're in now. He climbed in the boat and began teaching to the multitudes from the boat. Verse 4 of Luke 5, "When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets.' When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.' When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."

Now friends, I would submit to you that there is no way here in this scene that these same men could be in this same place and not talk about that scenario repeatedly while they're fishing. I mean, can you imagine that? I'm sure that over and over they're saying, "Man, can you believe what happened?" Then all of a sudden they hear some guy on the shore calling out. You know what had to have gone through their mind, "I wonder if that's Jesus? No, it couldn't be." And I think Peter especially thought that.

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Notice what happens next, "And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.'" That had to have been a dead giveaway just like, "Oh my goodness, this has got to be Jesus." You see, if they had not thought that, I cannot imagine Peter who tended to be a little bit stubborn and outspoken, along with doubting Thomas and these other men, I cannot imagine them just heeding the voice of some stranger yelling at them 100 yards away, especially when they would have been in such a bad mood fishing all night and catching nothing and probably thinking in their mind, "We're not catching anything. I wonder if God is trying to tell us something? I wonder if we need to be doing this? What are we going to do?" I believe, dear friends, that they suspected that it was the Lord, that they hoped that it was the Lord, otherwise they would have scoffed at the stranger. I mean, I could imagine them saying something like we would say, "Yeah, right. Throw it on the other side? You know how hard it is to take up this net? To refold it? To put it out there? Don't you realize that when the net is down, it's encompassing a vast amount of area even under and on every side of the boat? Don't you know that? Don't you think we know that? Don't you know that the schools of fish move all about? Do you really think we are that dumb to just do all of that and throw it on the other side?" That's what they would have thought unless they suspected it was Jesus.

"Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.' So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish." Oh, dear friends, don't you see the profound symbolism of this? "Guys, if you will obey me, I will bless you. You go in your own direction, you get distracted with the things of your own flesh, and you will be fruitless and you will suffer defeat." In contrast to this, we see, 2. The fruitful results when living for Christ.

Notice verse 7, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.'" It's like he was saying what they were all thinking, "It's the Lord." I mean, you could just hear him blurting it out. "So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord," it's almost like Peter was waiting for somebody to say, "That's all I need. It's the Lord." "He put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea." That sounds just like Peter, doesn't it? "I'm not waiting. I'm there. See you, guys, I'm going to get to Jesus." What a dramatic lesson here that Jesus is teaching. It's as if he's saying, "Guys, I told you before without me you can do nothing. Quit going off in your own direction. Listen to me. Obey me. Trust me. I'm going to continue to provide for you after the resurrection just the way I did before the resurrection. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. This is what I've called and gifted and commissioned you to do. This is what the Holy Spirit is going to help you do when he comes upon you. Guys, this is where you're going to find real joy, real fulfillment. This is where you're going to be fruitful."

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I'm sure they never forgot this lesson and notice how abundantly the Lord blesses, right? I mean, all these fish. An incredible scene and what a lesson for all of us who love Christ. We've all been commissioned to go and make disciples but beyond that we know that God has called and gifted us to do certain things for the sake of the kingdom. I ask you: are those things a priority in your life? Or are you just going to work and doing your family thing and you really don't think of any of that? You don't think that God has placed you here for the purpose of living for his glory. Ask yourself: is my life bearing fruit for the kingdom or am I barren? Does my life make a difference? Am I making an impact on the world around me or do I just make really no difference for the sake of Christ? Dear friend, if that is you, you are forfeiting divine blessing in your life and eventually your marriage and your family is going to pay for it. Now, how sad to see self-centered Christians distracted, on their way to defeat, powerless, frustrated, useless, discontent, sour and sullen. I've seen it happen a thousand times. Maybe that many times even in this church. They start out all excited, "Oh, isn't God wonderful?" Doing great things for God and then little by little they begin to drift away. Dear Christian, we must learn that our life will be empty and aimless if we simply live for ourselves.

Well, this is what the disciples are learning and Peter is so excited he jumps out of the boat. By the way, imagine that reunion. He's swimming and he comes up on the beach and there's Jesus. The text doesn't say it but you know he had to have just fallen at Jesus' feet like he did before in the Luke 5 account. Folks, have you ever noticed that when you really hear the Lord, when he has really spoken to you so clearly and you heed his voice, isn't it amazing how instantly your heart surges with an overwhelming sense of exhilaration and there is nothing you want more in your life than to be near the Lord? You don't have to tell that person, "You know, you really need to think about getting into the word and communing with the Lord in prayer." Wild horses couldn't drag them away from that. That's what's going on here.

