

JESUS STANDING ON THE SHORE (Jn. 21:4)

Do you ever feel you are almost ‘at the end of your tether’? ... Life, it seems, could not hurl any more problems and hurts at you? ... The disciples also had their problems ... Jesus was gone, their dreams had collapsed ... and they were back to the fishing. Their hearts weren’t in it though. Previously, fishing was their life, but that all changed when they met Jesus, **Jn. 21:1** *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. ... You get the impression they were ‘scunnered’!*

Come on to the shore though ... leave the fishermen out at sea and come on to the shore. Here are three simple thoughts by way of encouragement ...

THE SAVIOUR WAS WATCHING It was early morning, the dawn had broken, and the sun was just lifting over the Galilean hills. The birds were singing in the trees and the water was lapping on the stony beach. Absolute tranquillity! The Sea of Galilee is so beautiful, so picturesque.

There is not much sound out on the waters either, - there was no fish being hauled in! Yes, a couple of boats are out there, but there is not a lot of shouting or noise from any of them. The fishermen on board are tired and deflated. You could see there was nothing in the nets hanging over the sides of their boats. They had been fishing all night and they had caught absolutely nothing. It had been a waste of a night ... They were going home as empty-handed as they came ... but that is not the whole story!

The background to the story relates to three-and-a-half years earlier when they were out in those same boats and fishing was their career ... From the tender ages of boyhood they had been taught by their fathers to fish, but three-and-a-half years earlier, their lives had taken an unexpected turn when Jesus met them, **Mt. 4:19** *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. ²⁰ And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

And they *did* leave their nets and they followed Jesus up and down the country ... all over the place, ... meeting and speaking with people they would not have met otherwise. ... Jesus changed their lives ... but then He began to speak about how He would be betrayed, and how the authorities would take

His life. The disciples could not understand that kind of talk! ... And then Jesus *was* taken from them, ... He died and was buried ... and they didn't know what to do. Some of them went back home towards Emmaus, some of them stayed in Jerusalem for a while, and some of them returned to Galilee. ... The truth is ... they weren't happy anywhere ... they couldn't settle.

Early this particular morning though ... Look along the beach ... along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and you will see **the Saviour was watching**. ... Look, and you will see Jesus staring out at what Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, Philip and Andrew were doing. ... He loved those disciples. He called them into His work. He had invested His time and energy in them. They were precious to Him ... and He was **watching** them.

From where they were, they did not see Him, - they probably were not looking for Him. There could have been an early morning mist and they wouldn't have seen Him ... they did not know He was there, but **the Saviour was watching**.

The Lord Jesus will never leave you. Yes, it can get awful dark ... but He is the Light of the world. Yes, your worries can almost squeeze the life out of you ... but Jesus promises, **Mt. 11:28 all ye that labour and are heavy laden ... come unto me, and I will give you rest**. ... Don't let your trust in Him fade. Instead, keep it fixed no matter how difficult because here, the Bible is teaching us, ... behind the mist, on the shore, **the Saviour is watching**.

THE SAVIOUR WAS WAITING I am not saying it was easy for the fishermen. It was far from easy. It was anything but easy! It was probably the worst and longest night of their lives. Their Master had died. Their hearts were no longer in their fishing. They couldn't catch a single fish ... How much worse could their dilemma be?! ... Those disciples had been awake all night, and we know our problems and worries seem to be more intimidating and frightening as we struggle with them in the dark. It was as if the night was never going to end!

Just imagine you are out with them now in their fishing boat ... Take a glance over towards the shore ... It might be hazy, but take a *good* look ... Look hard, *really* hard ... *Jesus is there!* You see Jesus! ... Maybe you have to focus more, but He is there, keep looking and, *you can make Him out!* ... And very shortly, the darkness of the night and the mist of the morning will begin to clear, and you will see Jesus ... He is *watching* for you. He is *waiting* for you.

You see, **the Saviour was waiting** for them. No surprise though, for He had already told them He would be **waiting**, **Mk. 14:28** *But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.* ... He had given them a promise, and He would surely keep it! He has already been **waiting**, even when they had been out on the sea. ... Look at these disciples again and consider how blessed they were, - **the Saviour was watching** and **the Saviour was waiting**.

