

Breakfast with Jesus

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[0 : 00] Now please turn with me to John chapter 21 and we'll begin reading again at verse 9. John 21 and verse 9, when they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread.

Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish that you have just caught. So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish, 153 of them, and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. And so on, we're going to look at this passage down as far as verse 19 especially. As we see here, Jesus revealing himself to the disciples following his resurrection as we see in the previous chapter.

And it's really important to realize that that's actually the theme that runs through these verses in this chapter especially. It's mentioned a number of times, Jesus revealing himself to the disciples. And that, of course, would be hugely important for the disciples to be assured by Jesus that he was indeed risen from the dead.

[1 : 21] That he was here for his ministry to continue to bless them. And indeed, that's something that you find beginning even before he left them, the final chapter of Luke's gospel.

That final paragraph there, then he led them out as far as Bethany. And lifting up his hands, he blessed them. And while he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And that itself was an indication, however much they understood it at the time, we don't know for sure. But it was an indication that as he was with his hands lifted over them in the attitude and action of the high priest blessing them.

He was carried away from them in the act of blessing them. And therefore, they were to understand from that, that the blessings that they were receiving from him during his ministry in this world were going to continue.

And indeed, in a sense, would be intensified through his ministry from heaven to them by the Holy Spirit. As John's gospel, especially, we find that he taught the disciples.

[2 : 33] So it's an emphasis on Jesus revealing himself to them. Here he is risen from the dead. But they are assured by him that he's the same person.

That it is really himself. And that he is there to bless them. And it's really interesting to compare this passage with Luke chapter 5, where you find a very similar miracle worked by Jesus in regard to a large catch of fish.

Indeed, you'll find some liberal scholars saying that it's actually just the one event and that the different gospel writers have woven it into different stages as they saw it in importance in the ministry of Jesus.

Well, we don't accept that. We take it that this is an incident that really took place, as John specifies it, subsequent following the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

And that the one in Luke chapter 5 was an incident that took place before Jesus had died and during the course of his ministry. But what's interesting is that you find in Luke chapter 5, that that miracle was performed by Jesus while he was inside the boat with them.

[3 : 50] Here, he is at a distance on the shoreline. But it's the same power, the same miracle, the same miraculous effect of Christ's word.

In other words, that fits into the passage in terms of teaching us the importance of Christ's continued ministry. The same person who died continues to bless his people, to show his power, to reveal himself, and does so just as much as if not more than he did previous to his death.

And the fact that he's not in the boat with us, if you like to put it that way, he's no longer physically present with his people the way he was prior to his death, that has not in any way interrupted the

reality of his blessing, of his presence, of his revealing himself to his people.

Jesus is just as capable here of providing this huge quantity of fish as he was in Luke chapter 5, when he was inside the boat with them.

So the emphasis is on the continued ministry of Jesus. That's what we're experiencing here this evening. Christ continues to minister to his people as the world goes on.

[5 : 14] And it will be so right through to the end of the world. And the two things we find in this part of the chapter are fellowship with Jesus and restoration by Christ.

His ministry to his disciples involves both of these important themes, both these concepts in this passage. From verse 9 to verse 14 of the chapter, you find the emphasis there on fellowship.

And then from verse 15 to 19, the emphasis there is on the restoration of Peter. But there are things there which apply to Christ's ongoing ministry of restoration for our own souls whenever we require, as we always do, that restoration from his ministry.

The fellowship then was Jesus that is set out for us or taught in verses 9 to 14. When they got on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread.

Now in the Bible, consistently you find that meals are described as fellowship occasions or regarded as fellowship occasions. And that is something that we can carry with us into our own experience too.

[6 : 35] It's a very sad world, isn't it, where so many families nowadays hardly have time to sit together around a table at mealtimes and therefore don't appreciate as they ought the benefits of fellowship together as a family.

Well, that's what God's people are to think of as well. When they come together, not just to worship as we do formally here, but at other times as well, it is in fact a fellowship of them together and a fellowship with Christ.

And these meals, and of course that comes through very much in the Lord's Supper, which I know you're anticipating next Lord's Day, that it is a fellowship occasion at the Lord's Supper.

It is heightened in a way by what is actually done at the Lord's Supper. I mentioned something about that this morning, but the fact that God's people, God's professing people, are gathered together at a table, and it's rightly called the Lord's Table, means that they are there in fellowship with one another and with the Lord of the Table, the God of the Table, to feed upon the benefits of Christ's death.

It is actually a communal meal spiritually for them, so that they together share in the fellowship that they have with Jesus and with one another.

