

BREAKFAST WITH THE SAVIOUR (Jn. 21:5-14)

On the Sea of Galilee, on this particular morning, there were seven out of the eleven remaining disciples fishing from their boats (cf. v.7 and v.8). (Is there any significance that Jesus chose *seven* fishermen?!) They were Simon Peter, James, John, Thomas, Nathanael and two other disciples, most probably Andrew and Philip ... fishermen fishing all night, but they had caught nothing. ... Time and effort wasted, with nothing to show for their efforts.

It was early morning, the sun had just arisen, and the Lord Jesus was standing on the shore (v.4) ... but they didn't know Him ... One of the boats was further out, but the other one was less than one hundred yards from the shore (v.8) ... within shouting distance. ... Maybe they didn't recognise the Saviour because of the early mist on the sea? It might have been because they were tired ... I don't think it was either of those though, it was just simply that Jesus held back His identity as He did previously with the two on their way to Emmaus (Lk. 24:16) and with Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:14).

Their conversation began in an interesting way. What kind of a person would shout out to *fishermen*, - hard-working fishermen, - "do you have any food?" ... Having been out *fishing* all night, - it was more than their reputation was worth for they *ought* to have had food, *fish!*

... And what kind of a person would be down at the shore of Galilee in the early hours of the morning asking complete strangers for food?! ... I can only think of one type, - a homeless beggar on the scrounge. Who else would be there, asking such a question?!

Even the way the question was phrased, *Children, have ye any meat?* What kind of a way is that to address grown-up men?! The Man on the shore was close enough to see they were not children ... Children would not have been out by themselves in a boat ... What's going on here?

There is no doubt at all the Stranger on the shore addressed them as children, or, as the word could also be translated "boys" or "lads". ... Jesus is the Master Who has come on to the scene and He is about to take over ... Now, had they given up? I'm not one hundred percent sure they had. It is true they did not seem to be actively seeking Him but, in their favour, Mary was told by the angel outside the sepulchre, *Mt. 28:7 go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see*

him: *lo, I have told you.* ... It could be argued they had returned to Galilee awaiting His appearance.

However, it is obvious they weren't expecting Him, as they might have been. Nonetheless, He went and found them. ... *We* might often forget, but He never does. ... They had a bad night ... in fact, they had a bad couple of weeks ... but Jesus had come to where they were ... even in the midst of their disappointments and failures. Just when they needed Him ... Jesus stood on the shore and called to them.

"Do you have any food?" Of course, they hadn't and He knew they hadn't. Indeed, the way He asked the question expected a negative response, "You haven't anything to eat, have you?" He knew their need. He knew they had toiled all night. He knew they had caught nothing ... He knew *but yet He asked*. He had to hear them admit their failure and their need. "No", they replied. Just one word, - that was all they said, and that was all they *could* say, - can't you hear their disappointment and embarrassment?

Are you here, and you have brought your disappointments with you? You are a Christian, but no matter what you put your hand to, it doesn't seem to come to anything ... it doesn't seem you are achieving all that much! To be honest, it seems as if Jesus is away off somewhere and you are on your own ... If you are feeling like *that* you are feeling like these men in the boats. ... *What is the point going through the motions, when I am not achieving anything!*

Jesus met them that morning and He gave them three simple but important pieces of instruction ...

WHERE TO CAST THE NET

6 And he said unto them, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.*

Yes, this Stranger of Galilee told them exactly where to cast the net, - such a simple thing as that, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.* In other words, you are casting your net on the *wrong* side of the ship! They had been fishing all night using the *wrong* instructions! ... They weren't catching any fish because they were casting their net in completely the opposite direction to where they should have been.

It wasn't as if there were no fish in the lake, - there was ... but they were casting their net in the wrong place. ... People say, "I've tried being a

Christian. I've read my Bible and I have tried to pray ... but I don't seem to be making much out of it ... *It's not working for me!* What am I doing wrong?"

It is good that you are taking your profession seriously and trying to live faithfully as a Christian ought to live. It is good that you are reading your Bible and it is good that you are trying to pray and it is good that you are concerned ... *remember this*, Jesus said that He would never leave you nor forsake you. ... And He hasn't, and He won't! ... Just as He said there were fish out in the lake, it is true too that Jesus was going nowhere for He was staying with His disciples.

