

John 21:1-14

~ Our Ever-Faithful King ~

Introduction

It has often been said that:

A good story (a really a good story-teller) *will have* **multiple layers of meaning & significance** to their story

This is certainly true when coming to authors like C.S Lewis – or G.K Chesterton – J.R. Tolkien – and various other men...

And it's also **certainly true** when coming to the bible!

The bible (we could say) is a **multi-layered – multi-faceted – single story** of God told from a number of different **authors** and **perspectives**!

Now that's **NOT the same thing** as saying the bible has **contradictions** – or that the bible has **inconsistencies** – or many different interpretations:

NO the bible is **NOT** some post-modern (pick your adventure story) handbook to glean your own **meaning** and **interpretation** from!

But **rather** as the word of God – the bible is a **single story** with many different layers!

Various **themes** – and multiple **layers** – that the authors of the book are **picking up on all throughout** the story!

And so a good story (and really a good story teller) will have **multiple layers** of meaning & significance!

John 21

And that is **what we have** when turning to the final chapter of John's famous Gospel...

We have **as it were** John's **post-resurrection conclusion** – this is his famous **epilogue** – his noteworthy **ending**!

And **at first glance** it appears to be just a **basic & ordinary** account of Jesus feeding the disciples...

Jesus shows up – He gives them some fish on the beach – He takes Peter aside – He gives him some words of encouragement – and then he **finishes the story** in verse 25:

Nothing **strange** or **weird** about that!

But then on a **much closer inspection** when you drill down into the text – there does seem to be **multiple-layers** of meaning and significance!

There **appears to be** much more **theology & encouragement** bubbling under the surface!

Revealed

In fact, I want you to notice the controlling phrase that really **book ends** these **first 14 verses** – notice that John 21 verse 1 says:

*After this Jesus **revealed Himself** again to His disciples by the sea of Tiberias, and He **revealed Himself** in this way!*

Now look down at verse 14 where John says:

*This was now the third time that Jesus was **revealed Himself** to the disciples...*

Now I know the CSB has Jesus **appeared** to the disciples – but it's really the same word there in verse 1:

*Jesus **Revealed Himself** in this way after He was raised from the dead!*

And so that's the **controlling phrase** – that's the **driving hermeneutic** that should govern our view of the text and where John is heading with us in this story!

This story (chapter 21) is a **revelation** of Jesus Christ (the sinless Son of God) – and His Post-resurrection appearances:

From the dead!

Jesus is revealing Himself to these men **something of His glory** – something of His **grace** – something of His **character** – and something of His **nature**!

And so it would **behoove us** to pay attention to the text – and the details that are going on so that **we too** (like these disciples) may see something of the **glory** & the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ!

That's layer number 1!

Loose ends

But a **second layer** to the story is that John appears to be (by writing this chapter):

*Tying up any of the **loose-ends** that may be **lingering** on in the back of our minds?*

And you may be thinking:

Well what loose ends are you talking about?

Like what further information **do we need** from John that we **haven't already received** in the last 20 chapters?

Jesus relates

Well these are questions that perhaps the disciples were asking themselves as they awaited **further instructions** from their Lord – questions such as:

How does Jesus now relate to His disciples in His post-resurrection glory?

How does He now relate to them knowing that He's going to be with the Father?

Does He **relate to them** differently than He did in His earthly ministry – is there something that has changed in relationship or status – is He now going to be different to how He relates to these guys?

Peter

Or how about this:

*What happens to Peter now – the man who was **so zealous** for Jesus and appeared to have such **great faith** but ended up denying His Lord **3 painful times** over?*

How does Peter get restored back to ministry – how does he obtain forgiveness from the grace of God?

That's gonna be next week's sermon!

The Future

And then you may be wondering things like:

What should the disciples expect from Jesus in the future?

What kind of lives will they go on to live as His Apostles?

What kind of deaths will they die?

*What is **their witness** to the church?*

Is the mission to remain the same after He's gone?!?

And so that is why John seems to write this **final chapter** – John is tying up any of those **loose ends** or **questions** we have concerning the ministry of the Apostles!

Layer Three

And then a **third layer** of this text is simply to demonstrate what we have **already seen** throughout John's Gospel that:

*Jesus Christ is a **kind** and **compassionate** God to those in need...*

I don't know how else to say that – but to simply say that:

He's a faithful Shepherd – who will feed His sheep – and empower their hearts – for the purpose of mission!

And that's actually gonna be **the main theme** of today's 14 verses!