"But the other disciples came in the little boat," the boat is little in relation to the vast amount of fish that they had caught. They are unable to hoist all of that into the vessel, as you will see. "They were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish. So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread." Beloved, imagine the scene here. The disciples had been distracted; they're going in the wrong direction. Down deep, they're not really sure that the Lord's resources are enough for them and what does the Lord do? He blessed their obedience. They put the net on the other side and now he is basically saying to them, "Come here, guys. Come on, brothers. I want to serve you breakfast. I know you're tired, you're hungry. You fished all night. Come and fellowship with me and don't ever stop. Don't ever stop." Isn't that just like the Lord? Think of all the times he has

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done that in your life. I hope he's done it in your life. If he hasn't, it's your fault, not his. When you have experienced his compassion and some blessed invitation to fellowship with him. Isn't that what we all want? Of course it is. For 3 ½ years he has cared for them. Not long before this, he washed their feet, serving them as an act of humility and now he's serving them breakfast. You see, folks, here Jesus proves that he is not only going to continue to provide for them and meet the needs of his own but he is also going to serve those who obey him.

Don't you wonder what that fish and that bread must have tasted like? I do. I don't know, I think of maybe silly things like that, but I think, my goodness, this fish, talk about fresh. I mean, it's freshly created by the Creator and it's baked on a fire that was ignited by the very one who is a consuming fire. Amazing. "Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.' Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three," You know how fishermen do, it's like, "Man, we've caught a bunch of them. Let's count them." That's what he did here. I don't think there's any big deal about the number. I've heard all kinds of fanciful things but they had 153 big fish and he says, "and although there were so many, the net was not torn."

Now, these were probably tilapia. That's what they typically caught there, many times called St. Peter's fish. I've had them before there in Israel, maybe you have too. It's a fish with a large dorsal fin that looks like a comb and they grow to be about 18 inches long and they weigh about 3.3 pounds. I did the math, 153 x 3.3 is 504.9 pounds and Peter dragged it up on the shore. I mean, I would imagine Peter was a very strong man but, folks, that requires superhuman strength. I believe we see another miracle here. Would it not be reasonable to assume that the same God that filled that net with fish could also empower his servant with strength to pull it up on shore? Don't you know the others are looking at him, "Wow, Peter, how did you do that?" He's going, "I don't know." And they're all standing there and then they look over at Jesus and Jesus is smiling. You see, folks, here we have just another demonstration of the Lord's commitment to empower those who obey him and those who serve him.

"Jesus said to them," I love this phrase, "Come and have breakfast." Isn't that wonderful? "Come and have breakfast." There is no rebuke. No condemnation. "Guys, I can't believe it. Here we are again. I told you to meet me, you know, in the mountain and what are you guys doing? Are you going back in the fishing business? Are you kidding me?" I mean, you don't have any of that. By the way, the Lord didn't need to say that, they were probably feeling that guilt.

"Come and have breakfast." What a precious invitation. We must understand that this is more than, "Guys, I know you're hungry. Let me give you something to eat." This is the

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Breakfast Blessing On the Shore

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 21:1-14
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Lord saying, "Come and fellowship with me. Come and experience my presence in my provision in your life as the lover of your soul. Never forget this." I'm sure they were astonished to look upon their risen Messiah, perhaps even afraid, maybe even embarrassed, ridden with guilt over their disobedience and their lack of faith and so the Lord has to initiate his love and as the gracious host in verse 13, "Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise." You see, in verse 12, we see that none of the disciples ventured to question him, "Who are you?" I mean, it's like they're speechless. You know, I don't know what was on their faces but I can imagine, certainly I think if it was me, I would just be so overwhelmed to be in the presence of the risen Christ, to have him make me breakfast, given what was going on in my heart. I'm sure I would have tears streaming down my cheeks and I would imagine that's what was going on with these guys. It's hard to say anything when you're crying, isn't it? Tears of joy, conviction, repentance, renewed commitment.

John says, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead." That is the third time recorded in John's Gospel. By the way as a footnote, later we know after the meal, Jesus will turn specifically to Peter, their leader. He is going to probe his heart, expose his lack of devotion, the wrong priorities in his life, the true nature of his love and then he's going to restore him and he's going to recommission him and ask Peter to shepherd his sheep. That's just like the Lord with all of us, isn't it?

Well, dear friend, what about you? Do you experience the Lord's power and provision and protection and presence in your life? I hope you do. If not, maybe you don't know Christ and I would invite you to place your faith in him today. If you name the name of Christ and these things are not a reality in your life and your life is a mess and you know it, it's time to listen to the Lord, to heed his will which includes so many things. It's his will that you be saved. It's his will that you be sanctified. It's his will that you be submissive. It's his will that you be Spirit filled. And it's his will that you suffer if necessary. Are those priorities in your life? If not, you've been distracted and you're going to be defeated. You will be fruitless and powerless and you will waste your life.

Oh, dear Christian, listen to the word of the Lord. Apply it to your heart and then maybe you just might need to cast your net on the other side of the boat and then he will empower you to pull in that abundant catch and even invite you to have breakfast with him on the shore.

Let's pray together.

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Father, these truths are so powerful. They speak to each and every one of us. I pray that by the power of your Spirit, we will make them such a part of our life as to change us forever so to that end we pray in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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