

Subject: *The Lord's Last Miracle*

Scripture: *John 21:1-14*

The Gospel of John includes eight miracles of Jesus:

- Water turned into wine (2:1-11)
- Nobleman's son healed (4:46-54)
- Impotent man healed (5:1-9)
- Feeding of the 5,000 (6:5-14)
- Walking on the water (6:16-21)
- Healing of the man born blind (9:1-7)
- Lazarus raised from the dead (11:38-44)
- Miraculous catch of fish (21:1-11)

Several of His miracles took place around water, including this last miracle that involves fishing on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples wonder what life is going to be like without Jesus by their side. He died on the cross, rose again, and then appeared to them so they knew He was alive, but He also told them He was going away. What would they do? How would He care for them now that He was no longer with them physically? Jesus showed them in this miracle that they could not provide for themselves and He was still going to care for them and meet their needs.

1. The miracle on the sea (vs. 1-8)

The setting for this miracle is one of failure. Peter and some of the apostles went fishing and caught nothing. The whole night was a miserable failure, but the Lord brought good out of it.

- Peter went back to his old way of life

The best of men are still men at best. There's nothing wrong with going fishing, but when Peter said, "I go a fishing," he meant that he was going back to his old occupation as a fisherman. He was a fisherman by trade, but Jesus told him to leave his fishing nets, follow Him, and He would start fishing for men.

- Peter had an influence on others

The other six disciples said, "We are going with you." Whenever a person fails the Lord, it can have a domino effect. When a wife fails, it can affect her husband. When a husband fails, he can affect his wife. All of us influence other people for good or for bad. Just imagine the headline in the Jerusalem newspaper: "Leader of Disciples Quits the Ministry."

- The disciples' failure became the Lord's opportunity

Sometimes the Lord allows us to fail. They fished all night, but caught nothing. That's why they call it fishing instead of catching. Jesus calls out from the shore and asks them if they had caught anything, and they had to say, "No." That was so embarrassing. Jesus told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they immediately caught so many fish they couldn't even get them in the boat. When they got to shore, and they were so amazed they even counted them—153 fish, big ones, and their net didn't brake. John told Peter on the boat, "It's the Lord," and then Peter jumped in and swam to shore. What a story.

2. The meeting on the shore (vs. 9-14)

When the disciples came ashore they saw that Jesus had a fire burning and breakfast cooking, He invited them to come and eat. They knew it was the Lord and they sat around the fire and had breakfast. The Bible makes a point of saying this was the third time Jesus showed Himself to them after the resurrection. He proved again and again that He was truly alive. On the water Jesus showed them His power, and on the shore He showed them His grace, especially to Peter. Jesus used these circumstances to remind Peter of a few things:

- Peter remembered another time on the sea

Luke 5:3-6 *And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.*

- Peter remembered another time by the fire

John 18:17-18 *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. The night was cold and the fire was hot, but Peter was lukewarm.*

John 18:25-27 *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

Why did Jesus want Peter to remember these things? To humble him, forgive him, and restore him. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Lessons to learn about failure:

- 1) Anybody can fail the Lord
- 2) Our failures affect other people
- 3) Whenever we fail Jesus remains faithful
- 4) By God's grace our failures are not final

One man testified: "Looking back, my life seems like one long obstacle race with me as the chief obstacle." I love those words to *Amazing Grace*: "Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home." Life is full of dangers, toils, and snares (traps, things that trip us and take us down). It's a blessing to get knocked down if it makes you humble and makes you ready to receive God's grace.