

March 4th, 2018  
 PROVING PETER  
 John 21:1-14

### What's left to say?

This final chapter of John's gospel has been under suspicion by some who think it was added by a different author at a later date.<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for this is that chapter twenty ends with theological fireworks. Jesus rose from the dead, and appeared to Mary, and then to the disciples twice. He pronounced a three-fold peace over them (v.19, 21, 26); He gave them the great commission commissioned (v.21); He gave them Holy Spirit (v.22); and the keys to the kingdom (v.23). Everything he said and did over His three years of ministry was vindicated by His resurrection, and He equipped the apostles to carry on the work. And then we see John making *the* summary statement of his gospel in v.30-31. We spent three weeks on those verses because they are so important. What's left to say? Isn't chapter twenty-one anticlimactic? What does John 21 contribute?

### "The Shire was saved, but not for me."

That's kind of like asking: *why* do we need the end of Tolkien's *The Return of the King*? After the ring was destroyed, Frodo and Sam were saved, the fellowship was reunited and Aragorn was made King. What's left to say? But what did Tolkien do? He walks us back to the Shire. The battle was over. The Shire was saved. But *not* for Frodo. He was so fundamentally changed that he couldn't pick up the threads of his old life. He was granted passage with the elves over the sea. And it's one of the most emotional scenes in the entire trilogy. That's what John 21 contributes to this gospel. It's John's epilogue. Yes the battle is over. The resurrection of Christ was the death blow to Satan, hell and death itself. But how do the disciples live *now* in the wake of the resurrection?

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<sup>1</sup> D.A. Carson deals carefully with these suspicions. D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 665-668

Like the ending to *Return of the King*, these are some of the most emotionally charged verses in this entire book.

### Proving Peter

Jesus fixes His entire focus on Peter. Peter has always been the strong one. The one out in front. Self-sufficient. Confident. Zealous. It was Peter who said boldly told Jesus in **Matthew 26:33** “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” It was Peter who tried to protect Jesus in the garden with his sword (**John 18:10**). He always sought to prove himself. He was always the first one to volunteer, always the first to speak up, always the first to take action. Peter was perfect leadership material.

And *then* he blew it. He denied Christ. Three times. When Jesus was in His greatest distress, it was His greatest leader that abandoned Him and called curses down on his name. Peter’s abject failure was only surpassed by Judas himself, and that only because Judas sealed his betrayal with suicide. Essentially their sin was *no* different.

So here we are post-resurrection. Jesus received Peter back into the fold. But can *Peter* go back? How will his record ever be restored to what it was? Now he’ll forever be known as the disciple who denied Jesus. How can he pick up those broken pieces? How will he prove himself?

Dear congregation, how will you handle your abject failures? They’re coming. **Proverbs 24:16** says “the righteous falls seven times.” Seven times. In Scripture, seven is number of completion, perfection, fulfillment patterned after God’s creation of the world. Meaning *true* Christians, not just false professors, but *true* Christians like *you* will blow it, will fail miserably, will sin in ways you know better, dishonor Christ perfectly, completely, and comprehensively in your life. You are just like Peter. How will you pick yourself up? How will you prove yourself *again*? You won’t. Beloved, you were not saved *so that now* you can prove yourself to Jesus. That’s the climax of our passage today. Peter proving, proving, proving *vs* Jesus inviting, inviting, inviting. Jesus is not asking Peter to perform some task to get back into His good graces, He simply

invites him ‘Come, have breakfast with Me.’ And He’s inviting you to that same reality ‘lay down your empty nets of self-sufficiency, I have provided everything you need. Come eat with Me. Come enjoy My fellowship. You don’t have to prove yourself. You can’t. This meal is for disproven, disenfranchised, disillusioned sinners. That’s why I’m inviting you.’

### *The Big Idea...*

The gospel is not for those who have proven themselves, but for those who have been disproven

- ☆ The Barren Nets of Self-Sufficiency
- ☆ The Bursting Nets of the All-Sufficient Savior

## I. The Barren Nets of Self-Sufficiency

### A further revelation of Jesus

Let’s look at our passage. What we are going to see here is John is going to encapsulate this event between two markers in the text itself.<sup>2</sup> v.1 “After this Jesus *revealed* himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he *revealed* himself in this way.” The second marker is v.14 “This was now the third time that Jesus was *revealed* to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.” There is something very significant happening between these two markers that John wants us to see. Jesus is *revealing* Himself. Three times John uses that word. The Greek word can simply mean *appeared*—v.1 “After this

