

Jesus Recommissions His Disciples: Go Fish

sermonaudio.com

Gospel of John

By Ty Blackburn

Bible Text: John 21:1-14

Preached on: Sunday, July 3, 2016

Providence Church

2146 Buford Hwy

Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Please turn in your Bibles to the 21st chapter of John. We come to the final chapter in this wonderful Gospel. Today we'll be looking at verses 1 to 14 of John 21. The title of the message, actually the title of, I think three messages in this chapter will be, "Jesus Recommissions His Disciples," and today the subtitle is, "Go Fish."

It's interesting when you read the commentators that talk about John 21, there are a lot of people who believe that John 21 wasn't originally in the Gospel. They don't really have any textual reason, you know, there are occasionally circumstances where as we look at the text, the copies of the text through the years, that we find a verse here that might not have been in the original, there's no textual reason for that, all of the manuscripts have John 21 there, but some of the liberal scholars that like to really criticize the Scripture in a bad way, will say that it seems anticlimactic. After the summary statement in John 20:30 and 31, what more was there to say; it seems this is added by someone else. Well, of course, that's all ridiculous. This is clearly there by divine authority. It was breathed out by God through the Apostle John when he wrote the book, but people overthink and over analyze. You know, you come to a closing, it is a beautiful closing in John 20:30 and 31, there's a sense in which we looked at last week, a closing argument, everything is brought to bear and finally the final press is made, in a sense, for a decision. We called that "Evidence that Demands a Verdict" last week and I think that's right. It is there but often in stories where, just take an example of one of those whodunit movies or whodunit shows, it comes all to the climax when you finally know the verdict who is the guilty party, the movie never ends right there. There is always an epilogue. There is always an afterward where you find out what happened and this is, in a sense, the same thing.

But even more than that, this passage has tremendous teaching and implications and had tremendous impact on the apostles or the disciples at the time. They needed to hear this because what they really get in the 21st chapter, after John comes to his climax and says basically in seeing the risen Christ, Thomas proclaims, "My Lord and my God," and so the evidence is there for believers and he says, "Look, these things have been written so that you may believe." But let me tell you about now the wonderful recommissioning that Jesus gave to us in his last appearance I want to tell you about. It wasn't the last appearance of Jesus post-resurrection, it wasn't the last but it's the last one John includes in his Gospel and this message is essentially his recommissioning of his disciples.

John 21:1 to 14. Before we read it, though, I want just to remind you, I think when you put yourself, it's easy for us to forget and to just sort of assume all that we know in Acts and later about the apostles, but if you really stop and evaluate what was their circumstance between the resurrection on Easter Sunday and the getting of the Spirit 50 days later at Pentecost, seven weeks later, think about this. Jesus is crucified on Friday. They get word from Mary Magdalene early on Sunday morning that he has been raised. They rush to the tomb, Peter and John do. They find the tomb empty. Later that day, Jesus appears to 10 of the 11 remaining apostles, excepting Thomas. Then a week later, they wait a whole week before he comes back. Now think about that. They had a resurrection appearance then Jesus disappears. For a week they wait. Then they're still in Jerusalem, they're still scared, the doors are still locked because of fear of the Jews. Jesus appears in their midst again, this time to tell Thomas, "Thomas, reach here your finger. Reach here your hand." Thomas says, "My Lord and my God," and John in summing that up says, "This is the climax of what I'm hoping every one of my readers will come to this conclusion, that you will see that Jesus is your Lord and your God." But now I want to tell you something else about what happened after those things. That's why he's going to say "after these things," and what he does is he takes us into the mind and the hearts of those disciples.

So Jesus appears on resurrection Sunday, he appears a week later on the eighth day, that next Sunday. He appears many times over those 40 days after the resurrection but it's not like an everyday occurrence and we're going to find today that the disciples have left Jerusalem, they're back in Galilee, they've gone home. There's nothing abnormal about that. They just went to Jerusalem for the feast. They went with Jesus to the Passover, something that faithful Jews were to do three times a year, three pilgrimage feasts, Passover was one of them. So they go to Passover and you stay in Jerusalem through the feast of unleavened bread which lasts a week from Passover. Then you go home and so they have gone home to Galilee. They also have gone home because Jesus, we're told in Mark, that the angel when he appeared to some of the women at the tomb, the angel appeared and said, "Go to my brothers. Go to Jesus' disciples and tell them that he will precede them into Galilee." So they were to go to Galilee expecting to see him again.