[7 : 56] Well, here is something that is of the same nature, where Jesus calls them together to have breakfast with himself. But one or two details there are quite important before we look at the meal itself.

Notice the first thing in the first instance, that Jesus had prepared this meal before the disciples ever got back to shore. When they got on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread.

Now, we're not told specifically Jesus had actually prepared this, but that's surely the natural understanding we have of the passage. He had actually made this preparation for them.

He had actually laid out this charcoal fire and fish laid out on it and bread to accompany it, because he was providing for them a meal. And that was of spiritual significance for them, and especially to us as we read this now the way John has brought it all together and woven into it the theology that runs right through his gospel, where you find fellowship with Jesus so often emphasized.

Union with Christ, abiding with Christ, and Christ with his people. They're tired after the toil of fishing. They had first of all caught nothing.

[9 : 20] And after Jesus spoke to them, they caught this large quantity of fish and then found that he had prepared this breakfast for them.

And tonight, your toiling soul and my toiling soul needs to breakfast with Jesus. Needs to be assured that Christ himself has already in place that which is designed to feed your soul, to meet the situation of your toil and of your tiredness and of your struggles in this life.

And here they are being invited to come to share in this meal with Christ. Come and breakfast. Come and dine.

Come and actually eat what is provided for you. And that too is what is set forth in the Lord's table in a symbolical way. Although there's a real spiritual feeding upon Christ, the elements that are used

and the actions of taking them are themselves symbolical of that feeding spiritually upon Christ. And as we come to feed on Christ in fellowship with him, that's really something that you find brought across and put across in this passage itself.

[10 : 40] Come and have breakfast. Are you not thankful at the close of every day and the beginning of every morning that Christ has prepared a feast for you?

That what Jesus has laid out for you by a way of feeding for your soul is always consistent and always designed to meet your need, even if it changes dramatically from day to day or week to week.

Thank you. It's still the same Jesus who died and rose again, who's inviting you and inviting me to say, by saying, come and partake of this.

Come and dine. Come and share in this breakfast. And of course, he is intending that they understand they're not just going to eat together one with another.

He's going to be there with them and he is there with them. And they share this occasion with him and he shares this occasion with them. And one of the wonderful things about the Lord's Supper, something that I tend to think of personally in a way that really tries to understand more and more of it as my life goes on, is that when we come together at the Lord's Supper, well, it's true of the gospel meeting such as this as well of worship, but it's true at the Lord's Supper where these elements represent spiritually feeding upon Christ.

[12 : 02] it's a wonderful thought and a wonderful fact that Jesus comes to dine with us, that Jesus comes to share that fellowship with us that we have with him, that as we take delight in meeting with him spiritually and realizing his presence and share in this wonderful provision that he's made for us in his salvation, so he takes delight in coming to us by his spirit and in assuring us of his presence and in engaging on his own part in fellowship with his people.

And now he's saying to them, come, rest, take some time to actually share in this breakfast.

Now, there's something else here that's quite interesting as well. This was prepared for them. There was fish on the charcoal fire and bread along with it.

And yet he says to them, take some of the fish that you have just caught. Whether that was because there weren't enough fish on the fire already for all of them, it doesn't say that.

But there's a theology in that as well. Because not only is Jesus saying to us, everything you need, I've already prepared for you. It's all laid out for you and I'm inviting you to partake of it.

[13 : 30] But you have your own contribution. You have your own part to play in the fellowship, in the situation. And you go back again to another incident that really represents that same sort of thing to us, Jesus feeding his people.

The feeding of the 5,000. Such a small amount of food to begin with and yet when put in the hands of Jesus, it fed that multitude. And it doesn't matter, you see, that way, how small you may see yourself or I may see myself, how insignificant you may see yourself and how you might be saying even tonight that you are just far too insignificant to think of coming to share in the Lord's Supper or coming to the Lord's Table.

There are other people there so much better than you. How can you possibly think of yourself as good enough for that or compare yourself to them? What Jesus is saying, I'm not asking you to compare yourself to others.

I'm just asking you and requiring you to put yourself, your puny little self, if that's what you have it, in my hands. And leave it to me what I will do with that.

But you see, on that occasion too, he gave a specific instruction to the disciples that the food that he had miraculously multiplied, they were to take it and give it to the multitude.

[15 : 00] He didn't say to the multitude to come to him and he would distribute it to them. They were to actually distribute the food that he had miraculously provided. And that means that what Jesus has provided for us in salvation, in fellowship with himself, we actually have to come and partake of it.

We have our own contribution to make to that. There is a movement in our own hearts required of us in order to come to him and take what he has to offer and contribute to the occasion.

