

**Introduction:**

- John 21:1-25
- le. A man starts to cross the road. He sees a car a ways off and steps into the street. The car speeds up and the man starts to scurry across a little faster. As he does the car moves over into that lane. The man stops and starts back to the other side. As he does the car moves back over into the former lane. The man, seeing how close the car is, turns to sprint to the other side. As soon as he does the car moves over again into other lane. Struck with terror, the man freezes and stands still. The car comes to a screeching halt beside him. The window comes down and a squirrel sitting in the driver's seat says to him... "It's not as easy as it looks, is it?"
- Sometimes following Jesus can be difficult and you never quite know which way to go.
- The truth about Jesus: He invites us to breakfast, He initiates difficult conversations, He calls us to focus and to follow.

**I. Jesus Invites Us To Breakfast**

## A. The setting:

1. Seven of the disciples are beside the Sea of Galilee (only five are named). They all are home! It is amazing how 'home' has a way of pulling us back to what is familiar. It is also interesting how 'home' can bring back memories. le. Like hearing an old song from your youth.
2. Peter says, "I am going fishing." One of the temptations in following Christ is the relative ease of going back to what we were and what we did before meeting Him.
  - a) *"I'm going..."* (Jn 21:3) *"This word means "to lead from under," "to lead astray," in the middle voice "to put oneself at the disposal of," and in the perfect passive "to devote oneself." Intransitively it means "to withdraw," "to go away," "to journey to."* Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 1227). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. Peter is not telling everyone what to do. He is not looking to lead everyone astray. Peter is just devoting himself to what he already knows...fishing. And if you want to come along, fine. He is withdrawing from the stress of the last few days. For most, home will let you do that.
  - b) Unbeknown to him, he is actually setting himself up for a repeat of what happened 3.5 years earlier. They were fishing all night and they caught nothing. Lk 5:2-5
3. These disciples have already seen Jesus (ALIVE) twice while in Jerusalem. They were told to go to Galilee. So here they are...home...no Jesus...fishing...not ministering.

## B. Jesus is on the beach. They do not recognize Him. It is quite amazing how Jesus can be so close to us and yet we do not even know He is there.

1. Jesus 'throws the first spear' at them, Peter in particular. "Have you caught

anything?" Now if you are a fisherman the last thing you want to have happen when you have caught nothing is to have someone ask, "What did you catch?" That is just a dig at your pride. 'You are a hungry fisherman!' That is a lot for Peter to bare.

2. Jesus tells them, "Throw your net out on the right side of the boat." When did they last hear that. When they were called. When Peter said, "Leave me I am a sinful man."
  3. Funny how Jesus brings us back to where we started when we are not where we should be. John says, "It's Jesus!"
  4. Peter puts on his garment, jumps in the water and swims to shore. "Why?"
    - a) He could be genuinely excited about seeing Jesus.
    - b) I believe he is first in the water and first to get to shore to show how much he loves Jesus...more than the others.
  5. The rest come shortly with the big haul of fish. 153 to be exact.
- C. Jesus invites them to breakfast. The purpose of breakfast is to encounter Him. To again encounter his love.
1. Jesus invites us to fellowship with Him. To encounter Him. Jesus already has fish and bread cooking over a charcoal fire. The last time we hear of a charcoal fire Peter is denying Jesus.
  2. Jesus, no matter where you are in life, will always be inviting us to have fellowship with Him. "*Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice...*" Revelation 3:20
  3. Why do we resist encountering Him?
    - a) We don't know that we can encounter Him or we do not know what that looks like when happening.
    - b) \*\*\*We are to busy beating ourselves up over how bad we are.
    - c) We are 'to unworthy' to face Him.
    - d) We are stuck in our own guilt.
- D. Jesus' invitation is for fellowship. He really likes these guys. He likes us. It is for encounter. He wants them, to again, encounter His love. He wants them fully restored, to be the apostles they are called to be.
- E. Jesus wants to address two things at this breakfast that are important to keeping His disciples on track and to equip them to continue walking with Him when He is gone.
1. He wants to address personal failures and shame that often stops us from continuing our personal service to and with Jesus. (Yes, we know He is alive but we do not feel worthy to serve Him or others.)
  2. He wants to address how comparing ourselves with others stops us from being effective in life and ministry.
  3. It is in this setting of friendship, fellowship, full stomachs and love that Jesus

