

Jesus and the future

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[0 : 00] A really good question to ask someone if you're getting to know them is this. If you could invite three people, dead or alive, real or fictional, to come to a dinner party! Who would you invite? It's a good way to get to know someone. But I'm going to change that question this morning. If you could invite three people, real or fictional, dead or alive, to come and have breakfast with you, I wonder who you would invite. My top three, I think, are these.

Queen Elizabeth II, Paddington Bear, they're already friends, aren't they? And Sherlock Holmes. What an interesting breakfast time. That would be a great breakfast party. Well, as we come to this passage this morning, we're seeing a group of people having breakfast. That's what we see by the end.

And it's Jesus, the risen Jesus, who has organized this to happen. Breakfast on a beach. And he invites, not Queen Elizabeth, Paddington Bear and Sherlock Holmes, he invites his disciples. He invites his disciples to come and have breakfast with him. And we're going to gatecrash this breakfast a bit this morning as we have a look at it. But before we do so, we need to see what happens as we get to the breakfast. So we join the disciples at the beginning of this chapter. They're by the Sea of Galilee. I think some of our Bibles might say Sea of Tiberias. It's the Sea of Galilee. And there's seven of Jesus' disciples there. And Simon Peter, kind of feeling like he's leading the group, says to them, I'm going out to fish. And the others think, yeah, that's a good idea. We'll go and join you.

Fishing is something Peter and others did before they started following the Lord Jesus. But things are different now. They've spent these three years with Jesus, following him as his disciples. And Jesus has risen from the dead. He's told them that they're going to receive the Spirit, but that's not happening yet. They're kind of at a bit of a loss to know what to do, it feels like, as we read these verses. And so this fishing trip happens. It seems like a good idea of Peter's.

Let's go out fishing. Let's do something we know, something we love, something we're good at. So they go out. And as they do, as they go out in the boat, the end of verse 3 tells us that they caught nothing. They caught absolutely nothing. Their nets are empty. They have no fish.

[3 : 12] And if you're a fisherman, your job is simple. It's to get fish. And they have absolutely none. They're fishless fishermen. And they were even out at night. The best time to catch fish, certainly on the Sea of Galilee. If you caught fish at night, you could then eat some for breakfast.

You could sell some on to other people, sell some nice fresh fish to people. But there's nothing here. There's no fish. There's no food to eat. No money to be earned. They are fishless.

Fishless fishermen. But then the story changes. As we get into verse 4, have a look. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore. But the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

Jesus, the one who had risen from the dead. We saw that last week. We saw the empty tomb. We saw Jesus appearing to Mary. We saw Jesus standing in that room which was locked because his disciples were fearful.

Jesus had risen. And he now stands on the shore watching his friends fishing, unsuccessfully fishing.

[4 : 43] And as the risen Jesus stands there, things change. Things begin to change. He calls out to them, friends, have you any fish?

They didn't realize it was Jesus at this point. They probably couldn't really see him very clearly. He was quite a way off. They didn't realize it was Jesus.

And for someone to ask them, for a stranger to ask them, have you caught any fish when they hadn't, is just the worst question for fishermen?

And so comes back the answer, no. They probably were very reluctant to give that answer at all. What's this stranger wanting to do with us?

Is he going to laugh at us? What's he going to do? No, we don't have any fish. Please leave us alone is probably behind their answer. We don't know.

[5 : 50] But I wonder if that's what they're thinking. But no, this guy by the shore, he tries to interfere. So verse 6, he said, Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.

I wonder if there was any hesitation there. We're not told. There might not have been. But they did it. There clearly was some authority behind this voice of Jesus, even though they didn't realize it was him yet.

And so they threw their nets over. And what does it say? When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

This must have been a huge surprise to them. They hadn't caught anything. Now this stranger by the seaside tells them to throw their nets in and see what happens.

And suddenly loads of fish come. They're struggling with the net, struggling to haul it all in. An amazing thing. An amazing miracle.

[6 : 59] And as that happens, John, who's the disciple Jesus loved, that's what he calls himself here. He's the writer of this gospel.

He turns to Peter because he realizes who it is. Verse 7, Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord.

This is Jesus at work. This must have been a huge excitement for them as they realize Jesus is standing there and he's interested in us, even after our night of unsuccessful fishing.

And he's providing all these fish for us. It's the Lord. It's a miracle. It must be him. Of course, they'd seen Jesus do a similar miracle.