We're not absolutely passive and just mere receivers when we come to be fed by Jesus. We actually come to him and contribute our faith or the faith that is in our hearts and the love that's in our hearts as we'll see in a minute.

And the actions of our minds and of our souls, we contribute that at least to that occasion. So here he's saying he's provided this for them but they have to take a certain amount of the fish as well and contribute that to the occasion.

And then he says come and have breakfast. Come and feed. And I'm sure mothers and fathers too but mostly mothers have always said to their children make sure you don't skip breakfast.

[16:33] And when you leave home especially they'll say make sure you have a good breakfast. Don't go without a good breakfast. And in the rush of life today many people actually do without breakfast.

And you see them in our cities especially rushing to work just trying to swallow a hamburger or something and a bottle of coke for breakfast. Don't skip the breakfast.

And what Jesus is saying is how true that is especially in a spiritual sense. Take your time to actually feed upon what Christ himself provides for us.

for our personal life for our own development for our growth spiritually but also for our service forum. You see we're here gathered together not to be entertained but to be fed tonight.

We're here gathered together not because we're actually interested in whoever's in the pulpit or not we're here because we want Jesus to feed our souls. We want to partake of what Christ himself has come to provide for us in the gospel.

[17:36] We want to take of that spiritual food and in doing so we want to do it not just for our personal individual benefit we want to do it so that we'd be better servants better witnesses more able to go out into the world and live for him because that's what he's doing with the disciples and that's what he's doing as we'll see with Peter especially as he restores him back into his service.

This feeding is with a view to mission with a view to service. They cannot go out to face the world on an empty stomach spiritually if you like and neither can you or I.

If you're going to be an effective witness for Jesus as you and I must be you cannot do it without feeding upon himself firstly without taking in constantly of the spiritual food that he himself has prepared for us.

And you see this is not really for an elite group of people. It's important to realize the kind of people the disciples were and Jesus himself chose them.

The disciples that he chose were people who differed so much one from another in personality in character in abilities just the way that we are ourselves and differing one from another.

[19:06] Just look at the list. Simon Peter he denied him. Thomas he doubted him till Jesus revealed himself to him. Nathaniel of Canaan Galilee who firstly when he was told about Jesus as John also tells us said can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Surely you're not telling me the saviour has come from Nazareth. The sons of Zebedee and two others of the disciples were together. We don't know who they were.

They're not named. That itself might be significant. It's not really how prominent you are in the kingdom of God that counts. Some people have been very effective in the kingdom of God whose names have not been known.

Whose names have not been left to history to record them and keep putting them such as the disciples themselves or a Spurgeon or a Lloyd-Jones or people like that.

What's important to Christ is that we feed our souls upon him so that we serve him and that we're equipped to serve him wherever he sends us wherever we're placed in whatever capacity we need to be witnesses to Jesus.

[20:17] Here examples of failure of doubting of hesitation and even unnamed and yet they are all called to take breakfast with him and this audience tonight this congregation tonight is no different to these disciples in the variety of people and backgrounds and personalities and abilities that you have here and yet he says to every single one of you and to me this is for you I'm preparing this food the spiritual food for the likes of yourself now come and dine come and take it come and fellowship with me come and know me more fully and you see then it says they did not dare to ask who are you they knew it was the Lord

Jesus came and then took the bread and gave it to them and so were the fish and again the emphasis you see is on Jesus feeding he gave this to them and he gave the fish to them as well but they dared not ask him now isn't that interesting why is it they dared not ask him why doesn't it just say they didn't want to ask him or they didn't need to ask him they knew it was the Lord but it says they dared not ask him why is that word dared used well because for John the magnitude of Jesus

the greatness of Jesus the grandeur of Jesus the deity the divinity of Jesus is such a huge factor in his understanding of who he is and there's a sense behind the word dare of the awe and the reverence and the respect for God that's associated with Jesus as far as John is concerned they knew it was the Lord they did not dare ask him who are you because in John's gospel so often Jesus says I am such and such I am the door I am the good shepherd but in one case of course in John 8 he tells the Jews I am before your father Abraham was or came to be I am the I am that met with Moses at the burning bush that followed the people of Israel through the wilderness the God who revealed himself to them down through the years the God who had demonstrated his holiness his magnitude his greatness his awesomeness that's him here no less a being no less a grand person than that is now saying to these disciples to this variety of people with all their failures and with all their needs