So this is one of those times, they go to Galilee and they see him, but what is happening is he is dealing with them where they are. And I mentioned when we talked about there are four resurrection appearances that John gives us. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene. Then, as I just mentioned, he appears to the 10. Then he appears to the 11. And today we're going to look at his appearance to seven of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. But in each of these appearances, when I told you when we first started looking at these, that it appears that what John wants us to focus on is the difference it makes in encountering the risen Christ and so he points out the circumstances beforehand of the person that's about to encounter Jesus and then the encounter with Jesus and the dramatic difference that it makes. So Mary Magdalene was profound, deep sorrow, overwhelming sorrow is how Jesus found her, she meets the risen Christ and then she has joy. The apostles are afraid, the disciples are afraid in the upper room, they are paralyzed by fear. They meet Christ and then he breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit and go." He gives

them courage and confidence. Now, they're still wavering because the Holy Spirit hasn't been given. The third appearance, Thomas is doubting and what does he end up with after he meets the risen Christ? Exuberant faith. You see the change in each circumstance.

So here, again, as we look at this, we're going to see the disciples in something of a confused and hesitant, halting, unsure state. They don't really know what's next. I mean, think about it, their whole time with Jesus has been following him and just doing what he told them to do. You know, when he got up and said, "It's time to go," they followed him and now they don't have him with them on a daily basis telling them what to do and they're not going to have him on a daily basis telling them what to do. They're afraid and they're confused and you're going to see that as we observe this action.

Let's read verses 1 to 14 now of John 21.

1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias

It's another name for the Sea of Galilee, Lake of Gennesaret is also another name for the same body of water, the Sea of Galilee. This is just because it would be more familiar to his readers by this term, the Sea of Tiberias.

and He manifested Himself in this way. 2 Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish. 9 So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." 11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask for your grace and you're enabling power to understand and to apply your word. We thank you, Lord, that you have promised that the Holy Spirit who inspired your word is the one who illumines your word. May you have your way in our hearts. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, as we look at this, I want us to consider this under three headings. We're looking at a narrative and sometimes I like to do it this way. We're going to, first of all, observe the action, we're just going to look at what happens. And then we're going to try to interpret the message, that's the second major point. And then after we interpret the message, we're going to try to apply the teaching to our lives. So we're going to observe the action, interpret the message and apply the teaching.

Now, we observe the action of the events right before us. We're going to use some of the "W's" here and just look at the text and see how it unfolds. The first question is: when? Jesus says, "After these things." After these things. I mentioned that on Easter Sunday morning he had appeared to Mary Magdalene, Easter Sunday evening he appeared to the 10, the following Sunday he appeared to the 11, including Thomas, and now after these things. Sometime after these things between then and Pentecost, he manifested himself for the third time. This is apparently the third time that he appears to a number of the disciples at once because verse 14 says, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples."

So, when? After these things. Where? The Sea of Tiberius, the Sea of Galilee. They are back in Galilee. The feast of Passover is over and they've gone home. That's the second "W."

When, where, now who? He is at pains to tell us who is there and he mentions seven people, three by name: Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee,; and the sons of Zebedee, that is John and James. We believe John is the author of the Gospel so the author of the Gospel is there as well. We'll see the disciple whom Jesus loved is one and the same. So it's those five, the three, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and then he says two other of his disciples were also together. So there are seven in total. He doesn't tell us the other names. He wants us to be sure we hear those other names and when I think in particular, he wants us to be sure we hear the first and the last. He wants us to know that Peter is there and the sons of Zebedee are there. Keep that in mind.

Now, what is going on? What happens? They go fishing. They go fishing and we have dialogue about it. I can see how some of the commentators and folks in studying this passage, it is difficult. Working through it this week myself, it was hard. Some passages are harder to get to the point than others when you're studying them and this was one of those that was harder and I think that people have struggled with that and therefore they

just say, "Well, you know, it's just an epilogue. We don't really know exactly what it means. Let's skip over these 14 verses and jump to verse 15." But there is something really wonderful going on here and we need to watch it.

