

BREAKFAST WITH JESUS: AN INVITATION TO RESTORATION

Scripture: John 21:1–14

Imagine this. You've failed at what you've been doing. You've gone back to your old life. You're tired. You're hungry. You're unsure. So, you decide to go fishing. Then, as the sun rises, you see someone standing on the shore calling to you. Offering you breakfast! It's Jesus! It's for the disciples who fished all night and caught nothing. It's for the one who denied Him and wept bitterly. It's for the ones who weren't sure what would happen next. Jesus was inviting them all; tired, broken, uncertain, to come ashore and have breakfast with Him. Notice where this happened. It wasn't in a temple. It wasn't at a revival meeting. Not even during a big miracle Jesus was performing! It happened *while the disciples were fishing*. And it could happen to you! His invitation isn't just for the strong or the put-together. Jesus didn't wait for the disciples to "*get it together*." He met them right where they were! In their confusion. In their weariness. On a beach at dawn.

You see, Jesus meets you right where *you* are. In the middle of your Monday morning commute. Your traffic jams. Your messy house. Your busy schedule. Whatever! Jesus stands quietly by calling to you. Not shouting. Not forcing His way in. He's just *there* close enough for you to hear Him if your heart is listening. Calling you not with anger. But with love! "*Come. I have what you're looking for. Come. Be with Me.*" It's a reminder of Revelation 3:20 — "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him. And he with Me.*"

That verse inspired William Holman Hunt in 1854 to paint a picture, *The Light of the World*, based on that verse from Revelation. The door represents the human heart. And when you look at the picture, the lack of an exterior handle on the door signifies that it must be opened from the inside. That's the clue! You have to open the door! You have to hear His voice and open the door *yourself*! But, if you haven't, maybe you're like the 1980 song by Johnny Lee, "*Lookin' for love in all the wrong places.*" He's been standing there every day, and you didn't realize it!

Now, let's get into our lesson for today. Before the disciples went fishing with Peter out on the Sea of Galilee in John 21, they had been in Jerusalem. They had seen the risen Jesus at least twice after the resurrection. (John 20:19–29) Jesus had appeared to them behind locked doors in the Upper Room first, *without* Thomas. Then again *with* Thomas when Thomas recognized Jesus and said, "*My Lord and my God!*" But after that, things seem a bit uncertain. Jesus had told the disciples earlier (Matthew 28:7, Mark 16:7) that He would meet them in Galilee after the resurrection.

So, in our Scripture lesson, they traveled north back home. Back to Galilee. Near the Sea of Galilee. They were there waiting, unsure about what came next. Their lives had been turned upside down. Peter. Restless, impulsive Peter said, "*I'm going out to fish.*" (John 21:3) And the others followed. They fished all night and caught nothing! Then, Jesus appeared just as He had when He entered the room through the locked door in Jerusalem! Standing on the shore, He told them to try again. "*Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some fish!*" They did! And suddenly, their net was full of fish!

Now, this isn't just a miracle story about fish. It's a picture of life! Without Jesus, life can be exhausting and empty. But life with Jesus is abundant and overflowing! You see, Jesus doesn't need you to be successful in order to feed you. Our lesson tells us He already had fish on the fire and bread ready for the disciples when they finally came ashore and joined Him. Look at it this way. Jesus invites you to bring what little you have. Then, He multiplies it!

Ask yourself, are you wearing yourself out trying to "catch" a full life on your own? Or are you willing to admit you need what Jesus can supply, because He provides what you cannot! Peter had failed Jesus, miserably — denying Jesus *three times*! It happened during the night of Jesus' arrest just as Jesus had predicted. On the night of the Last Supper, just hours before his arrest, here's how it happened. During the Last Supper, Jesus was telling the disciples what was about to happen — His betrayal. His arrest. His crucifixion. Peter, full of confidence, said, "*Even if everyone else falls away, I never will!*" (Matthew 26:33) That's when Jesus told Peter plainly: "*Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me, three times.*" (Matthew 26:34, Mark 14:30, Luke 22:34, John 13:38). Despite Peter's strong determination he would die for Jesus, by the time the guards arrested Jesus, and the night wore on, fear had overcome Peter, and he did *exactly* what he said he would never do. Denial!