Main Point

John 21:1 to 14 John is highlighting for us **2 main attributes** of Jesus when it comes to the church's **mission & success** in building the Kingdom – He's gonna highlight:

Christ's abundant **power** – and His abundant **provision**

And the main point we're gonna see is this:

In our mission of being fishers of men, the God of all grace will continue to supply every single one of our daily needs!

John 21

Notice the text in verse 1:

After this, Jesus revealed Himself again to His disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. And He revealed Himself in this way...

Opening Gambit

So he's just **setting up the story** in such a way that we're going to see Jesus a third time after His resurrection...

And so in verse 1 the disciples **in obedience to His command** have gone back to the *Sea of Tiberias* which is just **another name** for the *Sea of Galilee* – we saw that back in John 6 verse 1 where:

Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee which John says is the Sea of Tiberias...

Now it was named Tiberias in the year 20 B.C in honour of the Roman Emperor of that time:

Ceaser Tiberius

And so this is **the Sea** that Luke in his Gospel calls the *Sea of Gennesaret* which is the **same body** of water!

So just so you know – the Sea of Tiberias – Sea of Gennesaret – Sea of Galilee) **all the same** sea!

And this sea is located up North in the region of Galilee – and that's **where the disciples are going!**

Rendezvous

And so the Disciples **go there** because this was **always part** of the plan of God!

This is where Jesus had told them to go after His resurrection!

In **Mark 14:26** on the night when He was betrayed – Jesus went to **the Mount of Olives** and said to the disciples:

*After the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered – and then **after I die** I will be raised up, and I will go before you to Galilee...*

And then **on the Day** of His resurrection in **Matthew 28** when the angel is sitting on the Tomb of Jesus – he says to the women:

*He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said...and behold, go tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead and that He is **going before you to Galilee**; and there you will see Him...*

And so the disciples of Christ **in obedience to Him** have gone to the sea in order to wait for Jesus because:

That's where Jesus is going to show up!

Fishing

And so while they are waiting for Jesus – Peter gets a little hungry and apparently so do the other disciples who were with him – verse 3:

*I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said. And the other disciples also said: We're coming with you," So they **went out into the boat**, but that night they caught nothing...*

Now these are professional fishermen – these are men who knew what they were doing – they knew how to fish – this was their **natural trade** – this is **what they were doing** when Christ first called them to ministry...

Futility

And yet John notes that:

They went out into the boat, and caught nothing...

The idea is that they've been labouring all night long – out at sea – in the dark – casting this net over and over and over and over and over again:

And nothing seems to come of it!

No fish – no reward – no prize – nothing!

There's a **painful futility** to this verse – they're floundering on the sea –and despite their best efforts they **come up short** – they're tired – they're exhausted – it's all work and no reward!

And so these men are done!

They're exhausted!

And there's really **nothing worse** in life for a fisherman than to go out fishing **all night long** and catch nothing!

This would have been a **real blow** to the pride of these men...

Absent Jesus

Now we can **never be certain** of this – but it seems to be that every time darkness is mentioned in John’s Gospel (or really in any of the four Gospel accounts) – it always seems to be at a time when **God is most absent!**

And in fact there’s probably a **literary link** that can be traced throughout the Gospels that every time Jesus **is not around** – or His disciples are cut off – or His presence **is not known**:

Something bad seems to occur!

Whether He’s asleep in the boat in Mark chapter 4 – or whether He’s not even **in the boat at all** in John chapter 6 – or whether He’s off in the garden praying in Gethsemane – or while they are by themselves all night on the sea – something bad happens **when Jesus is NOT with them !**

And I think there’s a **spiritual lesson in that** for us – that as Christians, when we try to live life **outside** of God’s **power** – **outside** of His **provision** – **outside** of His **presence** – when we try to live **outside of** God’s will – or live as though **Jesus were not present with us**:

That’s when sin seems to occur!

That’s when trials seem to persist!

And that’s when darkness rears its ugly head!

And so it’s a reminder to us to:

Always stay close to the Person of Christ!

To always be in His word!

To always be in prayer!

To always labour in faith!

To always be around God’s people!

Lest we tempt the flesh and give way to the presence of sin!

Labour in Vain

And so these men – away from the presence of Christ appear to be labouring in vain!

Their labour appears to be futile!

And maybe there's a reason for that...

Maybe Jesus **was teaching them a lesson** about their self-sufficiency!

I think He needed to empty them of their pride – in order to fill them up with His glory!

To **strip them** of their pride so that they would **look to Him** for their every need!

