

Talks – The Beach – myfishbites.com

Intro

This talk is based on John 21 where Jesus appears to the disciples in his resurrected body. We can learn so much from this. I am also grateful to the contributions made by some of the 20-30s group from my previous church.

Read the whole of Chapter 21 before starting this talk. As we already know, there is an authority to God's Word. Try to improve and grow in your own reading and diction skills. The Bible read dry won't carry the same weight that it does when someone with character reads it engagingly. I know that may sound patronising but we all need to improve, grow and make everything that we do as good as we can!

Back Fishing

Jesus had gone, or so the disciples thought. Some of them were together by the lake. Peter said he was going to go fishing and the others joined him. I've heard some criticism of the disciples here, going back to what they used to do. But I don't blame them. It held security, they may have been hungry, they were uncertain and confused.

There will be times where we feel the same and it's OK to have security. For you and I this may be being at home with our family, or doing something familiar. When grief and uncertainty come, it's good to have comfort.

Jesus Watching

In verse 4, we see that early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, watching the disciples. What an incredible image. Jesus came down to watch the disciples, caring about them, standing on the shore no doubt enthusiastic to see them again and hang out with them, pass on more knowledge.

What a great privilege to know that Jesus is watching you and I, watching his people, lovingly – longing for us to look to him and spend time in his presence. I see Jesus here like a new parent, lovingly watching over the new born baby.

How do we know Jesus was watching and caring? Well, he called out to them 'friends, haven't you found any fish?' How amazing that Jesus knows our circumstances and even the things that are a problem for us. Jesus is so wise, so perceptive. He knows best, so we need to come to him in all things.

But more than that, Jesus has an answer for all our problems. For the disciples, the answer was to throw the net onto the right side of the boat. This was more than just a knowledge of fishing and fish swimming patterns! This was Jesus caring enough to give the disciples help in what they were already doing. Jesus knew that it would benefit them, solve their fish-related problem, encourage them, bless them – and him.

When Jesus said stick the net on the other side of the boat, what was the result? So many fish that the disciples were unable to haul the net in.

It is the Lord

There is a very interesting thing that happens next. The Bible says in verse 7 that the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord". Let's bear in mind that the disciple who Jesus loved (John) also loved Jesus. He recognised Jesus first. It's likely that John may well have remembered the last time Jesus said throw the net on the other side of the boat (Luke 5.1-11) and recognised Jesus because of this. But when we love Jesus, have a close relationship with him, we will see him first, recognise him, be looking out for him. My challenge to you and me is: do we see Jesus? Do we love him, look to him like this? If we don't, we may miss him and miss God's blessings to us and others. Imagine if John hadn't recognised Jesus..

Passion for Jesus

No sooner had John said the word, 'Lord' then Peter was off again, over the side of the boat, man overboard, off swimming. If John recognised Jesus, passionate Peter was off at a rate of knots to meet his Lord. He was desperate to see Jesus, so much so that he threw himself off a boat into the early morning waters, swimming and running to shore..

What a picture of someone desperate to see Jesus. Do we show this kind of desperation, desire, passion for Jesus? Unfortunately we very often don't. Peter sacrificed the fish, jumped into a lake, got wet, didn't care about anything other than getting to Jesus. What a lesson for us and what a story. Yes, part of Peter's enthusiasm was motivated by a desire to make things right after his denial of Jesus. But how much would you sacrifice to get to Jesus? And if you have sinned, how we know that Jesus is waiting for us to say sorry and run back into his arms of love. Peter was a history maker. Are you going to be?

Faithful Disciples

While Pete had gone for his sponsored swimathon, the other disciples were left to bring the boat in, hauling a ridiculous amount of fish with them. You know, some Christians are like Peter - ready to dive into the water to meet Jesus. They may come to a town and see loads of people saved. But we can still be as passionate about Jesus but express it more cautiously and consistently, like the other disciples. It is worship to bring the boat in with the fish in, it is worship to serve quietly behind the scenes. Jesus made you as you are and sees everything that you do for him, and remembers it. If it weren't for the disciples faithfully bringing in the fish, they wouldn't have all had such a good meal! And if it weren't for the faithful disciples of Jesus today, steadily working in towns and cities, the big evangelists wouldn't be able to come in and see people saved and then discipled. So we all have our part to play. The question is whether we're willing to play it.

Peter, too, was ready to serve. Once the boat had come in from the lake, Jesus said, 'bring some of the fish you've just caught.' Interesting how Jesus gave the complete credit for the catch to the disciples, even though it was his direction that enabled the catch. How refreshing, especially in our world where people fight and push others aside to claim credit for everything. Jesus was humble and so should we be. Remember that Jesus brings the harvest, we are the ones who he uses. So it's encouraging to know that Jesus wants to show you, invest in you, lift you up and bless you (and not just with fish).

I have often worked with bands on their songs, and stood back as they received the accolades. I will also always give credit to people who write sessions and anything else for this website (or anything else). Jesus says honour others above yourself. It's hard but we must do this.

Back to John 21, typically, it was Peter who then climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. You see, you may be a bigwig, a leader, a big cheese.. But you must serve too. I have seen too many leaders without servant hearts, not getting their hands dirty. But I have seen some amazing men and women of God, serving, getting their hands dirty, mucking in. As I say to all the young people I work with, 'this (serving) is the place of leadership, the first step to leadership.' And I say it to you too. Don't leave early or walk away without helping. Serve. When we use a church building, my desire is to leave it in a much cleaner and tidier state than when we arrived. Why? Because it's honouring and it's worship.

My burden is easy

When Peter dragged the net in, the net wasn't torn (verse 11). Incredible how there was a record breaking catch of fish and yet the net remained intact, unbroken. Where Jesus calls, he also provides. When Jesus speaks, he will not allow you to deal with more than you can cope with, and will always provide the resources, whether we recognise that or not. Significantly, we find that there were 153 fish in the net. Why does the Bible tell us this? Partly to show that Jesus brings a catch of fish way beyond what we can imagine or believe. Partly because it shows that Jesus calls and provides. But I also think to show that God knows everything. The Bible says that God knows all the hairs on our heads. Likewise, God knows how many fish are in the sea, he knows all things. God cares enough about his people, his world, that we even have the fishes numbered, and endless pages of family history in the Old Testament. God cares. He really does.

Come and have breakfast

Can you imagine having breakfast with Jesus? I have many memories of various weekends away, when we have done bonfires and stood around with marshmallows. As the flames flicker and crackle, as we munch and chat away, it forms a unique kind of atmosphere and bond. This must be something like it was for the disciples as they sat with Jesus. Of course, for them, it would have been far more awe-inspiring. I mean, Jesus was dead, and here he was back again, as he'd promised. And yet this risen Son of God, was chatting, chilling with his mates on the beach, eating roast fish. How humbling to know that Jesus loved his disciples that much, and that he loves you that much too.

Jesus served the disciples bread and fish. Maybe this brought back memories of the feeding of the 5000. If he'd fed over 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes, with a net of 153 fish lying on the beach, all the disciples now believed that Jesus was who he said he was and that he could do anything.

There was a real sense of awe, something we have perhaps lost with all our worship songs about how lovely and fluffy our best friend Jesus is. Jesus is our friend. But he is also God. He is all-powerful and one day will return to judge the living and the dead, rewarding his people. He is mighty, awesome, uncontainable, un-definable, mighty, holy and the Son of God. As the disciples sat there, the Bible says, 'none of the disciples dared ask him who he was'. They knew. Never forget who God is. He will never forget you.

Pray

To end. Ask God to speak to you and wait to hear from him.