initiates a serious discussion. Jn 21:15

## II. Jesus Initiates Difficult Discussions

- A. The conversation is about to become difficult...for Peter. Difficult because Peter wants to forget his past failure in Jesus darkest hour. Peter fears being reminded or to hearing "I told you so." He is trying to figure out how to relate to the resurrected Jesus.
1. I think all of us are that way. In spite of ourselves we are just trying to figure out how to relate to the Risen Lord.
  2. This is particularly hard for those with failure and shame issues.
- B. *"Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"* (John 21:15 NLT). We have to remember what Peter said earlier: *"Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.""* (Matthew 26:33, ESV) Do you love me more than these???
- C. Jesus poses a series of three questions to Peter, by calling him a name that is a "set back" for Peter.
1. Simon - Hebrew name means 'One who listens.' Peter comes from Petros - small pebble. And upon this Rock Petra (foundation stone/bedrock) I will build my church.
  2. Jesus is taking Peter back to the beginning.
  3. Three times Jesus asks SIMON, not Peter, "Do you love me?" (perhaps three because that is how many times Peter denied Him) To which three times Peter answers, "Yes Lord you know I love you."
  4. Here is what you need to note in your Bibles: When Jesus uses the word Love it is a form of the word agape (a sacrificial love that is unconditional) Three times he asks Peter: "Do you love/agape me?" 2x agape, last time is Phileo.
  5. Peter responds "Yes Lord you know I 'Phileo' you. (Brotherly type love.) Peter because of his failures and shame can't say, "Yes Lord, I agape you."
  6. The third time Jesus asks "Do you love me?" Peter is hurt. (vs 17)
    - a) It is visible that it pains his heart to be pointed out, then told He is 'agaped' and he can't agape back. He has already proven that by his miserable failure. "I will die for you." Remember those words of Peter?
    - b) What Peter does not see yet, is Jesus willingness to repair the damage that had been done. And eager to forgive, restore, recommission. Jesus does not bring to the breakfast table a conversation to crush Peter. He brings the difficult conversation to the table to save Peter. To deliver Peter. To love Peter.
  7. Also note that after each response from Peter, Jesus says, take care of my lambs, tend my sheep and feed my sheep. He meets Peter where he is and empowers him with the mission. Jesus: *"Give me what you can, Peter, ...I accept it. Feed my*

*sheep."*

- a) I love you Peter
- b) I accept you Peter
- c) I trust you Peter... "*Feed my sheep*" After dealing with failure and shame...

### III. Jesus Calls Us To Focus and Follow (vs 18-23)

- A. The call to focus and follow. Now the topic changes. You can hear Peter's sigh of relief.
  - 1. When Jesus shines the His light on us pointing out what we already know, we generally want to get the spot light off us! Peter was no different. (Jesus is shining it on Peter). And it make his heart very uncomfortable.
  - 2. When Jesus shines the light on us, our conscience comes alive/sensitive, our failures stand out, our weaknesses are most visible to us. Peter is feeling the pressure of his past. Jesus changes the topic to discuss how Peter will die. "Whew!"
  - 3. This conversation is not so pleasant either. But Jesus is giving Peter a chance at redemption to once again demonstrate his love (agape) for Jesus. Jesus knows that Peter will get to this place of love (agape) for Him.
  - 4. But it is still uncomfortable at the moment!
- B. Peter is again thinking, "Let's change the subject." (What about him?) Shine the light on him.
  - 1. Isn't that what we do. The Holy Spirit shines light on something in our lives and because we are uncomfortable we say, "What about them Lord?" (change the focus/subject)!
    - a) Peter had just heard a very hard word. "You will die—painfully." His first thought was comparison. What about John? If I have to suffer, will he have to suffer? If my ministry ends like that, will his end like that? If I don't get to live a long life of fruitful ministry, will he get to?
    - b) That's the way we are initially wired. Compare. Compare. Compare. We crave to know how we stack up in comparison to others. We get off on finding someone less effective than we are. Ouch.
  - 2. To which Jesus responds: None of your business!
    - a) "Follow me!"
    - b) This was what the breakfast date was all about, "**You, follow me!**"
- C. Follow me Peter!
  - 1. Jn 21:19 Follow me no matter what you face.
  - 2. Jn 21:22 Follow me no matter what I am doing in other peoples lives.
  - 3. Jn 21:23 Follow me no matter if/when others appear more favored than you.
  - 4. Peter has just been recommissioned...to live and to minister. It is what we all want

in our journey with God. It took him back to the beginning, "Follow me."

IE. After a long night and day of marching, Robert E. Lee and the exhausted Army of Northern Virginia made camp just east of Appomattox Courthouse on April 8. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant had sent him a letter on the night of April 7, following confrontations between their troops at Cumberland Church and Farmville, suggesting that Lee surrender. The Southern general refused. Grant replied, again suggesting surrender to end the bloodshed. Lee responded, saying in part, "I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender of this army," though he offered to meet Grant at 10 the next morning between picket lines to discuss a peaceful outcome.

Having watched the battle through field glasses—Lee then said, "Then there is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths." But meeting General Grant at the McLean house, Lee said "We are pressed and are ready to surrender. What are your terms?" Surprisingly it wasn't judgment. It wasn't prison. It wasn't retribution ... The terms were to stop fighting and to start living. Give up your weapons, go home and plant your fields. The soldiers who hadn't eaten in days were given meal rations, horses and mules to plow fields. The war was over but for many people, life had just begun.

(Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt and Mark E. Neely Jr., "Appomattox Courthouse," HistoryNet, [www.historynet.com/appomattox-court-house-battle](http://www.historynet.com/appomattox-court-house-battle))

**Conclusion:**

- The truth about Jesus is:
  - He accepts us where we are.
  - He loves us as we are.
  - He entrusts us with the lives of others.
- If you have forsaken him, let him down, offended him, take heart, he is not any less eager to repair things with you. Seek his face. Ask him. Receive his grace.