— First to a servant girl who asked Peter if he was of the disciples. He said, "*I am not!*" (John 18:17) Second denial — to people standing nearby as Peter warmed himself by a fire. "*You are one of His disciples, aren't you? Peter denied it, saying, 'I am not!'*" (John 18:25) The third denial was more forceful. He even called out angry curses saying, "*I don't know this man you're talking about.*" (Mark 14:71) Right then, after that third denial, *the rooster crowed!* And Peter remembered! Luke 22:61 says, "*The Lord turned, and looked straight at Peter.*" And realizing what he had done, Peter was overwhelmed with guilt and grief and "*went out and wept bitterly.*"

It's heartbreaking! But it's so important because later in John 21, in our lesson today, Jesus gave Peter three chances to state his love for Jesus — *one for each denial*. And it was *full restoration*. No long lectures. No cold stares. And if anyone ever expected a harsh word, it would be Peter. But what did Jesus offer? A meal and an invitation to sit by the gentle crackle of a fire and break bread and receive the warmth of forgiveness. Now, what about you? Are you hiding from Jesus because you expect His disapproval? He's offering you restoration! That's the heart of the Gospel! When Jesus calls you, He's not

offering a lecture. A guilt trip. Or a second chance to prove yourself. He's offering *restoration*, which means healing what is broken. Not just hiding it. But renewing your calling! Not withdrawing it because of your failures. But rebuilding His relationship with you.

Understand, when Peter denied Jesus three times, it could have been the end of this story. But after the resurrection, Jesus sought Peter — not to shame him, but to *restore* him. "*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*" (John 21:15–17) Each "*yes*" Peter gave, Jesus wasn't just hearing a confession of love. It was Jesus undoing the denials! Healing the shame. And re-commissioning Peter to lead and to love others.

And what Jesus offered Peter; He offers to you! When you fail, *He offers restoration*. When you feel out of it, *He offers restoration*. When you don't know how to fix it, He says, "*Come, sit with Me. Let's begin again.*" So, it's not about *earning* His love. It's about *receiving* His love! The fire is already burning on the beach. Breakfast is ready. And He's waiting for you to come to Him not with judgment in His eyes. But with love. Not with a list of your failures. But with a table already set. Not demanding explanations. But offering Himself and saying, "*You don't have to fix yourself first. Come as you are!*" Just as He did with Peter by the fire on the beach, He does for every heart that's weary, ashamed, or afraid. He's simply waiting patiently, quietly, lovingly. And all you have to do is come to Jesus. He is waiting for you! The table is set. He's simply waiting.

Billy Graham often preached with that simple, powerful invitation, "*All you have to do is come.*" In so many of his messages he emphasized that salvation is not about earning, deserving, or fixing yourself first — it's simply about responding to Jesus' call based on what Jesus Himself said: "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" (Matthew 11:28) Billy Graham would stand in front of thousands and say, "*You may feel far from God. You may feel like you're not good enough. But Christ has already paid the price. He is waiting for you. All you have to do is come.*" Billy Graham trusted that the Holy Spirit was already working in people's hearts. And the only thing left was a simple "yes."

That's the Gospel. Pure and powerful. *Not complicated. Not heavy. Just come.* Come to the One who already loves you. Come to the One who already has prepared the way. Come home today. Jesus invites you to Communion. Not Condemnation. The table is set. This breakfast is more than food. It is a new beginning. An invitation to love again. To serve again. To live again. *Today* Jesus asks you to come. Bring your weariness. Your failure. Your fears. The fire is burning. The bread is broken. He's waiting for you. Let us pray.

"Lord Jesus, thank You for meeting us where we are. For providing what we cannot. For inviting us — again and again — into Your restoring love. Give us the courage today to step out of our boats. Leave our fears behind. And sit down with You at Your table. Amen."