I am and I'm inviting you to share breakfast with me is there anything more humbling than that for me and for you tonight to really appreciate who it is that's inviting us through the gospel to share in fellowship with him it's this awesome indescribably great God and yet he is genuinely lovingly addressing us as people who need his presence who need his feeding and saying well come I have prepared this for you and I am inviting you to come and of course it's that same grand person who said to the disciples take eat this is my body take this cup the cup of this new covenant in my blood and so it is for the

Lord's Supper no ordinary person who is inviting us or indeed commanding us to come do this in remembrance of me no ordinary person who is saying that to us no minister who is saying that to you no kirk session who is saying that to you it is the Lord as he is in this passage and that's really one of our greatest privileges that the Lord has seen fit to come as it were to come down to our level and say without in any way losing any of his grandeur or the grandeur of his person come and take this and share it with me so this fellowship with Jesus and then secondly a restoration by Jesus now more quickly he comes here to restore Peter when they had finished breakfast verse 15 Jesus said to Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these he said to him yes [25 : 53] Lord you know that I love you and then Jesus three times says feed my lambs feed my sheep tend my sheep Peter of course as you well know had denied him three times denied that he knew him denied effectively really saying he was not his disciple and that had come about despite the fact that he had so so insisted previously whoever would deny him he would not and of course that was Peter looking more to his own strength and his own resolve than independence upon the strength of Christ himself and so before he can go back to serve the Lord as a missionary as an apostle to go out to the world with the gospel he needs his own soul restored and you know that's part of what Jesus provides for us too even through the Lord's Supper as well as through the gospel remember that the Lord's

Supper is a means of grace it's not primarily a means of witness though there is that element to it it's a means of grace provided by God not only to feed our souls on a regular basis but as a means just like the gospel itself like the word is to restore our souls as David in Psalm 23 says about the Lord as his shepherd that he restores his soul to restore your soul means to set you back straight when you've gone out of the way to put you back on your feet when you've stumbled spiritually and whatever other ways you might describe these failures of our lives as Christians and that's what we have to accept we're not perfect and we're not going to be perfect in this life that we would strive to be as perfect as we can be nevertheless that's what we come to acknowledge in the presence of God and God comes to us and

Jesus came to Peter here to restore him for further service service he didn't write him off he didn't say well he's no longer going to be of any use to me if he could actually deny me three times what use is that kind of person to me no he came to restore him to be an effective apostle as the book of Acts especially shows us in the early chapters but he did so by questioning him in regard to his love three times he said Simon son of John do you love me in fact the first time he said do you love me more than these and we can't be absolutely sure what he meant with by more than these there are three possibilities and they're all they're all actually interpretations that actually are quite fitting in the context he could have meant do you love me more than these other disciples love me it could be secondly do you love me more than you love these other disciples it could even be do you love me more than these things you've now been involved with as you've gone fishing because that's what we made that Peter actually said

I'm going fishing he said we will go with you now it could be that Jesus is saying to him I'm here to restore you to service to be someone engaged in mission for me to go out in my name with the gospel that's what I'm going to do with you but I need to restore you first of all you need to be restored you need to leave the things that you've been presently engaged with you need to leave these you need to have your love for me restored and all these other things have to be put in a secondary place but in any case whichever of these three views you take what Jesus is addressing is the love of Peter for himself and that too is important because when we have failed the Lord in whatever way we fail the Lord and we do that regularly to a greater or lesser extent on a daily basis you know your own heart I know my heart you know your tendencies I know my tendencies there are things that we say to the

Lord in regard to our failures that we're aware of that perhaps nobody else in the world knows but when you come to him and when you tell him of these things and when you confess them and when you seek restoration the one thing you're aware of is that he is asking you at that specific moment do you really love me are you going to reaffirm your love for me is that a reality in your life that's what he addresses and it's interesting he doesn't say is your faith now going to be stronger than it was do you really believe in me that's not what he's saying to him because what's come to the fore in the failure is the question of love do you love me do you love me more than these and he does that three times and Peter is grieved that he did this three times and especially when it came to the third one in verse 17

[31 : 34] Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time do you love me and despite the fact that his heart was sore that Jesus had really pressed his finger on his conscience and it hurt the way Peter responded to Jesus questions is so significant for us he didn't say Lord I know that I love you how can I show my love for you I know that I do deep in my heart I know that I love you that's not what he said he said Lord you know that I love you that makes all the difference when you come to Jesus with a sincere heart you're able to actually appeal to his own knowledge who would actually dare come into the presence of the Lord and appeal to Christ's own perfect knowledge so that it would be made clear that he loved him but that's what Jesus is doing that's what

