

A Fruitless Expedition

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Preacher: Rev Hugh Ferrier

[0 : 0 0] Well good morning friends or afternoon even. It's good to be with you, it's good to worship the Lord together to magnify his name. I've been given the following note regarding the Women for Mission meeting. Any ladies wishing a lift to the Women for Mission dinner on Friday the 2nd June, please contact Katrina on 890369. We're also looking for baking for the usual sale of work.

Ladies wishing to contribute, please contact Anne-Marie for details. So that's just a wee update about the Women for Mission on Friday. Well let's hear our call to worship. It's from Psalm 34. We read these words, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soulship makes its boast in the Lord. Let the humble hear and be glad. Magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. That's what we're here to do today. We are here to exalt the name of our God together and we'll do so by singing the words of Psalm 98. Psalm 98, that's the Scottish Salter version on page 360 and verses 1 to 6. Psalm 98 and verses 1 to 6. So sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done, his right hand and his holy arm, him victory hath won.

Psalm 98 verses 1 to 6. And if you're able to stand for this singing, please do so. O sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done, his right hand and his holy arm, him victory hath won.

victory hath won. The Lord for his salvation hath caused it to be known.

His rest is in the heathen sight, his right hand and his holy arm, he hath shown. His rest is in the heathen sight, he openly hath shown.

[2 : 4 1] He might forlove his grace and truth to his holy arm, he hath shown.

Israel's house hath been, and the salvation of our God ends of the earth have seen.

Let all the earth unto the Lord send forth a joyful noise.

Lift up your voice, allow to Him sing praises and rejoice.

With harp and voice of psalms, and to Jehovah sing.

[4 : 1 1] With trumpets, cornets, gladly sound before the Lord the King.

Let's draw near to this same God in prayer. Let's pray. Our God and our Father, we thank you and we bless you for this unique privilege that we have at the beginning of a new day and at the beginning of a new week to sing praises to you, to lift up our voice in song to the one who is Lord and the one who is King.

And we praise and we bless you that even as we gather like this, we do so knowing that we are received by you, that we are welcomed into your presence, not through anything that we have done in and of ourselves, but all on account of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are told in your word that you are a holy God. Indeed, not only a holy God, but we are told that you are the one who is holy, holy, holy.

You are the one who cannot be approached by anything or anyone, that is tainted by sin, that is tarnished by the things that can defile. And as we think about this, we are reminded that even over the course of the past week and even over the last few hours, each one of us has most likely sinned against you in the things that we have said, in the things that we have thought, in the things that we have engaged in.

[5 : 51] And yet we praise and bless you that we are told in your word that we are made clean in Christ Jesus, that we are washed thoroughly through him, that we are made white as snow in his precious blood, that he shed as a sacrificial offering on the cross at Calvary.

We thank you that we are told in your word that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, that through him our sin is removed as far as east is from the west, that through him we are told that our sin is hurled behind your back, cast into the very depths of the sea, that there is no condemnation in and through Jesus.

And we thank you and bless you that through Jesus, we can approach the throne of the maker of heaven and earth and that we can call you our Father in heaven. You know each and every one of us here today.

You know all that we have come into this building carrying, all the worries, all the weights, all the burdens that may be on our minds, that may be on our hearts. But we pray that as we engage in this hour and this act of worship, that you would give each one of us the grace and the ability to worship you and to make much of you, that we would be those who truly, as we heard in our call to worship, would magnify the name of our God together.

We thank you and bless you that you are the one who tells us that when two or three people gather in your name for your glory, for the express purpose of worshipping you, you will be there in the midst of them.

[7 : 29] We pray that today we would know your blessing and your presence being among us, that the whole of this time that we spend together would be glorifying to you, that it would be centred on the person and work of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, that it would be directed and driven by the authority of your living and life-giving word and that your spirit might move in this place, that your spirit might take out our hearts that can so often be stone-like and that you would give us hearts that are warm, receptive to your word and to your gospel.

We pray that we might know what it is to be under your blessing, under your benediction, under your smile today, that we would leave this place glad that we were here.

Bless every congregation today that is meeting for the purpose of worshipping your name, purpose of glorifying your Saviour, your Son, our Saviour Jesus.

We pray, O Lord, that wherever Jesus is lifted up, that people would be drawn to him, whether in this village, throughout this island, throughout our country, throughout our world.

Bless us then and please go before us, beside us, and behind us in all that we say, in all that we do, and in all that we think in this time of public worship as we pray in Jesus' name and for his sake.

[8 : 59] Amen. Well, it's really good to see the younger ones who are here today and I brought something with me that I'm sure you will all know. What is this?

I don't know if you answer from there. I was thinking of coming down but these three men are very spooky and scary, especially that man right in front. Oh, come down.

Yes, I'll come down. Keep your safe distance from him. There we go. Right, so what's this? See, he's looking at me now.