We'll think about that in a moment. But back at the start of their calling to be disciples, Jesus does something very similar.

[8 : 03] A very similar miracle. Miraculous catch of fish. We'll think about that briefly a bit later. And so, as John turns to Peter and says, It is the Lord.

Peter, being Peter, wonderfully wraps his garment around him. He'd taken it off. And he jumped into the water.

He jumped into the water to go over to Jesus. He was going straight there. He wasn't having none of this messing around with the fish.

No, he was off to see Jesus. It's the Lord. The other disciples, they're struggling to carry the net along. They're following behind. But Peter's off.

He shoots off. And as they get to shore, they find, I think astonishingly so, that the risen Jesus is there preparing breakfast.

[9 : 06] Verse 9. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. Jesus has been preparing a fire.

He's already got some fish and some bread. He's preparing breakfast on the beach. And he invites them to bring in some of the fish that they've caught.

It tells us they've got 153 large fish. It tells us that there in verse 11. So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore.

It was full of large fish. 153. There's lots of different interpretations of the 153 fish.

But I think it's simply that the fishermen had counted their fish. They wanted to say, how many have we got? And John is there and he's an eyewitness. And he can even tell us this detail.

[10 : 10] There were 153 fish. large fish as well. And as they bring some of their fish to Jesus, they're preparing breakfast.

Jesus says to them, come and have breakfast. Come and have breakfast with the risen Lord Jesus. It is the Lord. Come and have breakfast.

There's a few things I want us to notice from this. Firstly, it is the Lord. He is risen. He is risen.

Remember that real excitement of last week, all that toing and throwing from the tomb as they were discovering it was empty. Mary didn't really know what had happened.

She thought they'd stolen Jesus' body. But then Mary, Jesus stands by Mary and calls her name. She says, teacher.

[11 : 12] She sees the risen Jesus standing with her. The excitement of Jesus standing in that locked room, showing his disciples, his hands inside.

It's really me. I have really risen from the dead. Thomas wasn't there. Thomas didn't believe that he could have possibly risen. And then Jesus even graciously appears to Thomas and says, look, it's me.

You can touch my wounds if you want to. I'm here. And Thomas says, my Lord and my God. Remember that excitement? Well, we can still be excited about it this Sunday, a week after Easter Sunday, because Jesus is still risen.

And that's why this story is here, I think, to show us that Jesus is still risen. It shows us another appearance of Jesus.

Verse 1 says, afterwards, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus appeared again. And then verse 14, this was now, the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

[12:29] It's really important for us to notice that Jesus really is alive, that he hasn't just appeared to one person somewhere once. That would be quite unreliable, really, based on just one person thinking they saw Jesus.

But no, he's appeared many times and in many ways after he rose again. Acts chapter 1 and verse 3, kind of just over the page, says this, after his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave them many convincing proofs that he was alive.

And here is just one of them, one of the many. Jesus is risen. Another verse in 1 Corinthians, Paul writes, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time.

Jesus appeared to more than 500 people. Jesus is risen. He's the one standing by the shore. He's the one preparing the breakfast. He's the one who's provided this miraculous catch of fish.

Him, the risen Lord Jesus. Jesus. And he is the one who is Lord and King over his creation.

[13:50] He shows that mightily as he calls to his disciples to throw your net on the right side of the boat. He knew where the fish were. He was providing the fish, I'm sure, for them to catch.

It was all from the Lord Jesus, the mighty, risen King. King. And this morning, we meet together and we still remember that Jesus has risen.

We meet together on a Sunday, the Lord's Day. There's a Sunday, Jesus rose, and we're still meeting here a few thousand years later. We can be so encouraged this morning that we worship a Savior who is alive, who rose from the dead.

That excitement of that Easter Sunday still carries on, carried on for these disciples as they had this amazing catch, and it's still reality for us now.

I was thinking about the disciples on Easter Sunday. They'd had this amazing experience, but then they're just kind of here and they're just trying to adjust to life after Jesus being risen.

[15:12] I wonder if they kind of pinched themselves. Was this really real? Did this really happen? And after you've had an amazing experience, you might kind of think a bit like that.

You might think, has that really happened? So back in January, I saw a concert in London, a band called the 1975. They were good.

But halfway through the concert, Taylor Swift appeared. Taylor Swift, like the queen of pop stars at the moment. And I had a great time those few days later telling people I've seen Taylor Swift.