<sup>2</sup> John is using a literary inclusio. D.A. Carson mentions this in his commentary (*ibid*, pg. 675). “In biblical studies, inclusio is a **literary device** based on a concentric principle, also known as bracketing or an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section.” Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusio> accessed March 3, 2018

Jesus *appeared*” —that’s how the NIV reads. But John uses this word differently in different contexts. In **John 17:6**, Jesus prays to the Father “I have manifested (or *revealed*—same Greek Word) your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.” Jesus is saying that through His words and His actions He has given a window into the invisible world. That’s what’s happening in John 21. It’s not just that Jesus appeared physically. He did. But He’s doing more. He is showing us invisible realities through these events.<sup>3</sup> Think of this event as another sign.<sup>4</sup> These physical events are pointing to deep gospel truths.

### The place and the players

Now **v.1** tells us that this revelation took place at the Sea of Tiberius also known as the Sea of Galilee about 70 miles north of Jerusalem. This is near where Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000 in John 6. This is at least a week after Jesus’ last appearance to Thomas and the others in **John 20:26-29**. They returned to Galilee after the feast of unleavened bread.<sup>5</sup> There is seven of them present, **v.2** says “Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.” They were all there because Jesus had told them to come. In **Matthew 28:10**, Jesus told the women whom He appeared to “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers *to go to Galilee*, and there they will see me.”

### “I am going fishing”

But something is amiss. Look at **v.3** Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” Now commentators are

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<sup>3</sup> “The verb is stronger than the more common ὀπράνομαι (‘he appeared’), used more commonly in the New Testament (e.g. Look 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5-8).” D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 675

<sup>4</sup> “[John] had said that there were many other signs which Jesus did for the proof of his resurrection. And in this chapter he mentions one of these many.” Matthew Henry, *Unabridged Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (OSNOVA’S Kindle Edition), location 253475

<sup>5</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 668

split on what is going on here. Was Peter suggesting a recreational fishing trip? Or was it an attempt to earn some needed living expenses? Or was this a defeated discouraged Peter returning to his former occupation for good? I think it's this last option. There's four why I think why. **First**, when Jesus told them to go to Galilee, He didn't tell them to go to the lake to go fishing, **Matthew 28:16** says He told them to go to the *mountain*. **Second**, before He was crucified Jesus told them "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his *own home*," MacArthur points out "The word "home" was added by the translators; the Greek text reads simply, "his own," which encompasses one's home, property, possession, and affairs."<sup>6</sup> **1 Thessalonians 4:11** has the same Greek, and it is translated "your own affairs." Jesus predicted they would return to own affairs. And before Jesus called him, Peter earned his living by fishing. (**Matthew 4:18-22**). **Thirdly**, Jesus had already told the disciples in a similar incident in **Luke 5:1-11** that they would no longer be fishermen, but rather fishers of men. **Fourthly**, these actions seem out of step with men who have been given a Spirit-empowered mission. Not that fishing is wrong, recreationally or vocationally. Both are good and God-glorifying. But as D.A. Carson points out "It is impossible to imagine any of this taking place in Acts, *after Pentecost*...There is neither the joy nor the assurance, not to mention the sense of mission...that characterize the church when freshly endowed with the promised Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

When Peter says "I am going fishing" it's like saying "I'm going back to cabinet making, or policeman-ing, or corporate banking." The question is: *why?*

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<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 390 MacArthur adds two more reasons. "Second the use of the definite article with the noun translated *boat* suggests a specific boat, probably one belonging to one of the disciples (or even Peter himself). Finally, the Lord's challenge to Peter in verse 15, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" is best interpreted when "these" is seen as a reference to the boats, nets and other paraphernalia associated with his fishing business. The Lord was calling Peter to turn his back on his former livelihood and be totally committed to serving Him."

<sup>7</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 669-70 Granted that Carson's own position is stated thus "The truth is probably between the two [i.e. despair and/or abandonment of the call vs innocently employing their time], but a good deal closer to the later."

Why would Peter do this? Because in his eyes he crossed the line. Sure, Jesus could still love him, as a kind of jr. Christian, but now the big plans, his service in the kingdom, all of that dissolved when the rooster crowed. He's depressed and defeated, and so he decides to go back to life the way it was before he met Jesus. Have you not felt this before? Maybe you're there now. "God I'm useless to you. My failures are too great. My defection too deep. I'm not even going to try any more, I'll save you the embarrassment."