It's really scary. What is this? What is this? What is this? What is this? What is this? What is this? What is this? I'm just giving thanks. Yeah.

I better stand just a wee bit away from you because then my wife has COVID.

[9 : 59] I'm okay. I'm fine. But my wife is COVID. So I'll stand just a wee bit back from you just in case. So what's this? Yes. It's week of X.

Now when you normally eat week of X? Breakfast. Your elder John Murdoch there, he was saying he wanted to eat some of this during the service when he saw me clean in with it.

And I said I might throw him down one during the sermon. But normally you would have one. Just go on. Just go on. But normally you would have week of X at breakfast.

Now I used to have breakfast with three guys when I was studying in St. Anhus. And I would meet up with him for breakfast every day for four years. We would meet up. We would have breakfast.

Sometimes we would have wheat bits. Sometimes we would have porridge. Sometimes we would have bacon, sausages and black pudding. That's the best kind of breakfast, isn't it? Not wheat bits.

[10 : 54] Not porridge. But a bit of bacon. A bit of eggs. A bit of black pudding. That's the best thing about the ferry, isn't it? Having that kind of breakfast. And I would meet up with these three guys every day for these four years because we were very good friends.

We enjoyed spending time together. We enjoyed praying together. Reading the Bible together. Just being with each other. And we would have breakfast together. But I came up quite well with your minister too.

And I met up with your minister for a few meals last week because we were in every room together with Myrtle Campbell. That's why the three of us are doing this food pit swap today. I think Myrtle's coming to preach tonight.

We got one really well with each other. We had meals together. And we said, well, let's just do a food pit swap today so that we don't need to prepare you servants last week. When you get on with someone, you eat with them.

You spend time with them. Now, today, when you're at Sunday school today, yeah? When you're at Sunday school, I'm going to be speaking about one of Jesus' friends.

[11 : 53] Now, can you tell me the name of one of Jesus' friends who is always talking and talking and talking? He couldn't stop talking. One of Jesus' friends. And he made a lot of mistakes as well.

You know what that friend might be? You know? No, you're not. You need to tell me. You can't tell me. Yes. Peter, absolutely. Now, Peter was a man who loved Jesus, but he also let Jesus down.

Do you remember what he did that really let Jesus down, that disappointed Jesus and himself? Do you remember? Well, he pretended that he didn't know Jesus.

He was a bit embarrassed to be seen as a follower of Jesus. And he felt terrible about that. He felt so embarrassed. And so, he just thought he could never be one of Jesus' followers again.

And then Jesus met Peter. And he said to Peter. What do you think he said to Peter? You know? He said, come and have breakfast.

[13 : 00] Let's spend some time together, Peter. Let's be friends. Let's have breakfast together. Let's have breakfast together. And that's the wonderful thing about Jesus. Because we all let Jesus down.

I let Jesus down. And these men, they know what it is to let Jesus down. And I'm sure you know what it is to let Jesus down. And the wonderful thing the Bible tells us is that when we let Jesus down, he doesn't say, go away.

I don't want anything more to do with you. He says, come. Come to me. Let's spend some time together. So, this week, if you do something that you know has maybe let Jesus down, maybe something you've thought about, something you've said, something that you've done, you can know that Jesus isn't going to say to you, go away.

I don't want anything to do with you. He says, come to me. Let's spend some time together. Okay. Well, thank you for answering. Thank you for coming down to the front.

When I was your age, our minister used to do these talks and make us come down to the front. And me and my brother would be like, no way. We would just shake our heads. I'm not moving prodding us.

[14 : 06] And we're just, no way. And so, thank you very much for coming down to the front. I know it's not easy, but it's really good to see you. So, we're going to sing again.

I'll just give one of these standards. And I think you'll be going to some of these schools as we sing. It's Psalm 103, Psalm 103, Genesis College, Salt Version, page 369, and singing verses 8 down to 12.

The Lord our God is merciful and is gracious, long suffering and slow to wrath and mercy plenteous. So, we'll be able to sing again. Psalm 103, on page 369, verses 8 down to 12.

The Lord our God is merciful and He is righteous.

He will not die continually, nor keep His anger.

[15 : 37] He will not die continually, nor keep His anger. With mercy, then, not as we sinned, nor did it requite our ill.

God has the heaven in its sight. The earth surmounted far.

So, we'll be able to sing. So, we'll be able to sing. Those sad to Him fear His tender mercies are.

As far as He says, distant from the west of the earth.

From us removed in His love all our iniquity.

[16 : 59] Amen. Amen. Well, our reading from the Word of God is taken from the Gospel of John, John 21.