But then normal life happens. People carry on and people don't really care or they're jealous of you. For these disciples, Jesus had risen.

They told people, maybe people didn't believe them. And they were kind of at a loss to what to do in this passage. But they need to remember, Jesus is still risen.

[16:13] That is still reality. They don't have to pinch themselves. It is real. And that's the case for us, even today. Every day is a resurrection day.

Jesus has risen. It is the Lord. He is risen. And because he's risen, know what, we need him. It is the Lord and we need him.

We really do. As the disciples see, it is the Lord. As John turned to Peter and said, it is the Lord. Peter jumps in and starts swimming.

And we're told that they're about 100 meters away from Jesus. And apparently, that's the length of two Olympic-sized pools. Two lengths of an Olympic-sized pool.

I think that's what I'm trying to say. It's a big distance. It's not just few meters. It's a big distance that Peter swims. But he doesn't seem to hesitate.

[17:17] He just jumps in, gets his cloak on and jumps in. He needs to come to Jesus. And this is interesting because as I mentioned, this isn't the first time a miraculous catch of fish has happened.

It happened right at the beginning of Jesus calling Simon, as he was known then, and John and James to be his disciples, there was another miraculous catch of fish.

And after that one, Simon Peter saw this. And we're told that he fell at his knees and said, go away from me, Lord.

I'm a sinful man. Peter was in awe of this miraculous catch, this Jesus, who would provide all these fish for him.

And he said then, go away from me, Lord. I'm a sinful man. He knew his sin. He was in the presence of God. But now, after spending these three years with Jesus, seeing his wonderful mercy and grace to him, seeing him on the cross, seeing that he's risen again, he doesn't now say, go away from me, Lord.

[18 : 36] No, he goes straight to him. Goes straight to him and swims those hundred meters to see Jesus.

He knew he needed him. He knew he was a sinful man. But he knew where he could go, to the one who can forgive his sins.

And as Jesus provided this miraculous catch, he was showing, as we said to the children earlier, he was showing them the truth of this.

In John 15, verse 5, where Jesus said, apart from me, you can do nothing. They had nothing. They had no fish in their nets.

Jesus. They needed Jesus. When Jesus turns up, things change. They needed Jesus. And he's showing them the importance of them, the importance of this truth, because he's preparing them for life without Jesus, life when, life when he would ascend, and they were to carry on his mission.

[20 : 00] So we get a hint of that, don't we, in John 20. We looked at it, some of us, on Sunday evening. As Jesus said, John 20, verse 21, peace be with you, as the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

He was sending them into the world on his mission, but he wouldn't always be around, not physically with them. They still need him. They can't go about it on their own devices.

They need him. And fishing is kind of used as a metaphor for what they're going to do. He told them back in Luke they would go and catch men, catch people.

That's the work they were going to be involved in doing as they go about on Jesus' mission, bringing them, calling people to Jesus, into his kingdom. And he is showing them so clearly here that they can't catch people on their own.

They can't even catch fish on their own. They need Jesus. And that's important for us to know as well.

[21 : 13] God, we need Jesus at work in us, here in this place. We have many resources really. At Easter time we had all those Easter leaflets, we had a big poster outside, we stood and handed out leaflets, but if we were just doing that on our own without coming to God in prayer, then our efforts I'm sure would be fruitless, because we need Jesus at work in what we're doing.

Apart from him we can do nothing. A couple of years ago, as we've kind of heard, I tried building that Ikea furniture, and that didn't go well when I tried building that on my own.

I had so many offers of help, but I was like, no, I can do it. And in the end, after unsuccessfully building it, I realized I couldn't build the next thing on my own.

I asked my brother for help. I swallowed my pride and accepted help. I couldn't do it on my own. And as we follow Jesus, we need to realize we can't do this on our own.

We need to be like Peter and we need to go and swim after him. We need to be like how we began the Christian life, realizing that there was nothing we could bring to Jesus.

[22 : 46] We come empty-handed, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling. And that's still true today as we seek to follow Jesus through this world.

We really do need to begin every day with Jesus. every day praying, please help me in all that I have planned to do. Please give me wisdom as I try and follow you.

Ask him for help. Make it a priority to be at the church prayer meeting. We as a church, we need to keep coming to God, asking him for help.

We need him. Thirdly, it is the Lord's. Come and have breakfast. That's what Jesus invites his disciples to do.