### **What was Peter's main problem?**

What was Peter's main problem? It wasn't his depression. That was the natural fruit of his main problem. His *main problem* is that he thought he had something to offer Jesus. He built his identity on the foundation of being sufficient for the task. He is the consummate self-made man—always capable for the challenge—always finishing first. He is the portrait of the self-sufficient man. And it's here that we have an indictment against our culture here in Boise, Idaho. I asked a dear Christian brother who had moved here from another state what he thought as an outsider to this particular city was our particular sin, our particular struggle, our particular blindspot. He came back to me about a week later, and answered self-sufficiency. Boise is full of people who are self-sufficient. And consequently that culture creates churches full of good people who minister to other good people. That is a recipe for disaster.

Dear congregation, fill in the blank: my biggest enemy in believing the gospel is     (what)    ? Your biggest enemy in believing the gospel *is* your own God-given strengths, your own abilities, your intellect, your resources, your independence. You do not need Jesus to overcome your weaknesses *mainly*. You *mainly* need Jesus to overcome your strengths. Jesus said "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a *rich person* to enter the kingdom of God" (**Matthew 19:24**). Is Jesus *only* speaking about money? No. You can be *rich* in strength or intellect, or emotions. You can be *rich* in assets or friends or opportunities. You can be *rich* in morality, or virtue or mercy. And these riches make it hard to lay hold of Jesus. Why? Is it because Jesus doesn't

love people who have these things? No. It's because your sinful heart takes your gifts and your strengths and your virtues and concludes that you are not as desperate and dependent as other people. You're a cut above the rest. You're not like that person. That was Peter's main problem—he relied on Peter. "It is easier to escape from unrighteousness than from self-righteousness."<sup>8</sup>

### **Failure at fishing**

What happens next is what you would expect to see if you have been acquainted with the grace of God. The end of v.3 says "They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing." I find this so humorous. Peter reasoned 'at least I'm good at one thing—fishing.'<sup>9</sup> What happens? They catch nothing. Peter can't even get fishing right.

J.D. Greear says here "Peter went back to his old life, but it wasn't the same anymore. He fished all night and caught nothing...This is the worst place to be: you've seen too much to ever be happy again in your old life; but you are too discouraged to keep going forward with God."<sup>10</sup>

So there the disciples are. Sitting in the boat on the Sea of Tiberias. Failures at following Jesus. And failures at fishing. The empty nets are the perfect sign of what they have to offer Jesus. What happens next?

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://summitrdu.com/message/the-failure-john-211-25/> accessed March 3, 2018

<sup>9</sup> "Certainly feeling inadequate to carry on any spiritual ministry on behalf of the kingdom of God, they were sure fishing was something they could do successfully." John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 391

<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://summitrdu.com/message/the-failure-john-211-25/> accessed March 3, 2018

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Dear congregation, if you've been born again by the Spirit of the Living God you can't go back to your old patterns of life. Like Frodo, the Shire was not saved for you, you have been given passage to far greater lands.

## II. The Bursting Nets of the All-Sufficient Savior

### Jesus appears!

Let's look at v.4 "Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus." The symbolism should not be lost on us here. The disciples fished all night in the darkness and caught nothing. And then Jesus shows up just as the sun rises and light floods the lake.<sup>11</sup> This is so often when Jesus shows up, when you find yourself most at a loss.

### "Children, do you have any fish?"

v.5 Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." Now I can't help but chuckle at what's going on here. One author said "this has to be the worst set of things you could ever say to a fisherman."<sup>12</sup> The disciples don't know this is Jesus,<sup>13</sup> but He calls them "children." The Greek word means little boy or little child. These were not "little boys", they were men, who carried swords and braved the stormy seas. Imagine showing up at a bank robbery and saying to the S.W.A.T. team, "hey little boys, did you catch the bad guys yet?" **Secondly** He asks them if they caught anything. Now why does Jesus ask this question? It's not because He doesn't know the answer. He wants them to come to grips with the answer. They had lied to themselves when they got into the boat. "At least we can do this." They hadn't yet learned what Jesus said "apart from me you can do nothing" (**John 15:5**). Dear congregation are you lying to yourself? Are you still rowing that boat of self-reliance in the darkness? "No I got this Jesus. I got this relationship thing under control. I got this health issue under control. I got this employment thing. I got this money thing. I'll come to You for religious questions, but the Sea of Galilee