I think it's interesting that Jesus **doesn't show up** – until after they've **come** to the end of themselves...

He **doesn't make Himself** known to them until they're absolutely exhausted...

And that's how Jesus often works in the Gospel isn't it?

The disciples are in the boat in **Mark 4** and they say to Him: *Teacher do you not care that we're perishing in this storm!*

And Jesus stands up and rebukes the storm!

Or the in the **other storm** in **John 6**: *Where Jesus isn't even present with them in the boat but **He meets them** on the water* – and He says:

Do not be afraid for I am here!

And so it's a **common theme for Jesus** to wait until things get really bad to finally show up before He saves the day:

This is a teaching moment!

Jesus is trying to teach them **where they must ultimately look!**

Unrecognisable

And so in verse 4 – without any reservation or warning from Jesus:

Jesus shows up!

*He stands on the shore of Galilee watching His disciples from a distance but the disciples **did not know that it was Jesus....***

Now, why didn't they know it was Him?

Daybreak

Well we don't exactly know why – but **it could be** that John says:

It was really early in the morning!

This was the break of day...

So maybe it's still dark outside – they **can't really see** who's standing on the shore!

And so maybe it's a daylight thing!

Distance

We **also learn later** that these men are about 100 yards from the shore – and so at 100 yards your vision **starts to become** a little blurry with faces...

If you go to a football field at night and stand one person on each end of the field – you **can't really make** out faces or who the person is!

So maybe it's a distance thing!

Resurrected Body

Or maybe like many who saw the resurrected Christ they didn't **immediately recognize** His glorified body...

And this is **a common theme**:

You have Mary at the Tomb!
 The Disciples in John 20!
 The 2 disciples on Emmaus!
 There's Cleopas!
 There's the women at the tomb!

No one could really recognize Jesus in His resurrected state **until He starts revealing Himself to them!**

And in the Gospels – it seems to be that Jesus **always acts first** in revealing Himself to His people – before we are able to recognize Jesus – Jesus must first act to reveal Himself to us!

Fish

And that's exactly what we see happening in verse 5 – Jesus shows up and calls out to them from the shore – and He says:

Friends, you don't have any fish do you?

Now the question **assumes a negative answer!**

Jesus was **NOT** asking this question to gain information – but Jesus was using this moment as a teaching lesson for the disciples!

He's trying to get **them to recognize** the futility of this moment labouring away from Christ!
 One pastor says:

They had to see and admit that their methods were failing [to make way for His glorious provision]!

And so the reply comes in verse 5:

No, we don't have any fish!

And I don't know if they were frustrated at that point – I don't know if their eyes were rolling back – but I love how **Jesus responds** in verse 6 – after admitting they **don't have** any fish – he simply says:

[Pause] Have you tried the right side of the boat...?!?!]

Really Jesus!

And I mean I just **imagine the disciples** at that point staring at Jesus and saying:

Check out *Captain Obvious* over here!

I mean we are professional fishermen!

Of course we've tried the right-side of the boat – who does this guy think that He is!

And I'm actually really surprised that Peter **didn't pipe up** to say something like that...

Many Fish

But for whatever reason and we **don't really** know why – the disciples listened to the voice of this stranger!

They **don't know** that it's Jesus – but they **listen to Him!**

And so part of me wonders if this is **just desperation** at this point – like:

Why not? let's see what happens...let's see what this joker has for us...

And so **they cast the** net on the right-side of the boat!

And guess what happens?!?!

Jesus demonstrates His abundant power to provide for them fish!

Verse 6:

They were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish...

They **listened** to the voice of Jesus – they **obeyed** the voice of Jesus – they were **rewarded** for **obedience** to Jesus!

One pastor says:

Christ has the power to grant success to those who minister in obedience to His word...

Luke 11:28 says:

Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it...

Psalm 119 says:

Make me walk along the paths of your commands for that is where my joy may be found!

The common principle (the biblical reality) is that:

Obedience to Jesus is where life works best!

It's **NOT** always the case that's obedience will yield the earthly fruit of blessing – but it is always the case that:

Obedience to Jesus is where life works best!

We would all be a **little further on** in our faith if we just remembered the old Hymn *to trust and obey*:

*Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

Ignite the Resources

And again **at this point** what do we know about Jesus Christ?

We know that He's the one who controls the sea!

We know He's the one who controls everything!

We know that He is the maker and sustainer of all the earth!

We know He's the one Creator and Sustainer of all things!

