

JOHN

Stories Related To The Last Days Of Christ

June 16, 2019

I. Introduction

- A. Today, we are going to look at **John 21:1-14**. And like the last two Sundays, rather than reading the whole section, I will read a few verses at a time and talk about them before moving on.
- B. Pray

II. History, information, and lessons from **John 21:1-14**

- A. **John 21:1-2** . . . After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at 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.
 - 1. Obviously, not all the disciples were there, and certainly Judas wasn't there because after seeing what happened to Jesus, he felt remorse, returned the money, and hanged himself (**Matthew 27:1-7**).
 - a. However, just as a reminder, the twelve disciples' names are: Peter and Andrew (*brothers, father Jonah*), James and John (*brothers, father Zebedee*), Bartholomew (*Nathanael*), James (*the lesser, father Alphaeus*), Jude (*Thaddeus*), Matthew (*Levi*), Philip, Simon the Zealot, Thomas (*called Didymus*), and Judas Iscariot.
 - b. For the sake of time, I want us to look at only the disciples listed in **John 21:2**, in order to get a sense of what was going on with them, between them, and between Jesus and them at this time.
 - 2. **Simon Peter**
 - a. It appears Peter held a prominent place among the disciples because of the four times the NT lists all twelve disciples – **Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Acts 1:13** – Peter is named first. John also names him first here in **John 21:2**.
 - b. In response to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" it was Peter who answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:15-16**). And it was Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (**John 6:68**).
 - c. It was Peter who tried walking on water. And it was Peter who wanted to build three tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration – one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah (**Matthew 17:1-4**).

- d. It was Peter to whom Jesus said, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (**Matthew 16:18-19**). But it was also to Peter that Jesus said, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's” (**Matthew 16:23**).
 - e. It was Peter who said, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” And again he said, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You” (**Matthew 26:33-35**). But it was also Peter who in a short space of time denied knowing Jesus three times in order to secure his personal safety.
3. **Thomas called Didymus** (the twin)
 - a. Thomas is mentioned only once in each of the first three gospels, but seven times in the gospel of John. And only in John do we read the story of Thomas doubting the resurrection until he had undeniable evidence.
 - b. Yet it was Thomas who said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him” (**John 11:16**).
 - c. And it was Thomas who said, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” to which Jesus responded with these now famous words, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (**John 14:5-6**).
 4. **Nathanael** (Bartholomew), who was from Cana in Galilee
 - a. Only John uses the name Nathanael, while the four lists of the disciples I mentioned earlier use the name Bartholomew.
 - b. And as with Thomas, only John gives us some history and tells us of some of Nathanael’s interaction with Jesus.
 - c. Therefore, we read in **John 1:45-49**, “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ [46] Nathanael said to him, ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ [47] Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ [48] Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’

[49] Nathanael answered Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.’”

5. **James and John** (brothers, sons of Zebedee)
 - a. From the early church onward, the common – though still uncertain – conclusion of Bible scholars is that John is the disciple spoken of as the one whom Jesus loved.
 - b. We first read about Jesus calling James and John to follow Him in **Matthew 4:21-22**, “Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. [22] Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.”
 - c. Luke gives us a bit more information by telling us that Simon Peter was a partner with James and John in the fishing business. And so we read in **Luke 5:10-11**, “... James and John, sons of Zebedee...were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." [11] When they (*Peter, James, John*) had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.
 - d. When Jesus was appointing the twelve disciples, He gave some of them different or additional names. For example, we read in **Mark 3:16-17**, “[Jesus] appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), [17] and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges (boh uh NUHR jeez), which means, "**Sons of Thunder**")....
 - e. I am pointing the "**Sons of Thunder**" name out because we read in **Luke 9:51-56**, “When the days were approaching for [Jesus] ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; [52] and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. [53] But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. [54] When His disciples **James and John** saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ [55] But He turned and rebuked them, [56] And they went on to another village.”
 - f. And if it is true that John is the disciple spoken of as the one whom Jesus loved, then I want to remind you of his participation in an activity at the Last Supper which was not so good. We read in **Matthew 20:20-23**, “ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request

of Him. [21] And [Jesus] said to her, 'What do you wish?' She said to Him, 'Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.' [22] But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to Him, 'We are able.' [23] He said to them, 'My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.'"

- g. Imagine how Jesus felt about these two brothers bringing in their mother to secure important seats for them in Jesus' kingdom. I doubt that this activity by James and John made Jesus feel loved by them.
 - h. And though we can only imagine how Jesus felt, Matthew tells us how the rest of the disciples felt, "And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers" (**Matthew 20:24**).
6. **Two unnamed disciples** – we don't know who these two men were, and though speculating may be fun, it is of no value for gaining wisdom and insight in living a godly life.
7. Now the question is, why tell you all this. My reason is to remind you that these disciples were different from each other in a variety of ways, and that their behavior and interaction with Jesus and each other created an atmosphere that was not as godly and loving and cooperative as it ought to have been. They definitely had more growing and maturing to do.