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<sup>11</sup>"Christ's time of making himself known to his people is when they are most at a loss. When they think they have lost themselves, he will let them know that they have not lost him." Matthew Henry, Unabridged Commentary on the Whole Bible, (OSNOVA'S Kindle Edition), location 253545

<sup>12</sup> Source: <https://summitrdu.com/message/the-failure-john-211-25/> accessed March 3, 2018

<sup>13</sup> Jesus, like on the road to Emmaus, is not yet allowing them to see His true identity.

is my territory. I don't need you here." Well how is that working for you? Jesus wants you to admit what He already knows—you've done this on your own long enough, and you have gained nothing. **Thirdly**, Jesus gives them advice on how to fish. v.6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." Back to the S.W.A.T. team at the bank robbery. The bank robbers like these Galilean fish got away. You proceed to tell these professionally trained special weapons and tactics team "hey maybe you should have used guns." "Right, guns, now why didn't we think of that?" I'm not sure what was going through the disciple's heads at this point because they didn't know it was Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

### The two miracles

But they do put the net down on the other side and v.6 says "they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish." Two instantaneous miracles. The **first** is the catch of fish itself. Just as Jesus was directing the fish away from their boat all night, now He directs the fish right into their net. The **second** miracle is that the net didn't break. This catch was so massive that the disciples were not even able to bring it into the boat, they had to drag it along in order to get it to shore. The final count was 153 fish. And this has caused much speculation as to what this 153 number symbolized.<sup>15</sup> The church father Jerome said that 153 symbolized all the known species of fish in the ocean at his time pointing to the fact that the net of the gospel would catch men from every tribe and tongue and nation. The problem is that even at Jerome's time 153 was not the number of know species, it was 157. Other fanciful interpretations such as that 153 is the triangular number of 17—meaning  $1+2+3+4+5 \dots +17$  equals 153. Augustine took this and pointed out that  $17=10+7$ . 10 being representative of

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<sup>14</sup> "What is at first more difficult is why these fisherman should pay any attention. If they had already recognized the Master, their obedience would make sense, but not v.7, where recognition comes only after the catch; if they had not recognized him, why listen to the voice of someone calling in early dawn gloom from the shore of the lake." D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 670

<sup>15</sup> cf. Carson for a fuller description of these speculations (*ibid*, pg.672-673).

the 10 commandments and 7 of the sevenfold spirit of God (**Rev. 1:4**). Another proposal sets forth that  $5+12=17$ . 5 being the number of loaves of bread in the feeding of the five thousand, and 12 being the leftover baskets. So what does 153 symbolize? It symbolizes that there were a lot of fish. Apparently they had never caught such a load before, so they decided to count them. This is just like the abundant wine in **John 2**, and the leftover baskets in **John 6**. When Jesus performs a miracle, it is not just to show the grace that He performs at the beginning of our lives.<sup>16</sup> It is to show the grace upon grace that He never stops giving us.<sup>17</sup>

### “It is the Lord!”

Look at **v.7** “That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. [8] The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.”

How did John recognize the LORD? The boat hadn’t yet got closer to the shore, so it wasn’t due to his eyesight. It was due to his heart sight. ‘Only Jesus provides like this. Only Jesus comes when all human resources fail. Only Jesus is this full of compassion for the needs of His people.’ When Peter heard this, he swam and swam and swam.

And this was a different response than the first time Jesus did this. In **Luke 5**, after fishing all night and not catching anything, Jesus told Peter to let down the nets in the deep waters. Peter protests at first but then complies. The catch was so big, the nets began to break. When Peter saw this, he fell down

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<sup>16</sup> “Christ manifest himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for.” Matthew Henry, Unabridged Commentary on the Whole Bible, (OSNOVA’S Kindle Edition), location 253586

<sup>17</sup> “That the Lord provided far more fish than they could eat at one meal is further evidence of His provision for them. The disciples could have preserved and eaten the fish over the next several days, or sold them and lived off the proceeds.” John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.; Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 394

and said “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8).<sup>18</sup> In the first miracle of the fish Peter wanted to flee from the presence of Jesus, in this miracle of the fish in John 21, Peter now rushes towards Jesus. So Peter did make gospel progress. This is where a lot of Christians are. They believe the gospel, now they know that Jesus has dealt with their sin, and so instead of running away from Him, they want to be close to Him. Peter had learned that lesson. But there’s a different lesson that Peter hadn’t learned yet.

### What characterizes Peter in this passage?

Here’s the question, what characterizes Peter in this passage?