And if you're using, I think it's the Church Bible, it's on page 853. this weekend Myrtle Campbell from Barvis and myself were in the train talking together and he said to me what are you preaching on this Sunday in Barvis and I said to him I was going to preach on the thief on the cross and he said oh man I preached on that in Barvis two weeks ago so I thought oh well I better change my sermon for Barvis and then I found out that your minister has been doing a series in the life of the different disciples in the morning and I thought goodness I should have gone for something completely obscure I should have chosen Obadiah or Naaman or Nahum or one of these kind of books of the Bible but we're going to be looking at the life of Peter today John 21 reading verses 1 to 14 after this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias and he revealed himself in this way Simon Peter Thomas called the twin Nathaniel of Cana and Galilee the sons of Zebedee and two others of his disciples were together Simon Peter said to them I'm going fishing they said to him we will go with you they went out and got into the boat but that night they caught nothing just as day was breaking Jesus stood on the shore yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus Jesus said to them children do you have any fish they answered him no he said to them cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some so they cast it and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish that disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter it is the Lord when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work threw himself into the sea the other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from the land but about a hundred yards off when they got out on land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread and 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 now none of the disciples dared ask him who are you they knew that it was the Lord Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and so with the fish this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead amen this is the word of God to us this afternoon let's again draw near to him in prayer let's pray our father as we have just sung we rejoice in the fact that you are the God who is merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love we thank you and bless you that we see the supreme display of your grace and your mercy in Jesus that we are told in your word that from him we receive grace added to grace we pray today for those who may need your grace in different ways in particular ways we're aware that each one of us has come into this building today with a story maybe some of us have come here wrestling with doubt and despondency of heart and discouragement of soul and we pray oh Lord that you would draw near to those who may be feeling downcast in their spirits we remember those who are unwell those who may be here today who are worried about their health who are currently going through courses of treatment or about to start maybe others who aren't here because of ill health we pray that

your hand of healing might be upon them that you might be with all those who are dealing with their situation we pray oh Lord that they would be very conscious of the all-sufficiency of your grace in these days we remember others too who are downcast those who have perhaps been believed in recent days recent weeks and others who may have been believed many many years ago maybe many decades ago and still find the separation as great and raw as ever it was pray oh Lord that they would know your comfort thank you that you describe yourself in your word as being the God of all comfort and the father of all mercies and we pray that those who need your comfort today would know that personally for themselves we do remember this congregation we thank you for it for the witness it is here in the very north part of this island we thank you for a new ministry beginning we do pray for for Donald for Emma we pray also for the elders of this congregation as they seek to encourage the congregation and reaching out to the wider community and we pray oh Lord that you would bless that you would encourage that this would be a season of spiritual growth and also numerical growth in this congregation that the great desire of each and every one would be to see the greatness of Jesus Christ being made known in every home and in every family we pray oh Lord for the young people in the congregation whom we pray that they would grow up knowing the Lord Jesus not just knowing about him but actually knowing him that they would be those who are able to say at a very early age the Lord is my shepherd and so we pray now that as we come to focus on your word together that you might open our eyes that they would see more of your beauty and majesty and glory that you would open our ears to hear your word the indicatives of what you have done and the imperatives of what you require the invitations that you extend that you might open our minds that can so often be dull to actually discern what has been read and what has been said and that you might open our hearts that they would be responsive and that they would be able to look to the Christ who is presented in the pages of this gospel and be able to say of him that he is indeed all together lovely so bless us as we focus on your word together please put aside and put away all discouragement all distraction all disturbance please speak oh Lord for we your servants are listening and we pray this in Jesus name

Amen well before we focus on the word of God together we'll again sing this in the words of Psalm 119 Psalm 119 verses 33 down to 40 that's on page 402 of the psalm book Psalm 119 the Scottish Psalter version and this is our prayer as we come to focus on the Lord's word together teach me oh Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline give understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully Psalm 119 verses 33 down to 40 and once again if you're able to stand for this singing please do so teach me oh Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline give understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I give my whole heart I shall my heart incline and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline turn thou away my sight and lies from you in vanity and in thy good and holy way he reached to within me and in thy good and holy way he reached to within me and in thy good and holy way he reached to within me

What are you in vanity and high-mines andeg marry from you in life if I am and may and may I amazing His education is to clean and say Matthew is Assistant to me so go to my heart incline and yield to me on the ret Vinci tampoco Here Into the light's And Lord To it Behold me To thy fear Turn The hell away My fear To reproach For do thy Judgements Be Look for thy Pleased as I Come long In thy Truth Within me Well friends, would you Turn with me please to the words that we read There in John 21, John chapter 21 And reading again verses 1 to 3

[27 : 59] John 21 And reading verses 1 to 3 We read after this, Jesus revealed himself Again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias And he revealed himself in this way Simon Peter Thomas called the twin Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee The sons of Zebedee and two others of his Disciples were together And Simon Peter said to them I'm going fishing They said to him, we will go with you They went out And got into the boat But that night They caught nothing A few months ago I came across The following quote I had failed On an epic scale An exceptionally Short-lived marriage Had imploded And I was Jobless A lone parent And as poor As it is possible To be in modern Britain Without being homeless The fears that my parents Had had for me