Verse 3, they not only go fishing but they have a dialogue about it. It's a brief dialogue but we have, "Simon Peter said," actually in the Greek it's one of those historical presents. "Simon Peter says, 'I'm going fishing.'" Why couldn't it have just been shortened to say, "They went fishing. They caught nothing." I could have saved a lot of space here. The Lord wants us to hear it for emphasis. "Simon Peter says, 'I'm going fishing.' And then they all say to him," we get to hear them all say, "We will also come with you." In fact, in the Greek it's even emphatic; the "we" is actually extra emphatic; it could almost say, "We ourselves will also come with you." So the seven of them agree to go fishing.

Then, "They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing." Now fast-forward, all the way through the night they catch nothing

"But when the day was now breaking," it's dawn, "Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was him." You may remember he's about 100 yards away. They are 100 yards out to sea. It's early morning, dawn, the day is just breaking and they don't know it's him on the seashore.

And "He says to them, 'Children, you do not have any fish, do you?'" Now, it's helpful, some of the commentators point out that the word that is used here, it can be translated "children," but it could also mean like, you know, say in England, "lads." "Hey, lads, or boys, or guys, you don't have any fish do you?" It's that kind of familiar term that Jesus used.

"They answered Him, 'No.'" So there's a dialogue about the catch. There are no fish and Jesus emphasizes that.

"And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.' So they cast on that side of the boat, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish." And this leads to an instantaneous recognition, the man that they didn't know on the seashore they now know because John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, recognizes, "It is the Lord," and he says it to Peter and then Peter with his characteristic impetuosity, jumps out of the boat 100 yards away and begins swimming toward the shore.

Then you would expect to find Peter reuniting with Jesus. Isn't that when you read through it, you expect that? But all we have is, "the other disciples came." So we stay with the narrator. He's in the boat. And so they're bringing these fish in, these 153, they're going to count them in a little bit, 153 fish in. But there is no record of what Peter said to Jesus, Peter running up and embracing Jesus. You expect that but it's not there.

Then when they finally get to the shore, "So when they got out on the land," verse 9, "they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread." I think there is a

sense in which they're just kind of almost in a daze. You know, Jesus is here, we're fishing, we've brought this in and it's not like they run up and start asking him questions, you know, they are like, "There's a fire there." And of course, it's a miracle, in a sense, Jesus has fish already. There is a fire laid and fish are cooking so they are smelling; they've been out all night and they're smelling breakfast. They didn't think they were going to have any good breakfast. They thought they were going to have to eat a Pop Tart but they have fish on the fire and bread, freshly baked bread, the smell of that.

"Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.'" I want some more of your fish. I'm going to receive some of your fish too to add to this. So Simon Peter goes and gets the fish and then we have Jesus say, "Come and have breakfast." John points out that they didn't dare ask him, "Who are You?" They knew it was the Lord. Then "Jesus comes and takes bread and gives it to them, and the fish likewise." He serves them breakfast. Then he ends up this section, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead."

Jesus feeds them but John is telling us that this has been a manifestation of Jesus' glory. In fact, the word is used three times. Verse 1, twice, "After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples"; verse 1, "and He manifested Himself in this way." Verse 14, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples." The word "manifested" is a verb which means, it comes from a word which means "to shine light upon," so it is to make visible. So Jesus is making visible his glory in this event. He's making visible his glory in this event.

Now, let's think about that. I want to move now to the second point: interpret the message. We observed the action, let's interpret the message. Why? Why does Jesus choose to reveal himself, to manifest himself, when they were out on a basically unsuccessful fishing trip? It wasn't he wasn't looking at his watch and he showed up a little early, "I didn't realize they were fishing." Of course not. He chooses and, remember, there are selected moments that he appears to his disciples and this is one which he chooses in which he chooses to appear and reveal himself. What is going on with that?

Now, we said what are their circumstances? They are in between the resurrection and Pentecost. Occasional appearances. They don't know the future plan. They lack clarity. Their lives have been turned upside down. The great joy that they have in Christ is still shrouded in some confusion. They know that opposition is great around them and they know that they are inadequate. They're dealing with guilt, fear, a sense of personal unworthiness, their doubts concerning themselves, not about him but about them.