Intense earnest labor.

v.3 He fished *all night*

v.7 He was sweating so much from the labor that he stripped off his clothes

v.7 He threw himself into the sea and swam and swam and swam to Jesus

v.11 He hauls the net in by himself, though Jesus in v.10 told *them* to do it

You see Peter learned the lesson that He could be near to Jesus because his sins were forgiven. But he hadn’t learned gospel rest. Peter was still trying to prove himself. To make up for his failures. To show Jesus that he was worthy.

### What characterizes Jesus in this passage?

On the other hand, what characterizes Jesus in this passage?

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<sup>18</sup> “This is the universal response of people when they recognize the character of Jesus. It is the universal response of the creature who beholds the unveiled glory of the holy. Our basic nature is to put as much space between Christ and ourselves as we can. When Peter realized the One with whom he was dealing, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his guilt. **He wanted relief from that guilt more than anything else, and that meant he wanted space between Jesus and himself.** So he said, “Jesus, please leave, I can’t stand it.” That was how Peter reacted early on in the ministry of Jesus. But that was not what he did when Jesus gave this second great catch of fish. This time, even though he had so much more to be ashamed of, so much more to be embarrassed about, instead of trying to put distance between himself and his Savior, he dove in the water and swam as quickly as he could. He couldn’t wait to get to the shore, where Jesus stood.” R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew’s Expository Commentary: John*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 400-401

His warm insistent pursuit of Peter and the other disciples.

v.4 He found them and greeted them when they were running away

v.5 He lovingly calls them “children” a term of endearment

v.6 He tells them where to get fish—showing He cares for their physical needs!

And then in v.9 we read “When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.”

v.12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

What a contrast! Peter is trying to prove himself, to show Jesus that he can do it. How does Jesus respond? ‘Peter, I don’t need your fish, I already have fish on the fire. In fact I provided the fish you have. Stop trying to prove yourself. Come and have breakfast.’

### A half way gospel

I think I identify with Peter better than anyone else. Are you like Peter? You firmly believe that God loves you for salvation but not sure if God takes pleasure in you. Somehow those things have been divorced in your mind. Jesus earned God’s love for you, but it’s your effort that earns God’s pleasure. **Peter was confident enough in *Jesus’ love* to swim to Him, but not confident in *Jesus’ pleasure* because he always felt the need to prove himself.** Do you feel that? Like you don’t measure up? Overwhelmed by all the spiritual activity that you are failing to do? And so you walk around unsure if God is really pleased with you. Sure, you know He loves you. But you’re not sure if He’s pleased with you. And so what do you do? You work harder. You *try* to read your Bible more. You *try* to pray longer, or harder. You *try* to be kinder to your spouse, or your kids, or you *try* harder to be a better employee at work, a better friend at church. Only none of those things work. Your fishing all night. Your sweating, your swimming, your hauling, but your own efforts only end up with empty nets. You still feel somewhat distant from Jesus. **The disciples felt this as well.** Look at v.12-13 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now

none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. [13] Jesus *came* and took the bread and *gave it to them*, and so with the fish.

### The gospel means there’s nothing left to prove

Two important things to notice here. **First** notice how the disciples acted. When they knew it was Jesus they immediately came to shore. But once on shore there was a standoffishness. D.A. Carson says here “It was almost as if the disciples were reluctant to come, even as they were eager to be with him. Jesus must spell out the invitation: *Come and have breakfast.*”<sup>19</sup> I think the rest of the disciples felt what Peter felt. Remember they had all abandoned Christ as well. They had feelings of guilt. They had feelings of needing to prove themselves. And when you feel like you need to make up for something in a relationship, what do you do? You’re standoffish until the penance is paid. **But secondly**, notice that Jesus is the one who initiates. In **v.13** He is the one that *goes* to them. *He* hands them the bread, *He* hands them the fish, *He* serves them.<sup>20</sup> He *serves* them. He wasn’t waiting for Peter to prove himself. That’s impossible. Jesus came to them. Jesus provided for them. Jesus supped with them.

