

## GONE FISHING OR FEEDING SHEEP?

John 20:19-21:25

### What are we living for?

Past couple of weeks we've focused on our Lord's death and resurrection.

Jesus' death and resurrection has changed our purpose for living!

He has given us new life.

He's given us **a new reason for living.**

**Seniors** often ask: "Why am I still alive?" "Why doesn't God take me home?"

Obvious answer: He hasn't finished His work in us and through us yet.

What if, instead of questioning "Why?!" we search for the reason why.

### What purpose does God have for us?

Jesus had a reason for leaving His followers on earth.

He has a reason for leaving us! **What are WE living for?**

### CRUCIFIXION OF THE SON OF GOD 18-19

### RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD 20-21

The story of Jesus doesn't end at His death.

Jesus' greatest victory, His resurrection from the dead,

*is the final proof* that Jesus is God's Son, and we should trust Him.

Evidence of the resurrection is blended with a call to His followers.

### DISCOVERY OF THE RESURRECTION 20:1-10

Even His disciples aren't expecting to find an empty tomb.

Mary and two disciples are shocked to find His body gone.

### APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN LORD 20:11-31

To Mary Magdalene 20:11-18

To 10 disciples 20:19-23 In the midst of story of His appearance,

Blends His appearance with our purpose for living.

**Jesus gives them a unique commission:**

**They will represent Him, as He represents the Father.**

21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!*

*As the Father has sent me [as His official delegate], I am sending you."*

**Jesus provides the power of the Holy Spirit.**

22 *With that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

This provision is **NOT** the fulfillment of His promise (John 14-16),

nor of His prayer (John 17) That happens **at Pentecost.**

This provision is like O.T. pattern.

He gives the Spirit to equip them for work He has for them to do.

They have a reason for living—just like WE do!

**The Holy Spirit equips people God sets apart**  
**to carry out a specific ministry.**

**Jesus presents a unique facet of apostolic ministry:**

23 *If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven;*

*if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

Tenses introduce special significance to His words.

Jesus tells them that when they grant forgiveness or deny it, they affirm what has already been done.

Matt. 16:19 affirms that what they bind or loose on earth, will have already been bound or loosed in heaven.

**They'll be God's representatives to declare on earth what God has decreed in heaven,**

especially concerning **those God accepts** as His people.

This function is **demonstrated in Acts**, especially in 8-11, when they become God's spokespersons to announce that God has opened the door for Samaritans and Gentiles to become part of His people.

In Acts 8:14, when the apostles hear that the Samaritans have trusted Christ, they send Peter and John to check it out.

**They are God's spokesmen to affirm what God has decreed.**

**To Thomas and the others 20:24-31**

Thomas' story is singled out for special attention

because of its direct relationship with John's purpose.

**His doubt 20:24-25**

Thomas is known as the doubter

because he isn't present when the others see Jesus risen.

**Thomas refuses to believe until he SEES the evidence.**

25 . . . *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."*

**His faith 20:26-28**

*A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

**Thomas sees and confesses Jesus as Lord and as God.**

This is John's theme: he wants us to believe that Jesus is God.

**Our faith 20:29-31**

**Jesus blesses those who believe without seeing.**

*Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

John uses Thomas' faith and Jesus' promise of blessing to lead into an appeal to the reader:

WE should trust Jesus, the risen Lord.

We should recognize Him as Lord and God.

When we believe in Christ, we will receive eternal life.

## **COMMISSION FROM THE RISEN LORD 21:1-24**

### **Appearance to the disciples by the sea 21:1-14**

Jesus' final recorded appearance is to the disciples by the sea.

**1** *Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias.*

*It happened this way:*

#### **The disciples go fishing. 2-3**

They've gone back to fish; they have nothing better to do.

While Jesus is present, it's natural to follow Him and to serve Him.

Now that He's gone, **what is there to live for?**

"Let's go fishing!" They're headed back to the old life.

"We might as well go back to the life we know!"

"We have to get on with our life!"