Now, let's go over the facts one more time because I think what has happened here is Jesus has re-created a circumstance. It's almost like a man who loves his wife and I love my wife dearly but I was too young when I got married and dumb. I was just 22 and I had had a very poor plan for the engagement. I mean, it wasn't terrible but I executed it poorly. That's another story. We're not going to go there. I'm sorry, honey. But this is one thing that I won't be doing but some of you when you got married you had a great plan of how you were going to propose, to pop the question, and it was so good that it would be

worth, if you wanted to on your 25th or your 50th anniversary, to re-create the moment; to somehow sort of secretly work it so that your bride is in that same circumstance so that you can then re-pop the question. Wouldn't that be beautiful? For me, no, but for some of you, yes. I've got to work on something better, you know. I can't go back to the original. But anyway, isn't that a beautiful thing when that happens? I believe Jesus is doing exactly that. That's what makes sense of this text.

Where are they? They are at the Sea of Galilee, John says the Sea of Tiberias. That's one name, the Sea of Tiberias is the Sea of Galilee, is the Lake of Galilee, is the Lake of Gennesaret. Four different names for the same place.

What are they doing? They're going fishing. They fish all night catching nothing. Jesus tells them to cast their nets. They catch an enormous number of fish and then there is a realization of who Jesus is. Then Peter responds in a profound way.

Turn with me to chapter 5 of Luke, verse 1. "Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him," Jesus, "and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret," the Sea of Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, "and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land." This is Simon Peter. "And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. When He had finished speaking," he's finished his sermon and, "He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets.' When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink." They got so many fish in the boat, two boats, that they are about to sink. "But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!'" There is the realization that the man who has told him to put down the nets is someone extraordinary. "For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.' When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him." The other parallel accounts, Matthew and Mark, record it as, "I will make you fishers of men," Mark 1 and Matthew 4.

That's where Jesus found Simon Peter. That's where Jesus found John and James, the sons of Zebedee. That's where he called them, and here in his post resurrection appearance when they are kind of confused about what they're to be doing and they know they need to eat and so I don't really think it's a bad thing that they went fishing, they knew fishing, "I'm going fishing. Let's go fishing," but Jesus had a divine appointment with them. Exactly the same. They went out fishing on the Sea of Galilee all night, catching nothing. Jesus tells them to cast their nets and they catch an enormous amount of fish. They realize, there is a profound realization of who he is and Peter responds in a dramatic way.

So this all happens, now, I don't think they are fully catching this at the moment. I don't think they got this until later. I think John, actually, the reason it occurs in this Gospel and not the others is because years of reflection he's thought about this more and more and more and it has even become more and more wonderful and precious to him. I think Peter understood it after that Spirit came, he may have understood it then. I mean, somewhere along the way. You know, they were kind of slow to get things. They aren't as smart as our wives. If we were doing this to our wives, guys, I mean, this is a bunch of men, if it was ladies, they would know. "Hey, look at this, I see what's happening." Maybe they would, maybe they wouldn't but anyway. But what's happening, though, is he has put them in this position to say to them, "Listen, though you have failed me, though things are very different, I'm going to my Father, I'm going away." In reality, nothing has changed and he is recommissioning them. He's basically saying to them, "Go and I will make you fishers of men." He's saying, "Go fish, but fish for men."

Now, some things that we learn that we want to add to this as we learn in the passage because, in a sense, it's an enacted parable, it's a real event that Jesus has orchestrated to teach this lesson, when you go and fish for men, how are you to go? Not in your own strength. One of the people I was reading said this week that in the Gospels, the disciples never catch a single fish without Jesus' help. You don't go in your own strength. You don't go with your own plan. You go with his plan and in his strength. And when you go with his plan and in his strength, he will bring forth fruit in his time and in his way. He was basically teaching them here in John 21 what he said in John 15:5, "Abide in Me and you will bear much fruit. Apart from Me, you can do nothing." So that's the message that I think he's giving to the disciples.

Now, let's apply this, apply the teaching. Observe the action, we've done. Secondly, interpret the message. And now, apply the teaching. How? When life is perplexing and we don't understand what's going on around us, when our circumstances seem out of control, when the foundations appear to be destroyed, what are the righteous to do? Well, in the truest sense, to remember your commission and your commission is to go fish; it's to be about sharing Christ; it's to be about lifting him up no matter what happens. So worst case scenario in your personal life, things fall apart, your dreams come crashing down, so many things that you had hoped for are changed. What is the message? What are you to do? The same thing you were to do when Jesus found you, to love him and lift him up.

