

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 21:1-14

(The disciples experience the wonderful miraculous catch of fish.)

1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were 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.

4 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.

INTRO - I'm coaching baseball again this year, I expect you'll hear a number of stories in the next couple of weeks.

A couple of years ago I was coaching baseball and one of the players had trouble hitting. In big situations he struck out again and again. It got so he wasn't sure we wanted him up to bat. He thought we didn't want him letting us down. It got so he didn't want to get up in those situations. He didn't want to disappoint himself.

I. That describes the attitude of the disciples.

A. All these men had failed the Lord.

1. Peter, Thomas, James and John, Nathanael, all those men here on this fishing trip had also been with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and run away.
2. They had doubted the women when they returned on Easter morning with the good news of the risen savior.
3. Yes, they now knew that Jesus had risen from the dead as he said he would.
4. But they had failed Jesus so miserably when the moment of difficulty came. Why they, they thought, would Jesus want to have them follow him and fail Him again? Why would they want to go through that pain of failure again?

B. It is important that in order to understand today's Gospel lesson you understand two things about what is happening.

1. First, this is not the first miraculous catch of fish that disciples had caught. It happened once before

A. When Jesus was starting his ministry, and the disciples were by the shore repairing their nets, Jesus asked them to put out into the water so he could teach.

B. Then he told them to put down their nets in an unlikely place to catch fish.

C. That day it took 2 boats to bring the fish in.

D. Do you know what Jesus told them after this catch of fish? **'Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.'** Jesus had used this miracle to call these fishermen to discipleship.

2. Today's Gospel is the second miraculous catch of fish.

A. This catch happens after the disciples had failed Jesus.

B. This catch happens when they were not sure Jesus would want them to follow Him, not sure Jesus would want them to do His work anymore.

C. Maybe they should go back to fishing.

D. And then, in a miracle just like the one when Jesus called them the first time, Jesus leads them to another miraculous catch of fish.

C. Jesus wanted his disciples to know no matter how badly they had failed, he still wanted them to do His work.

1. He still loved them.

2. He still had work for them to do.

3. He was still calling these men who had sinned and failed him to follow and serve Him, not because of their goodness, but because of His love.

II. That young baseball player did not think we wanted him to hit. God's people are still like that.

A. No matter the Christian, God sacrificed His Son for us, and we have failed Him.

1. We have not put God first in our lives. But, we have failed to worship, or used bad language, or denied him when WE had a chance to witness.
2. We have not loved others as Jesus loved us, but been selfish, and held grudges, and talked badly about others.
3. But, Jesus died and rose to defeat our sins, and death, and Jesus offers us forgiveness and eternal life.

B. Sometimes, we know we need that forgiveness, and want the eternal life, but we can't think how God could use someone like US to do His work.

1. One of the most effective evangelists I know is a man I met in Prison. He was convicted of a felony. But while he was there his life changed. This was not some show to help him get out of prison, because when I saw him two years ago, 10 years after he got out of prison he was still working as a pastor. You see, God sometimes works most effectively to show His power, and His love, when he works in the lives of those who at one time failed Him. That is the power of forgiveness.
2. For years, one of the most effective drug treatment centers I know was run by an Assembly of God pastor, who himself had been a drug addict in Philadelphia. You see, God sometimes works most effectively to show His power, and His love, when he works in the lives of those who at one time failed Him. That is the power of forgiveness.
3. I don't care how badly you have failed the Lord, today we not only hear Jesus calling His disciples back to lives of sacrifice and service for Him, today we hear Him calling us.

III. And look at the call.

A. First, Jesus simply says, "**Come and have breakfast.**"

1. Jesus calls His disciples to spend time in His presence.
2. Jesus calls us to time in His presence, worshiping him, being encouraged by others, receiving the Sacrament and the nurture of His Word. "**Come and have breakfast.**"

B. But, it was not long after this miracle that Jesus ascended into heaven.

1. Then he told His disciples the main task he had for them.
2. "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"
3. Jesus not only called the disciples, he calls us too. Jesus is still calling sinners to be His disciples and to do His work.

CONCLUSION - Jesus continued that pattern. A couple of years after this miraculous catch of fish, Jesus knocked a man off his horse. This man's name was Saul. He was the biggest persecutor of God's people. Jesus called Saul, to be Paul, and this sinner became the most effective missionary God had.

And today, God calls you!