These fishermen couldn't see the fish, - never mind, catch any, - but the fish were there. ... You could imagine the men in their despair, "Things haven't been going well for us recently: we don't know where Jesus is and what is going on; we're fishermen, but we can't even catch fish any longer." But the fish were still there ... and Jesus was on the shore. ...

And He saw them first, - long before they saw Him. He spoke to them first. He started the conversation with a simple question ... and He already knew the answer but He wanted to hear the fishermen answering for themselves. There was nothing complicated.

Do you remember one time Jesus was just outside Jericho on His way to Jerusalem. There was a blind beggar sitting by the side of the road, - everybody knew he was a beggar, and everybody knew he was blind. Nevertheless, Jesus went over to Him and asked him an obvious question, [Lk. 18:41](#) *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?* And the man answered, [Lord, that I may receive my sight](#). Jesus simply wanted to hear the men confess his need.

Where to cast the net ... they were throwing it in the wrong direction; they were throwing it in every direction but the right direction ... they were throwing it on the left-hand side instead of the right-hand side ... "What's the difference?!" you ask. The difference is they were fishing on their own, but when they threw the net and were obedient to the Lord's command they caught the fish they were out all night trying to catch!

It was not the first time Simon Peter had to be taught how to fish by Jesus. There was that other occasion back in Luke chapter five. He had been there before ... not being able to catch any fish! Don't you notice too that they

didn't say as they had said before (Lk. 5:5), *we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net*. There was no arguing, - they just did what they were told. They obeyed!

Maybe you can understand very easily what these men were doing. You can look back and see how Christ helped you out of that *previous* situation ... *Here is the good news*, - the Christ Who helped you before is the same Christ Who can help you again! ... As in the story here, if you are willing to be obedient, He will show you again '**where to cast the net**', so you are not wasting your time and effort!

Jesus worked a miracle, - not necessarily the miracle of creating all those fish ... He did that too ... - but the greater miracle that Jesus worked was the miracle of opening these men's eyes. ... *Without me ye can do nothing (Jn. 15:5)* is the lesson they were being reacquainted with. ... John was the first to realise it, *v.7 Peter, It is the Lord*. Simon Peter sees it next, *v.7 he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea*.

Now that doesn't mean Peter had no clothes on, it simply means that he had taken off his heavy outer garment to do the hard work of the fisherman he was out there to do! Peter and John were good friends, - they were the first two disciples at the empty tomb (20:2-8) ... and here they are the first of the disciples to recognise Jesus standing on the shore.

As the net with the fish was being recovered on to the stony beach, the fishermen saw another welcome sight, *v.9 they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread*. ... A fish and some bread, - it was enough to get them started, after having been out on the sea all night. ... Jesus supplied the start of their breakfast.

And the story continues ... He had told them **where to cast the net**, and now He is telling them ...

WHERE TO BRING THE FISH

We have a phrase, "teaching your granny to suck eggs" (I'm not too sure what it means, - I've never seen any of my grannies sucking eggs! ☺), but it implies that what you are trying to teach someone they have been doing it far longer than you have). ... Now, here is Jesus, - a *carpenter*, - instructing *fishermen* on what to do with their fish ... *v.10 Bring of the fish which ye have now caught*.

Jesus isn't opening up a discussion here about all the fish they have caught in the past, (not a 'rambling session') no, He was concentrating on *their present experience*, *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught*. ... Jesus had said previously, *15:10 I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. This was how He was about to bless these disciples at the Sea of Galilee.

One hundred and fifty-three fish, - an exact number. I remember hearing Pastor Willie Mullan speaking in the Bible Class about this number. He often visited Israel and on one occasion he was speaking to a fisherman and he was told by the fisherman that there are exactly 153 different species of fish in the Sea of Galilee. I don't know how accurate that is, but Jerome (the Christian apologist and translator of the Vulgate, 342-419) worked on a similar supposition.

Whatever it means there is the beautiful truth that the full number of the fish caught was known when the net was on the shore. In the same way, the full number of God's Redeemed will all be accounted for when all are gathered on the shore of Heaven.

At the command of Jesus they brought the fish up on to the beach ... they dragged the net out of the sea, they dragged it over the pebbles and on to the sand. ... Jesus told them **where to cast the net**, and He told them **where to bring the fish**. But the greatest miracle of grace on that Galilean shore that morning was the invitation ...

