

John 21: Overview and Discussion Questions

To say that the past several days had been eventual would be an understatement. The disciples had witnessed the resurrected Jesus not once, but twice. And yet the disciples perhaps still doubted. Was it all real? Furthermore, what now? They had walked and lived with Jesus for over three years, and they were known by all as Jesus' disciples. But now with Jesus seemingly being no longer present physically, or at least in the same way as they knew, the disciples felt a sense of aimlessness and lack of purpose.

Peter decides to go fishing. Returning to something familiar perhaps gave Peter a sense of stability and purpose at a time when things seemed uncertain. However, as we have studied throughout John's Gospel, the things of the world – no matter how fulfilling they might seem be – can never satisfy our longing for eternity. This was evident when Peter and the disciples fail to catch anything during the night. And yet, Jesus lovingly appears to them to remind them of the call that He had placed on their lives. In a scene which is reminiscent of what took place in Luke 5 when Jesus first called Peter, James, and John, he tells the disciples to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. Upon doing so, they pulled an enormous catch! Peter then knew that it was Jesus and he rushed out of the boat to meet Him, similar to when Jesus called out to Peter in the storm in Matthew 14. Once again, Jesus demonstrates to His disciples that His resurrection was real through the simple act of sharing breakfast together. Ghosts and hallucinations do not and cannot cook meals for you!

After Jesus and the disciples had their fill, He provides for their spiritual nourishment by reminding them of their purpose and calling. He does this in two ways. The first is through

Peter's restoration. Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times, Jesus gives Peter the opportunity to reaffirm his love and devotion to Jesus and His Kingdom. However, Jesus' response to Peter's repeated affirmations of his love is to feed and tend to His sheep. What does Jesus mean by this? Recalling all the times Jesus described those who did not believe in Him as lost sheep without a shepherd, Jesus was reminding Peter and the disciples of their mission: to preach the Gospel to the ends of the Earth and to tell anyone and everyone about the freedom and hope that they can experience through Jesus and His Heavenly Kingdom. A mere superficial profession of faith is not enough to be considered a true follower of Christ. True believers affirm their love for Jesus by obeying the Holy Spirit and allowing His desire to seek the redemption of the lost to become our desire as well.

The second way that Jesus reminds the disciples of their purpose is to warn them against pride and to be united. Jesus specifically addresses the rivalry between Peter and John. After Jesus explains to Peter that he will suffer for the sake of the Gospel, Peter turns to John and asks Jesus, "What about him?" However, Jesus' response is to redirect Peter's towards the specific call the He has placed on his life. Rather than focus on unnecessary comparisons or rivalries, we are to seek the unity that Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17:6-19. Pride and ego should have no place in Christ's Kingdom. **Believers in Christ are on the same team, and our desire should be nothing else but to preach the Gospel and the fulfillment of Christ's Kingdom on Earth.** John ends his account of Jesus' life and ministry by saying that if one were to write down all that Jesus had done, there would not be enough books in the world to record them. Even now, Jesus is alive and active in the world, bringing about His redemptive work. **May we seek His Kingdom both now and always!**

Read the passage prayerfully a few times over and then answer the questions: [John 21](#)

Questions:

1. What similarities and/or differences do you notice about the scene where Jesus has breakfast with His disciples with other passages in the Gospels? Why do you think Jesus appeared to them in this specific way? ([John 21:1-14](#), cf. [Matthew 14:22-33](#), [Luke 5:1-11](#), [John 6:1-24](#))
2. What comforts, encourages, or challenges you regarding Peter's restoration? ([John 21:15-19](#))
3. What lessons on unity and purpose in Christ can you draw from Jesus' response to Peter's question regarding John? ([John 21:20-25](#))

Application:

As you reflect on your study of the Gospel of John, what were some key themes and lessons that stood out to you?

Conclusion & Heart Prayer:

Lord, what are You saying to me? And what are You calling me to do about it?