### Gospel Rest

Beloved this is why John 21 exists. To show you that the gospel means that Jesus not only loves you *but* He takes pleasure in you. Look at the Divine ordering of these last three chapters. In **John 19** we see the crucifixion of Christ for sinners. In **John 20** we see the resurrection of Christ for sinners. In **John 21** we see the fellowship of Christ *with* sinners. This is the last miracle in John’s gospel, and it was intended to convince you that when Jesus died for you, He didn’t *just* purchase you back from the dead, He purchased you so He could fellowship with you. Beloved the cross means that the enmity between you and God is over. When Jesus removed your sins, it *means* that you no longer have to

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<sup>19</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 673-674

<sup>20</sup> **Mark 10:45** “the Son of Man came not to be served but *to serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

labor in order for God to take pleasure in you. No amount of spiritual zeal can ever make God more pleased with you. You don't measure up. You never will. Your nets are always empty. But Jesus is always filling them up. Not because you are doing your part, but because He is doing His. Just as you had nothing in your net to provide for your own salvation, so you have nothing in your net that would earn the right to fellowship with Jesus. And where do we find Jesus? On the shore. He's already made breakfast, with His fish. He's already has a fire going to warm your cold skin. And He's inviting you to sit on the beach with Him and eat.

## Application

Our Doctrine: The gospel is not for those who have proven themselves, but for those who have been disproven

Peter and the other disciples were not welcomed to that breakfast at the beach because Jesus didn't care about sin. Sin is the stain of this universe. Nobody hates sin more than God whose eyes are too pure to look at evil (**Habakkuk 1:13**). Nor were they invited to that beach because they were spiritual superheroes. Before this chapter is over, we're going to see Peter sticking his foot in his mouth again. They were invited to the beach not because they proved themselves, but because they were disproven. They were shown to be sinners. To themselves. To the universe. And that is who Jesus came for. Sinners. He didn't come for people who think they're alright. That's why "it is easier to escape from unrighteousness than from self-righteousness."<sup>21</sup> I don't care how long you have gone to church. I don't care how much money you give, or how much time you invest in other people, or how moral other people may think that you are. If you think you are a pretty good person, you are in grave danger. Self-righteous people have superficial relationships with Jesus. They hold Him at arm's distance. "Oh, sure Jesus is great, especially for really bad people. Make sure those people get Jesus. But me, I'm good keeping Him on

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<sup>21</sup> Source: <https://summitrdu.com/message/the-failure-john-211-25/> accessed March 3, 2018

the fringes. I don't really need to turn my life over to Him, because I'm not that bad." Jesus said "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." (**John 13:8**) How tragic. Will you let your self-righteousness, your trying to prove to the world that you are ok, when you know you're not, stop you from entering into relationship with Jesus? Who is more lovely than He? He's a friend to sinners. Who is more patient than He? He had every right to cast all the disciples aside and start over, but He doesn't. He never abandons His people. Why would you not want Him? He promises to cleanse you, and make you a new creation, and give you living water so that you will never thirst again, and heavenly bread so that you will never be hungry again. And He promises that no matter what devilry you face in this life, He will never leave you nor forsake you. Why wouldn't you want that type of Savior?

Our Duty is our Delight: Come and feast and fellowship with Christ

There are three very clear imperatives in our passage today. **First**, Jesus told the disciples to cast the net on the other side of the boat (v.6). **Second**, Jesus told the disciples to bring some of the fish ashore (v.10). And **finally** in the climax of our passage Jesus told them "Come and have breakfast" (v.12). This is so significant. Jewish meals were not utilitarian events like many of our meals in the West. They weren't simply refueling moments. They were moments of overflowing hospitality and deep communion. It was *meals* that served as the epicenter of the OT holy days. It was in the context of a meal that Jesus shared His last moments with His disciples before He went to the cross. It is a meal, the great marriage supper of the Lamb that all of human history will find its consummation. And it's a meal, here on a Galilean beach that Jesus invites His disciples to eat. It is a command. And I want to point this out because we must see that in the Kingdom of Jesus duty and delight are not divorced. Jesus command in this text is clear. Come to *Me*. Eat with *Me*. Enjoy this beach with *Me*. Enjoy this fire with *Me*. How does that translate to 2018? Rest in Christ. Jesus wants to lead you to a profound rest in Him even in the midst of your greatest trials.

**Rest in the truth** that you have nothing to prove, *because* Jesus already sees all your all your greatest sins and has already received you in the beloved.

**Rest in the truth** that you can never increase God's pleasure in you, that no amount of good works can make Him love you more, and not amount of sin can make Him love you less.

**Rest in the truth** that Jesus is transforming you into His image. You will not be a sinner forever. Butt very soon, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trump will sound and you will be changed from corruptible to incorruptible never to sin again.

That is how you come to Jesus and eat with Him now. By receiving the promises that He holds out to you.