We know He's the one who **caused the fish** to swim over to the **right side** of the boat!

And so we know that He **NOT only** ignited the resources in the water – but **He also moved** the resources into that boat!

Because our God is abundantly powerful!

That's who Jesus is!

He is the God of abundant power!

And this God can be **trusted** in times of darkness and despair **to mobilize** His resources when we are in need!

He will **provide** for us – He will **take care** of us – because He is the God over all things!

Thank Him

And I would say that **just by way** of application – I think **this is a great place**—after reading this passage to just **stop thank the Lord!**

Thank Him for His **grace** – thank Him for His **power** – thank Him for His **provision!**

You know as Christians we **so often** think about all of the wants that we **don't** currently have – but we so **often forget** about all the needs that we do have!

He is such a good God!

I mean He is **so good** to us!

And it's the first thing John is wanting us to see us in this passage:

Our God is the overabundant God of power!

Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth!

Point 2

Second in verses 7 to 14 – John is demonstrating a second thing about Jesus that:

He is the God of abundant provision

He's **NOT only** the God of overabundant power – but He's also the God of overabundant provision!

So verse 7 – after the disciples **miraculously haul in** this large catch of fish – we read this:

The disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" and when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged [himself] into the sea. ⁸ and since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards away), the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.⁹ and when they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. ¹⁰ "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus told them. ¹¹ So Simon Peter

*climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish—153 of them. And even though there were so many, the net was **not** torn...*

Familiar Scene

This is the overabundant provision on the sea!

It's a strange yet familiar scene **isn't it** – I wonder if when I was reading that (or when Danny was reading this morning) I wonder if something inside of you thought:

*That scene **sounds overly familiar** !*

I've read this somewhere in the Gospels before...

And you would be somewhat correct – there are actually parts of this story that are familiar to us because **this scene** has actually happened before...

Turn over in your bibles to Luke chapter 5 – this is the story of Jesus first calling His disciples on the sea of Galilee...

And this is actually **at the beginning** of Jesus' ministry – it says:

*Now as the crowds were pressing in on Jesus to hear the word of God, He was standing by Lake Gennesaret (that's Galilee – the **same place** in John 21)...*

*And He saw two boats at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.³ He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then He sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat.⁴ And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch – **sound familiar?!?!***

Now notice Peter's response in verse 5:

⁵ "Master," Simon replied, "**we have worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets.**" ⁶ *and when they did this, they caught a **great number of***

fish, and their nets began to tear. ⁷ *So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.* ⁸ *and when Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!"* ⁹ *For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken,* ¹⁰ *and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners...*

And then Jesus said to them in verse 10:

"Do not be afraid...from now on you will be catching people...or the famous phrase is:

*You will become **fishers of men**...*

Then they brought the boats to the land, left everything, and followed Him...

It's an amazing account isn't it!

So many similarities to the story in John 21!

It is the Lord

And it must have been familiar to John because the text says **in John 21:7** that after they had **hauled in** this great catch:

The disciple, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

Now how did he know that it was Jesus – simply by the fact of all the fish?!?!

Well he must have **remembered this scene in Luke chapter 5!**

Something inside of John's mind clicked – and he all of a sudden remembered:

This is what the Lord does!

The Lord provides for His people!

The Lord sustains His people!

The Lord is gracious and kind and generous to His people!

He's a sustaining and supernatural God!

Peter

So verse 7:

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea.

The idea is that Peter was **possibly stark-naked** working on the boat and when he saw the Lord he wanted to dress himself appropriately!

He **doesn't want** to be embarrassed or **naked** in front of the Lord!

Or it could be that Peter was **down to his underwear** and he kind of girded up his loins and tied his outer garment around him – and then he could plunge into the sea...

It doesn't really matter which one you take – the point is that **Peter merely heard** that it was the Lord and he **acted!**

He **heard it** – He **didn't see it!**

Upon hearing the news of the Lord – that **was enough** for Peter to act!

Growing Faith

I think this shows a growing faith in Simon Peter – Peter is now starting to:

Walk by faith and not by sight...

Remember right before this scene in John 20 we saw Thomas **last week** saying:

*Unless I **see** the wounds of His hands and **feel** the marks of His side – I will never believe...*

Thomas was living by **sight** and **NOT** by **faith**...

But Peter **upon hearing** the good news – immediately acts and he **leaves everything behind** to get to Jesus:

Now that's significant!

Because Peter is a fisherman – he knows **how valuable** a catch like this is!