WHERE TO MEET THE LORD *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine, v.12.*

The purpose the Lord came to the shore was to meet with His disciples ... those fishermen. It was no accident He was there and they were there. They hadn't thought about it, but He had planned this meeting in advance!

He already had a fire burning with a fish and a loaf (cf. *indefinite* article in v.9) ... One fish and one loaf prepared for these seven hungry men, - it would not have been enough, but that is what He had waiting for them. ... *Now*, though, He was telling them to bring in their catch ¹¹ *of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three ... and feast!*

It was like when the five loaves and the two fish were brought to Him on the hills of Galilee (Mt. 14:13-21), and He fed more than five thousand people ... and like when the seven loaves and the fish were used to feed more than four

thousand people (Mt. 15:32-38). ... This morning, - on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, already on the fire there was a fish and a loaf ... but when the men had brought in the catch Jesus had blessed them, the one fish and the one loaf had been replaced with the [great fishes \(v.11\)](#) ... Little becomes much when God is in it! ... Because of Jesus in their midst, they had more to eat than they had anticipated.

[Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine, v.12](#) ... They knew Who they were dining with, - they did not have to ask! Do you know the last time they all ate together? ... It seemed like a lifetime ago ... The last time they ate together was in the Upper Room before the betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. That was a dark night. ... The last time Peter sat at a fire was in the open air of the high priest's garden, ... not too far away from Jesus ... when he refused to acknowledge he knew Jesus ... and he denied Him three times. Here he was united with the Saviour again.

When you came on to the shore, - as it were, - Jesus had a fish and a loaf and a fire waiting for you ... enough to get you started, but you discover when you remain in His company you are not only blessed with a 'fire' that keeps burning, but He also satisfies your spiritual hunger too.

Being a Christian, - a child of God ... fulfilled, and happy, and content, - can only be your privilege when you keep in His company. Stray from His side, and your fellowship with Him will suffer. ... Wander off, and you will lose the peace that comes with knowing the Saviour. If you leave Him behind and think you can make it on your own, you will be sorely disappointed. ... And that is how these disciples were before Jesus met them again on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

You and I would not have what we presently enjoy had it not been for the Saviour! "All to Him I owe" ... He is the reason we have what we have. ... It doesn't expressly say it, but it is what He did on other occasions, so it's safe to suggest He did it on this occasion also ... Jesus took the bread and the fish and He gave them to the disciples, - He blessed the food as He had previously done when He fed the multitudes.

If it had been left to those weary fishermen-disciples they would not have had any breakfast that morning but, you see, [Phil. 4:19 my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.](#) ... *What have I to dread, what*

have I to fear, Leaning on the everlasting arms. ... They all ate together in the presence of Jesus, Who He supplied their need.

Conclusion

Are you feeling like these fishermen? Life is hard on you at the moment. Nothing seems to be working out for you? ... Your plans and dreams are a muddle. You are not sure what's happening ... Read these verses again: see how Jesus told them **where to cast their net**, - not where they *were* doing it, but where He told them to do it ... and they *had* to do it. Trust the Saviour to give you the right directions, and ask Him to give you the faith to follow them.

He told them **where to bring the fish**, - He gave them His instructions ... they had to be obedient to what He said. It is the same for us. He tells us in His Word, **Prov. 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.** ⁶ **In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.** ... Keep His Word *close* to your heart and *in* your heart! ... Someone has rightly said, "The devil will keep you from this Book, but this Book will keep you from the devil". Read and live by it. It is how a Christian succeeds.

Where to meet the Lord. He gives you the invitation, **Come and dine.** It is a personal invitation. He came from Jerusalem to Galilee to meet these disciples. He walked along those roads with the feet which were pierced on the cross of Calvary. He made the fire with those hands which were outstretched on the tree ... He came from Heaven, from Glory, ... and He is here today for He said that where we are met together in His Name, He'll be there (Mt. 18:20). ... You know Him as Saviour, so come and receive what He has for you. You know that when you trust Him, He will never let you down, - He will never disappoint you.

You are greatly blessed because the Lord loves you. When you feel you are out on a sea, bobbing about ... "catching nothing", and there is no apparent purpose to what you are doing ... remember this invitation God offers *you*, **Come and dine.** ...

We may trust Him fully, All for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly, Find Him wholly true. ...
Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blessed,
Finding as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.

Amen.