"We have to earn a living somehow!"

[7 disciples are hanging out together] **3** *"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*

Provides a reminder of His words: "*Without Me you can do nothing!*"

Doing their thing, their way, they catch **NOTHING!**

**Jesus gets their attention 4-14** *Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

*10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." 11 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.*

He knows their needs.

He doesn't need their fish.

When they come in, he already has what he needs on the fire.

He can supply what we need, if we'll follow Him.

This leads to a commission:

## Commission for Peter 21:15-24

After Jesus has breakfast with them, he challenges Peter, who led them out to fish, with something more significant than fishing.

### Call to feed His sheep 21:15-17

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.*

**Two questions** emerge from the passage:

Commentators don't agree.

#### 1. "Do you love me more than these?"

To what does "these" refer—the fish or the other followers?

Either question is appropriate:

Do you care more about me, than about **your fish**?

Commit yourself to following me

and to the role I'm calling you to. "**Feed my sheep.**"

Do you really think you love me more than **the others**?

Remember Peter's words?

*"Even if everybody else abandons you, I never will!"*

If you really think you qualify,

commit yourself to follow me. "**Feed my sheep.**"

#### 2. What's the significance of two words for love?

Are these just synonyms for love?

It seems there's *some* significance to the exchange of words.

Jesus seems to propose a higher standard

—one that Peter is reticent to claim for himself.

It's a word used to describe God's love for His people.

It's a choice, that isn't attached to conditions.

We don't *deserve* God's love for us.

God demonstrates that kind of love, . . .

*"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Peter claims love based on a relationship.

Love between members of a family.

Often used for people's commitment to someone/thing.

The third time Jesus asks Peter if he really fulfills that criteria.

Peter is hurt by the third question.

Is he hurt because Jesus asks three times?

Is he hurt because the third time Jesus questions his *familial* love commitment?

Some suggest he may be hurt because the three questions bring to mind three denials.

However you answer these questions, the point is clear:

***Jesus commissions Peter to commit his life to care for the Lord's sheep.***

*"If you love me, feed/shepherd my sheep."*

#### **Prediction of death 21:18-19**

The ministry to which the Lord calls Peter won't be easy.

Like **warning labels** in our modern litigious society:

Electrical appliance: "Unplug before sticking fingers in appliance"

Iron: "Do not iron clothes while on body!"

Coffee cup: "Hot! Scalding hot liquids may burn you!"

***We issue danger warnings about everything!***

**Jesus issues a warning label** before calling Peter to serve Him:

***"Danger: Following me may be dangerous to your health!"***

He's going to die for the Lord's sake. **18-19**

*I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

**Though the path leads to death**, the Lord repeats the call:

"Don't let that get in the way!"

**"Follow Me anyway!-whatever the cost!"**

#### **Question concerning John 21:20-24**

Peter notices John and wants to know about him. **20-24**

*Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" 24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.*

The Lord tells Peter not to worry about John.

God can handle him, without Peter's help.

Peter has enough to handle in his own life.

When the rumor circulates about Jesus' answer concerning John, many think he isn't going to die before the Lord's return.

John wants to clarify that before he dies.

## **EPILOGUE: THE UNTOLD PART OF THE STORY 21:25**

John informs readers of part of story he can't tell. 25 *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*

Far too many events took place in Jesus' life to record the whole story!

He has only told an exciting fraction of the story; he hopes that will be sufficient to cause the reader to trust Jesus, the Son of God.

## **LESSONS FROM JESUS' ENCOUNTERS WITH HIS FOLLOWERS:**

### **1. Are we trusting Jesus, the risen Lord?**

Thomas' response and John's appeal point to our need for Him.

### **2. What are WE living for?**

Are we living for the fish?

Are we out to get *more for ourselves*?

Is that what we're committed to?

Are we committed to living for the sheep?

Is our life about ministering to God's people?

**Are we living for the fish or the sheep?**

Jesus calls us: **"Feed my sheep!"**

That's a life worth living! ***What are WE living for?***