He understands how incredibly wealthy a catch like this is!

But Peter has made a **calculated decision** at this point – does he help the men haul in the load (knowing that an extra hand could be the difference between losing it and keeping it) – or does he go to the Lord?!?!?

And so he decides in that moment upon hearing the news that:

Jesus is **worth more** to him than anything this world can give!

Jesus means more to Peter than a thousand fishing expeditions at this point!

Peter's faith is beginning to flourish!

Verses 9-12

And so in verse 9 we read that:

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread.

And Jesus said to them:

Bring some of the fish you've just caught So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish—153 of them. And even though there were so many, the net was not torn...

And then in verse 12 Jesus says:

Come and have breakfast... but none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are you?" because they knew that it was the Lord...

Charcoal Fire

So again the details of this story are both **basic** yet **significant** – let me just point out a few of the details here!

First you have Peter walking up to the charcoal fire – Peter was first to step onto the beach and he steps out smelling this charcoal fire:

Now what do you think this scene would remind him of?

Charcoal fire – Jesus – early hours of the morning?

The last time we **hear anything** about Peter standing at a charcoal fire, he **denied the Lord** 3 painful times!

And Peter is probably standing there remembering his denial!

Fish Burgers

Second you've got the **fish** and the **bread** laying on the fire – now that probably reminds them of the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6:

How Jesus fed the crowds in compassion!

And what's interesting there is that He actually does that where?

In the region of Galilee...

So this is **NOT** a new thing for Jesus to be doing – and it's **NOT even a new location** for Jesus to do it in:

Jesus does this thing regularly for people – why?!?!

Because He cares for us!

153

Third you've got this large number of fish:

153 of them to be exact!

Now why 153 **we don't know!**

Many have tried to spiritualize this and say that this number is a triangulation of the number 17 – if you begin at 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 inclusive **all the way to** 17 you end up with the number 153 – and that's a code for somewhere in Ezekiel – and the number of the Trinity – and the New Jerusalem!

And so and on they go

Saint Augustine, who's given us **so much good material** in the church – he said that:

153 is a picture of the law and gospel...

Why – I don't know...

But NO Augustine!

153 is a significant number because it's a lot!

That's the significance!

This is a lot of fish – and these are **NOT small** fish but large fish!

So this is 153 large fish!

And that's significant because there's **only 8 men** (7 disciples – plus Jesus) with 153 fish to eat!

And we should be **used to Jesus** by now being **overabundant** in His provision of food – right?!?!

Jesus is always abundant in His giving – whether it's the wine in John 2 (540+ litres of wine) – or the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6 (12 baskets full of bread and fish) – and now you have 8 men and 153 fish:

Do you think that's gonna be enough food for them!

I think they're gonna be okay!

These men are NOT going hungry!

Jesus serves

So you have the fish – you have the bread – you have the charcoal fire – and then **lastly** you have:

The Son of God cooking!

Verse 13 says:

Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish...

Now why is that so significant – well it's **significant because of everything** we've been learning about **Christ** in the Gospel of John!

We saw His glory explode in the prologue in chapter 1:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...

He was the monogenesis of the Father; the only Son of God full of grace and truth!

Then you have all of His **signs** and all of His **sermons** and all of His **miracles** and **encounters**!

And now He's the resurrected King from the dead!

He's the reigning King – He's the universal Lord!

And then Thomas' **great confession** – my Lord and my God!

And now in John 21 you have:

The KING of KINGS – the LORD OF LORDS – the eternal Son of the Father:

IS COOKING BREAKFAST!!!

What's the point:

Even as the King of universe Jesus is always the King who loves to serve

I mean even as the resurrected Lord of the universe – He **washes their feet** – He **feeds them** – He **clothes them** – even as the King who has **infinite resources** at His disposal:

He comes NOT to be served – but to serve...

To give His life as a ransom for many...

Jesus is the humble servant!

Provision

And it's a **clear message** for us that the King of the universe will **always provide** for every single one of our daily needs...

That in this season of suffering that you're currently in:

He hasn't abandoned you!

He hasn't forgotten you!

He isn't neglecting you!

But He's serving you!

And He's comforting you through your daily provision...

It reminds me of what Paul says in **Philippians 4:19** – that:

My God will supply every single need of yours according to the riches of glory in Christ Jesus...