B. **John 21:3-7a** . . . Simon Peter said to [the other six], "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. (*night fishing was common at that time*) [4] But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. (*I have no idea how it was that they did not recognize Jesus' physical form after having been with Him over the past two plus years. But they didn't.*) [5] So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" (*Notice, Jesus did not ask if they had any fish, but rather He asked them to affirm they didn't have any fish – which means He knew the answer before He asked. However, what I think is important here is the method Jesus used. He used a question to draw them in and allow them to acknowledge their need, before offering advice. In other words, He did not offer unsolicited advice.*) They answered Him, "No." (*And in saying "No," the disciples were admitting the failure of their efforts, which opened them up to accepting*

advice about trying something different.) [6] And [Jesus] 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."

1. It was not the physical form or the sound of His voice or the advice given that caused the disciple whom Jesus loved to realize it was Jesus, but rather, it was the results of His advice.
2. You see, many give advice, but only some give advice that works, that is, that leads to an outcome that affirms the wisdom of the advice.
 - a. God's advice is always wise, because when followed, it always produces good results.
 - b. Therefore, we are wise to live according to God's advice as given to us through His holy scriptures and through His servants who live what they teach, as opposed to taking advice from those who teach what they have yet to live.
 - c. And one of the marks of teachers who live what they teach is that they never proclaim the greatness of their wisdom and advice, but rather they allow the results from applying their wisdom and advice to proclaim its worth.
3. Now I want affirm here that we ought never, or at least we ought to be exceedingly cautious about giving advice before hearing the person's side of the story to whom we are giving the advice.
 - a. And when dealing with those who are not our own children, we ought to be very cautious about giving unsolicited advice.
 - b. However, if time is a significant factor, then at least have enough humility and respect to clearly acknowledge that the advice you are about to give is unsolicited.

C. **John 21:7b-8** . . . 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.

1. Did Peter do the right thing by swimming to shore to be with Jesus? I suppose we may not all agree as to whether he did or didn't, but here is my take on it.
2. On the one hand, by jumping in the water and swimming to shore ahead of the others, it is possible Peter could be likened to Mary, Martha's sister, as described in **Luke 10:38-42**, "Now as they were

traveling along, [Jesus] entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. [39] She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. [40] But Martha was distracted with all her preparations (*In other words, Martha's mind was on food preparation and serving her guests which took her away from listening to Jesus and therefore missing out on learning truths that would have been better for her – and her guests – had she taken the time to learn them*); and she came up to [Jesus] and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.' [41] But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; [42] but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'" Now the question is, was Peter like Mary in swimming to shore?

3. Before deciding if Peter did the godly thing, ask yourself, was Peter loving his neighbor as himself by leaving the other disciples with the work of bringing the extra large catch of fish and the boat to shore – especially since it was his idea to go fishing?
 - a. According to the story, Jesus was not talking about or teaching important life effecting truths. He was not instructing His disciples on what they were to do next. After telling them what side to fish on, He stood waiting for them to come ashore and eat the breakfast He had prepared for them.
 - b. Therefore, given these circumstances, it is my estimation that Peter should have stayed with the boat and done his share of the work, because in that situation, that was the loving, the right, the neighborly, the godly, the kind thing to do.
4. So why am I making a bid deal about this? Because too many Christians leave the work for others – work they should be helping with, either because they helped make the mess, or because they promoted the activity that needs cleaning up once it is done, or just because they are servants of Jesus Christ following His example of serving – and pitching in to help finish a task or clean up afterward, be it a meeting or a dinner or whatever, is part of loving your neighbor as yourself.
5. Therefore, whether here or in someone's home or at another gathering, make it your aim to offer help in cleaning up or in finishing the task that still needs finishing, for in so doing, you will be loving your neighbor as yourself – and you cannot get more practical then that in applying God's word to Christian living.

D. **John 21:9-14** . . . 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.

III. I want to conclude today by making three points from **vs 9-14**

- A. **First**, though many have speculated, no one knows the significance, if any, of the number of fish caught, or even why John included the count in his gospel. My reason for pointing this out is that rather than wasting time speculating why God did this or that or said this or that, better we focus on living up to what we know so that we are living as godly as we know to live for the sake of everyone around us.
- B. **Second**, according to John's gospel, Jesus' public ministry began at a wedding feast where they ran out of wine and He provided more, and it came to a close with Jesus providing breakfast for His disciples. If there is significance to this, it might be the reminder that it is God who meets our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs. And to help drive this truth home, Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33**, "Seek first [God's] kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
- C. **Third**, we see in **vs 11** that even though there was a great amount of fish, the net was not torn. This affirms a principle that we are wise to unhesitatingly trust in, and that principle is this: "What God asks of us is possible, and though it may seem too much at times, we always have enough of God's grace, empowerment, and help to do and live according to His will and word."