We look at our social circumstances, talking about if America continues to go from bad to worse, what if it just becomes a skeleton of what it was formerly and persecution breaks out, what are we to do? The same thing we were to do from the moment Jesus found us. It hasn't changed. We are to go fish. We're to be about the great commission. We are to go and make disciples, that's what we are all called to do and that will be true no matter where we are. I mean, I mentioned in a message not too long ago about Corrie ten Boom, the lady that was imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps. She was a Christian who was helping Jews in Holland. The book "The Hiding Place," the movie, "The Hiding Place," is about her life. She is helping Jews escape from Nazis because of her love for

Christ. She wants to help people in distress and so she is willing to risk her life and she ends up getting imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camp. Her father dies there. Her sister dies there. But what did Corrie do while she was there? Well, for a while she struggled. She was perplexed. She was frustrated but she and her sister figured out what they needed to do was to go fish and in the concentration camp they made disciples. They kept clinging to Jesus, lifting up Jesus, and they were used mightily of God.

So isn't it wonderful that, in one sense, what we have been called to do can never be taken from us? No matter what your circumstance is, you still are on mission if you belong to Jesus Christ; if you have repented of your sins and placed your faith in Christ; if you're trusting in completely his death, his perfect life, his atoning death and his glorious resurrection. If you're trusting in him and him alone, then you have been brought to him. You have been wooed by him. He found you. He brought you to himself. He proposed to you and brought you to himself. And in every circumstance what we need to do is just to remember that commission; to reflect back on what we are called to do.

In fact, I think there are four things that I would like to summarize to apply the teaching how. When you find yourself perplexed, confused, disoriented, discombobulated, to try to get your bearings, what do you do? Four things. First of all, remember where you were when he found you. That's what he invites them to do. He puts them in a circumstance which makes them remember where they were when he found them. This used to be their life and their livelihood. This is what they were doing day in, day out, fishing, fishing, fishing, and that was it. So remember where you were when he found you. Where were you when Jesus found you?

Secondly, reflect on the glory of Christ. Remember where you were, now just put your...remember where you were where he met you, he called you to himself and now just reflect on the beauty of the Beloved or the glory of Christ. Reflect on the glory of Christ. We noted that the word "manifest" is three times in the passage. Manifested, verse 1, twice, "Manifested himself. Manifested himself." Verse 3, "Jesus was manifested." That is, he revealed himself. He makes his glory known and he's making his glory known in this passage. I mean, and in this circumstance, they can look back at when he found them and what's happening right now and they're seeing his glory reiterated. I mean, Peter, when he said, "Go out in the deep waters. Let's go away from the shore. Go out in the deep water and let your nets down." And he catches all those fish, he knew immediately that this man is from God and he thought, "I'm a sinner. I'm unworthy of You." And yet that day in his unworthiness, that glorious Savior called him and said, "It's not about your worthiness, it's not about who you are, it's not about what you've done, it's about who I am and My calling upon your life."

But what did he see then and what did he see now? He saw the omniscience of Christ. I mean, Jesus knows there is a school of fish right there. A hundred yards out. He's not got some kind of hi-tech gadget. He is the Lord of glory. He made the fish that are out there. He is sustaining their life even now as they swim through the water, and he has appointed that school of fish to be right there at that boat at that moment because it's their job that day to show his glory. So the omniscience of Christ, the omnipotence of Christ. I mean,

those fish couldn't go anywhere else if they wanted to. This is one time where the fish, they see the net, they've got to go right into it. I think fish are pretty good about trying to get away. We were fishing this weekend and it seemed like that way for us. I mean, we caught a few but there were times where they were really good at getting away. On this day, nobody is getting away. The fish are going where Jesus commands them to go.

Omnipotence, the sovereignty of Christ. He has orchestrated the circumstances perfectly, and then you also see the gentleness of Christ, how kind of him, because the context is going to show you. Verse 15, what's going to happen is he's going to speak directly to Peter and he's going to recommission him, and he's going to speak directly to John and recommission him. But this is setting the environment perfectly for that event. How wonderful that our Savior has that kind of heart. He is that thoughtful, that tender, that loving, that gentle, that he puts everything in perfect order before he reissues his call to Peter, reissues his call to John.