The end of ourselves

And here's what's **so sobering** about this scene in John – here's what's so challenging to wrap our minds around – that:

If Jesus was sovereign over the fish that they **caught** – He directed the fish – He guided the fish – He provided the fish – do you **NOT** also think that He was **sovereign** all night long over the fish that they **did NOT catch!**

In other words:

If Jesus was waiting for the break of day **to finally come** into the middle of the story – and He waited for His disciples to come to the very **end of themselves** – then **what does that teach us** about the **current season of suffering** that you're currently going through...

What does that teach us about the way God show His strength through your weakness!

How He **often works** in our lives **through** our failings...

Through our parenting blunders!

Or the outbursts of rage that we need to repent of!

John 15

See I think Jesus was trying to teach these disciples an important lesson **NOT only** about themselves:

But about Him!

And it was the **same lesson** He was teaching them back in John 15 verse 5 that:

Apart from me you can do nothing...

Jesus was trying to teach them that their **entire ministry** and the **success** of their mission was **entirely dependent** upon Him!

Fishers of Men

And that's where I think the significance of this 153 comes in – **if we were** to read **anything into that number** (which I'm not convinced we're supposed to) – but if we were it would probably be something along the lines of the abundant **success in their ministry**:

Or success in the mission of God because Jesus provides that power & the provision!

If we go back to Luke 5 after the **nets of the disciples** were beginning to break **because of the amount of fish** – Jesus tells the disciples:

*Follow me and I will make you **fishers of men***

So it **could be** that **the fish** here are a **symbolic way** to speak of the nature of the Kingdom and the amount of people that will come under the preaching of the Gospel!

These are men and women that the disciples will be catching in their ministry!

So Jesus will take these men for the next 3 years **under His wing** – and He will show them how to catch men and bring them into the Kingdom of God!

Now if we know anything about the ministry of Jesus while walking on the earth – we know that His ministry **got smaller and smaller and smaller** as time went on!

It did **NOT** get bigger!

And those nets in Luke 5 had started to break...

But here in John 21 when the disciples haul in this catch – John so **very strangely** notes in verse 11:

*Even though there were so many [fish], **the net was NOT torn...***

Now why would he add a detail like that in light of Luke chapter 5?

Well it could be that Jesus was showing them that the success of their ministry was **NOT dependent** on them but upon the one who does NOT allow the nets to break!

On the God who supplies their every need!

The one will **NOT allow** the **net of the gospel** to break or tear or become hindered!

But rather that He will **continue to build** His expanding church throughout the world – and the gates of hell will **never prevail** against it – because:

Jesus empowers the mission!

It reminds me of a great quote that I heard this week – that said:

*The Church of God is in the midst of a battle **it will not lose** – because it's engaged in a mission **that will not fail...***

So here's what Jesus is saying to us this morning through John chapter 21:

The God of all power and provision will continue to supply every single one of your daily needs in Christ as you faithfully walk in the mission of the Son to the glory of the Father!

So that every single day you wake up and you say:

Just one more cast

Just one more conversation!

One more prayer!

One more invitation!

One more gospel tract!

Just one more for the glory of God!

And the God of all grace will **promise** to supply your every need and to do the rest!

He's so good to us...

And so today is a good day to give thanks to the Lord!

Let's pray!

John 21:1-14

Discussion Questions

[Read John 21:1-14].

Main Point: *In our mission of being fishers of men, the God of all grace will continue to supply every single one of our daily needs.*

Q1. [Read verses 1-6]. Why is the story of the disciples fishing good news for tired Christians? – Describe a time in your life when you felt like everything was going wrong. How do these times reveal the object of our trust?

Q2. [Read verse 4]. What's the significance of Jesus waiting until daybreak before showing up? – What does this teach us about the way that Jesus often works through our weary suffering?

Q3. Have you ever had a time when your own efforts seemed fruitless, but trusting in Christ changed the outcome? – Can anything be learned by this?

Q4. [Read Luke 5:1-11]. Comment on how these verses parallel the story of John 21. What are the similarities/what are the differences? – How does Peter's reaction in verse 7 reflect his love for Jesus? – What does this tell us about how we should respond to the presence of Christ?

Q5. [Read verses 9-14]. Why do you think John included the specific number of fish (153)? – What might this signify? – What is the significance of Jesus preparing a meal for His disciples?

Q6. Jesus reminds His disciples that apart from Him, they can do nothing (John 15:5).

How does this truth relate to their experience in John 21? – What are some ways we try to live the Christian life in our own strength rather than relying on Christ?

In what ways can we trust Jesus more with our daily needs and our mission to make disciples? – How can this passage encourage us to keep “casting the net” and sharing the gospel, even when it seems fruitless?