Peter is doing in regard to the love that he has for Jesus Lord you know that I love you Lord you know that I love you and then the third time Lord you know everything you know that I love you whoever else might doubt your love if it's a sincere and genuine love I'm not saying tonight that my love for the Lord is anything like to the extent it should be and you may be not able to say yourself that your love for Jesus is as strong and as consistent as it should be that's not what he's asking though that too is important what he's asking is do you really love me do you genuinely love me is your love for me a real love is it the love of your heart is the love that puts him before yourself before anyone else of course that's a challenge then this is the

Lord we don't expect to come into the presence of the Lord and not be challenged this is Jesus this is Jesus Christ this is our Savior this is the Lord and here he is coming to Peter and in his own loving but firm way saying to Peter do you love me more than these do you love me and here is Peter Lord you know everything you know that I love you came across this quotation from one of the biblical commentators a man called Henry Clay Trumbull who lived in the 1800s Peter gave the best answer when he said thou knowest mere professions of love and devotion amount to but little at any time Peter had already overdone the business of professing his unfailing affection for Jesus yet he was sure that in spite of his failure under peculiar trial he was known of Jesus as at heart a loving disciple of Jesus so he put himself back as it were into the care of Jesus appealing to Jesus to recognize the love which was underneath all his surface swaying of conduct a loving heart is always its own best witness it will speak as no words can speak in its own defense when doubted and when a loving heart is pained at being called in question because of some seeming failure it cannot do better than to trust itself to the consciousness of the one toward whom it reaches in love if indeed every human friend should fail to recognize the love of another's loving heart

Jesus never so fails the Lord knows them that are his whatever be their short comings now the Lord didn't in any way excuse Peter for what he did he wasn't going to gloss over his failure as if it wasn't important he wasn't going to just leave that out of the reckoning but he was there to restore him and that is the Lord's loving heart towards his people set on restoring us when we need that restoration as we always do to whatever extent we need it tonight maybe tonight you know in your heart of hearts that you failed them too maybe it's something nobody else knows but yourself maybe you've been carrying that around you with you for some time maybe you've been afraid to share it with

Jesus afraid of what his response might be afraid of the consequences of confessing your failure you have no need to be no one will welcome you the way he will no one will give you the reassurance that he can it's so difficult isn't it for us just to put ourselves into the hand of Christ to take the control of our life away from ourselves even to the extent of what we need to do in confessing to Jesus and seeking restoration and assurance of his love so difficult my present car has a device that is called adaptive cruise control it's a very handy device when you get used to it especially on the mainland when you're travelling long distance and in heavy traffic when you set it you set the maximum speed allowable whatever stretch you're on and then you set a distance between you and the car in front and once you've set it that's it you leave it the car will slow down if the one front slows down and if it stops the car will stop and then it'll start again after the car in front goes and it keeps that safe distance all the way you can drive from Inverness to Edinburgh with that without touching the brake but until you get used to it it's just so difficult when the car needs to slow down and you see something in front of you stopping you hit the brake you take over control now the adaptive cruise control will do that for you but you need to give yourself to it you need to let it control the car if it's going to work and it's very difficult just to leave it in the hands of the cruise control and of course the beauty about that is that it doesn't nod off to sleep or get drowsy and even if I should lose concentration for a moment and don't notice the car in front that it's actually going to come to a stop the adaptive cruise control sees it and stops your car that's how it is with Jesus you put yourself in his hands he controls your life he takes over he knows what's best for you he knows how to restore you when you need restoration he knows how to assure you when you need reassurance he has everything we require to take over our life to control our life the problem is do you really want that are you prepared to let him do that or do you keep your fruit sometimes yourself on the break of your life well what he's saying here to

[39 : 57] Peter is feed my sheep feed my lambs tend my sheep he's being restored to look after the Lord's people which is really still effectively what leaders in the church are required to do and what the Lord said to Peter in Luke's gospel and chapter 22 when he revealed to Peter that Satan had desired to have him to have them all as disciples that he might sift them all as wheat that's what Satan is set upon Satan's desire was that he would get in amongst the disciples get in among the church scatter and cause havoc but he said to Peter I have prayed for you that your faith does not fail and when you are restored or when you're recovered when you've turned round again when you've repented all these different words are used what Jesus meant was when you've come back from your lapse from your denial strengthen your brethren and if you look at first Peter and at the early chapters of the book of Acts you can see how effective the restoration of Jesus was when he restored Peter through questioning him about his love

Peter became such a dynamic leader of the church such a fearless warrior for Christ how did he come to that through feeding upon Christ through fellowship with Christ through the restoration of Christ and so for you and for me too it is exactly the same in principle when we come to give ourselves to the Lord and he controls our life who knows what he might do with the likes of you and I let's pray and above him of■