He had prepared this fire and the fish and the bread. And he says to them in verse 12, come and have breakfast.

[23 : 59] Come and eat with me. I know you've been out fishing all night. I know you're tired. I know you're hungry. I know you need some food.

Come bring some of your fish over as well. Come and add it to my fish. Come and have these nice, warm fish sandwiches. The risen Jesus is soon going to ascend to the heights of heaven. But he's here on earth and he's stooping down to serve his disciples. Just as he had at the cross where he laid down his life for them.

Just as he had not long before that stooped down to wash his disciples' feet. Here he stoops down to make breakfast for them. An extraordinary act of service from the risen Lord Jesus, the glorious one.

It's an incredible scene. This is the dream breakfast party. This is the breakfast to be at. Jesus knew exactly what his disciples needed and he provided so abundantly for them.

[25 : 18] And Jesus, he invites us, he invites you, not to have breakfast, breakfast to even more.

Elsewhere, I love these words of Jesus, come to me, Jesus says, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Elsewhere, in the book of Revelation, we hear these words of invitation, the spirit and the bride say come and let the one who hears say come. Let the one who is thirsty come.

Let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. We're invited to come to Jesus, to come and find our rest in him, to come and find forgiveness for our sins in Jesus, the one who can forgive us.

Come and find our home with him, come and find the one who will bring us into that new creation that we read of at the beginning of our time together, where there will be so much feasting and joy.

[26 : 37] He understands what it's like to be human, understands what it's like to be weary, to be hungry, to be tempted. He's experienced what it's like to be human.

He understands and he graciously invites his disciples to come and have breakfast. and it's a picture of the invitation that he invites to you and to me to come and find your rest in him.

Will you come to Jesus? And finally, as we come to him, we stand in awe of him, in awe of the risen Lord Jesus.

So there in verse 12, there's that invitation, come and have breakfast. And then it says, none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord.

There's a sense of real reverence and awe of who they're eating breakfast with here. They see Jesus, the risen son of God, standing in front of them and they dare not ask who he was because they knew who he was.

[27 : 57] If they did ask, he would say, maybe he would say, I am. I am God. I am the son of God. And yet at the same time there's a kind of sense in the disciples here, can it really be so?

We're in the presence of God. It is, we know it, it must be. We dare not ask, we know. this is the one they have breakfast and they just stand in awe of him.

A few years ago, I went to see these guys. They're called Awesome Cutlery. They produce great Christian children, aimed at children, aimed at families, music and some other resources as well. And I got to see them over in Hove a few years ago with a family from a church over there. And it was amazing. I really loved it. I didn't really know much about them before, but I thought, these guys are great.

So you've got Cutlery Boy and Captain Awesomeness. Captain Awesomeness is in the red, Cutlery Boy in the blue. A few months after seeing them, I then started studying up in London.

[29 : 17] there was a guy that I'd seen from a distance who I recognized, but I couldn't place who he was. And I found out that his name was Gareth and he was in his third year, final year.

I was just like, but I really do recognize him, but I can't place it. And then it clicked. This guy was Captain Awesomeness, the one in the red.

And I was in awe. Every time I saw him, I kind of backed away. And then one day, he sat at my table at lunch as we were eating lunch at college and he'd asked to sit there and he then went off to get some soup and I said to my friend, it's him sitting at our table, he's going to eat with us.

And I then asked him who he was because I knew who he was. I ended up asking something sheepish like, are you into music at all? There was a sense of awe there, as it must have been for these disciples.

As the risen Lord Jesus stands there, eats breakfast with them, as he's provided this miraculous, so miraculous this catch of fish.

[30 : 43] And he wants to eat with them, he wants to be with them, but they know who it is, they know it's God, but they know they can. Peter certainly knew he can, he knew he could go straight to Jesus, he needed to, we all do.

This is Jesus. This is Jesus who stands before us in this passage this morning. Jesus, he is the Lord, he is risen, he is risen from the dead, the glorious son of God.

We need him, we really need him, we needed him when we first became a Christian, I'm sure we saw that and we still need him now.

We need to keep coming to Jesus, keep asking him for help to live the Christian life. We need Jesus, we need him.

come and have breakfast with him. Not literally, but you can come and have fellowship with him. He graciously, graciously, the risen Lord invites us to come and stand in awe of him.

[32 : 01] That's who we've seen this morning. Let's pray. Amen.