You see it also just in him fixing breakfast. I mean, we see the majesty of Christ in his omniscience, his sovereignty, his omnipotence, but we see the meekness of Christ. When they get to the shore, here he is, he has laid the fire, he is cooking breakfast. Then in his gentleness and kindness, he even says, "Hey, why don't you bring some of your fish along." It's kind of like when, you know, a dad may have caught a bunch of fish. We were talking about this this weekend. Patty was talking about how her mom when her brother caught some really tiny fish like this big, it was part of a fish meal, "Cook some of those up." I can imagine what that was like, one bite. A fish nugget. But anyway, what was that doing? It was saying to that little boy who caught these fish, "Look how you contributed something." So here he is saying, "Bring some of your fish. I could just make all these fish. I don't need your fish obviously but I have ordained, I have called you to catch those fish and I'm going to use what you've done."

Then he serves them breakfast. I mean, all of the action is Jesus'. They are not talking at all. I mean, they may have been talking but John doesn't tell us anything they said. He says to them: come and breakfast. Two commands. "Come and have breakfast." All we hear about them is what they don't say. Then he comes, he takes the bread and he gives it to them, and the fish likewise. He serves them breakfast. In this sense, what you see is Jesus and some things have not changed at all, before his crucifixion, before his lifting up, what was he doing? He was serving them, washing their feet. In his resurrected glory, what is he doing? He is serving them, feeding them. Something about just the glory of God. He made us for relationship and one of the things that we enjoy the most as human beings is spending time together around a table, eating together. Isn't it wonderful, you eat a good meal and you enjoy laughter, you talk, you share your heart with someone you care about and you just get to know one another, that God has made us for that. This is what Jesus does with them. He takes time to feed them when they're hungry and to sit down and to breakfast with them.

That's what God is like. Do you want to know what the Father is like? Look at the Son. He says something similar in Revelation 3:20, interesting in that passage he is talking to the people of the disobedient church, the church at Laodicea that is lukewarm, neither hot

nor cold, and they are in danger, serious danger, and he as the Lord of the church has issued a stern warning but he ends up the warning by saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He's talking to those who have already professed Christ who are possibly walking away. But listen to the heart of our Savior, "I stand at the door and knock and if any man will open the door," if you will just open the door to me, what will happen? "I will come in and sup with you." I will come in and share table fellowship with you. This is what our God is like.

You reflect on the greatness of his glory, his humanity, his gentleness, his love. So you remember where you were when he found you; reflect on the greatness of his glory; thirdly, love him. In reflecting on the greatness of his glory, let your heart go out to him in love. Express your love to him. Delight in his love.

And then finally, fourthly, lift him up. When we find ourselves discombobulated, we don't know what to do, we remember we have a commission. We were called in a relationship sovereignly by our Savior to do his bidding; to live for his glory. We're no longer our own and the commission is to make disciples. How do I do that? I remember where I was when he found me. What I would be, where I would be if he had not called me today. Reflect on the greatness of his glory, the wonder of his person, the beauty of his character. And then let your heart go out to him in love, love him. And as your heart is filled up with love for him, lift him up, share him. Talk about him. Talk about a Savior that is both majestic and meek; holy and yet approachable; one who is a judge and yet also one who says, "A bruised reed I will not break, and a smoking flax I will not extinguish." And as you lift him up, remember that as you lift him up you must do it in his strength and not yours, "For apart from Me you can do nothing."

You know, the Lord has a way of doing those kind of things in our lives. It may not be quite as detailed as that but he has a way of giving us our own little experiences of déjà vu and that's really what's happening here. "Hey, we've been here before." To remind us of his great love for us and to remind us of why he called us.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, how grateful we are for the revelation of your heart in fullness in your Son. We're so grateful that you are a God who is love and that from all eternity past, you have existed in a communion of love and delight and joy and pleasure; you loving your Son, your Son loving you, your Son loving the Spirit, the Spirit loving you. And Lord, we are amazed that you have invited us, you have created us and then invited us into a relationship like that, to be a part of that wonderful experience of a holy family. Lord, we pray for those that are here that need to stop living for themselves and to surrender to Christ, today that you will grant them the grace to do that; that they will run home through Jesus. Father, we pray that you would help all of us to be people who remember what is the one thing that matters, knowing and loving you every moment of every day and making you known. We pray this in Jesus' name.