THE SAVIOUR WAS WORKING He called out to them a question which was bound 'to cut them to the quick'! **Jn. 21:5** *Children, have ye any meat?* ... If ever a question would 'rub salt into the wounds', *that* question would! ... Experienced fishermen fishing all night and nothing to show for it! ... And then Jesus told them, **6** *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.* You see, there *is* a 'right' side and a 'wrong' side ... and when it comes to following the Lord you must make sure you follow Him in the 'right' way ... not 'your' way, but *His* way, which is the 'right' way.

There is no good in saying you are a Christian if there's not much evidence ... after all, what kind of a fisherman doesn't catch fish?! The days of these men being fishermen were over ... and that was because the Lord had called them to be doing something else.

Reading on, though, we must commend them here for they were obedient and they threw the net over the right-hand side of the boat and they netted a multitude of fishes (v.6). ... There was fish there all the time ... but it was only when Jesus took control the fish made their way into the net ... and Jesus had all the fish counted ... 153 (v.11)! ... And what a realisation when John told Peter Who He saw and Who was behind it, **7** *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord* ... The Saviour had been **watching**, He had been **waiting** ... and now on the shore **the Saviour was working**, **9** *As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.* The Lord Jesus had gathered the sticks and the coals, and He had already been fishing. He had also prepared the bread ... He had thought of everything.

The Saviour had neither been sleeping, nor had He forgotten them. ... In the background, - when the fishermen thought their company with Jesus had ended, - Jesus was away ahead of them because He had already been making preparation for meeting their needs.

Yes, **the Saviour was working** ... quietly, softly, patiently ... even when He would have been tired too. ... And there is something else as well ... Jesus often spent His nights in prayer (cf. Lk. 6:12), and you can be very sure He had already been speaking to His Father about His disciples, ... and their disappointments out in the boats. ... And on the shore, **He was watching, He was waiting** and **He was working**.

At the beginning of our study I asked if there are times when you feel you are almost ‘at the end of your tether’? ... Jesus had been **watching, waiting, and working** ... but look at those words in ¹² **Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.** ... “Come and dine, the Master calleth, Come and dine” ... *What a welcome!*

The meal had been prepared by the greatest chef ever. The fish had been caught, the bread had been baked, the fire was burning ... **Come and dine** ... Ps. ^{34:8} **taste and see that the LORD is good.** ... Faith in Christ is not an ornament. It is not something you ‘wear’ one day of the week and hang it up in the ‘wardrobe’ for the other six days. Faith in Christ is a living reality relevant to every aspect of our lives. ... There is nothing concerning you that does not concern the Lord Jesus. There is nothing He does not know about you. The heartache/pain/sadness you are experiencing He knows all about. ... He is not only **watching** and **waiting** ... but He is also **working**.

But there is something *you* need to do ... otherwise this is just theory. Here is what you need to do. By faith as a child of God, look along the shore, and don’t stop looking until you see Jesus. *He is there* ... No matter how ‘misty’ it is ... keep on looking for Him because you *will* see Him ... **watching** and **waiting**, and you will also see Him **working** ...

I am not saying your problems will go away and immediately disappear, - they may, or very possibly they may not. I’m not suggesting this is some type of magic wand ... because the plain truth is that as long as we are in this world we are susceptible to the sorrows of this world ... but what I am saying is that when you obey the Lord’s invitation to **Come and dine** it means you have His company around the fires of affliction. ... And sometimes the fires may become awful hot, and you might be tired and worn out as those disciples were, you might be unsure about many things ... but when you **Come and dine** with the Master, you are in the company of the One Who has been **watching, waiting, and working** for you.

And just a brief word for the unbeliever ... You have your problems too and often you don't know where to turn. You have probably prayed in the hard times ... However, first of all, there is another prayer you need to pray from the very depths of your heart. Jesus invites you to stop eating from the world's table ... to stop nibbling at all those tit-bits and crumbs and start eating from the provisions the Saviour provides.

Jesus said to the religious men of His day, **Jn. 6:27** Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. ... Invite Jesus into your life and He will take over in every area and become your Master. ... Be sure not to miss out! None of us here today has any reason to miss out. ... Be sure to avail yourself of this most wonderful of invitations from the Lord Who is **watching, waiting and working** ... He invites you, **Come and dine**.