And that I had had for myself Had both come to pass And by every usual standard I was the biggest failure I knew I was the biggest failure I knew That quote is from The best-selling author J.K. Rowling Author of the Harry Potter books A woman whose net worth Is now valued At over a billion dollars 800 million pounds But she's a woman Who has known What it is to feel Like a huge failure Today we're looking at This man Peter And the way that The Lord goes about Restoring him Following his failure That we find In John chapter 18 We're looking at these verses Then under three headings A fruitless expedition A friendly direction And then a free invitation A fruitless expedition

A friendly direction And then a free invitation First a fruitless expedition Look at verses 1 to 3 Here John focuses On the failure To catch any fish The failure to catch Any fish Now before proceeding We can note the context John 18 recorded The betrayal And the arrest of Jesus John 19 recorded The trial And the crucifixion Of Jesus John 20 recorded The resurrection And the appearance The first appearance Of Jesus And now John writes In verse 1 After this Jesus revealed himself Again to the disciples By the sea of Tiberias And he revealed himself In this way This narrative Is all about Jesus manifesting himself To his disciples His followers This narrative Is all about The revealing Of the risen Lord of glory In time And space

And this revealing Of Jesus Occurs By the sea of Tiberias The sea of Galilee The sea of so much Of Jesus' Early ministry We can move From the context To the companions In verse 2 John tells us Who had gathered together We have Simon Peter This Galilean fisherman The unofficial spokesman For the group A man who had just Recently Denied with curses That he even Knew Jesus We have Thomas A man who loved Jesus Perhaps he He loved Jesus More than any Of the other disciples He was a man Who certainly Expressed a willingness To go to death With Jesus But he's a man Who's doubting Whether Jesus Has really now Risen from the dead We have Nathaniel A man who hasn't Been mentioned Since John chapter 1 He's always there But he's always In the background We have The sons of Zebedee

James and John Two hot tempered Brothers Whom Jesus had Affectionately nicknamed The sons of thunder And finally We have two Unnamed disciples Who had fled Into the night When Jesus was Betrayed And arrested Now in looking At these men We can note Something that is Very significant About them Something that They all had In common They had all Been followers Of Jesus And each Had failed him Some had denied Him Others had Doubted him Others had Deserted him But they had All failed him In one way Or another We can move From the companions To the catch In verse 3 Peter speaks And he tells the group That he's going fishing For three years He had followed Jesus And engaged in the work Of ministry The work of mission But now he decides To go back to Galilee Back to his old Stamping ground And he decides To go back to fishing Back to his old job

[33 : 03] And he tells his companions About the decision That he has come to His mind is made up You know when you When you have decided To put an idea Into action You start telling Other people I have lots of ideas Many an idea Lots of ideas Cross my mind But it's only When I start Telling other people About my idea That it moves From the idea To the action And that's Peter He's telling them About what's beginning To develop in his mind And the rest of the group Tell Peter That they will go with him Perhaps they were All former fishermen We know that James And John had been part Of the Zebedee And son fishing business Before Jesus Had called them And now they decide To accompany Peter As he returns To his fishing boat That is the effect That is the influence That Peter is having On these men And can I just say As an aside Just in passing What kind of effect

What kind of influence Are you having Friends on others Within this congregation You see You can have A positive effect On the Lord's people Or you can have A negative effect On the Lord's people That's Peter Peter was having A very negative effect On these other disciples So the rest of them Are all deciding That they too Will abandon the ministry Abandon the calling That Jesus had given them And they say We'll go elsewhere What effect What influence Are you having On this congregation But their fishing trip Is fruitless It's a dismal failure They go out They get into the boat And they catch nothing Now put yourself In Peter's shoes Peter's sandals For a moment He has failed As a disciple As a follower Of Jesus And he's now

Trying to prove That at least He can still catch Some fish And he fails In that As we consider These verses Friends We have been given A clear picture Of failure A clear picture Of failure That's what we see In John 21 Peter and those With him Have failed As followers Of Jesus They have also Just failed As fishermen If you were to Ask them To sum up Their lives To sum up Themselves Using just One word They would probably All admit To being failures And this passage Is given For every person Who has ever Failed Not just those Who have failed In some task Those who failed In a work assignment Those who failed In a sporting event Those who failed In a relationship Or a marriage Those who failed An exam It's for people Who have failed When it comes To following Jesus It's for people

Who may be Promised And professed Their commitment To Jesus Their loyalty To Jesus And then they Let him down Through something They said Something they Thought Something they Did It's for people Who feel like They've blown it And that there Is no way back It's for people Who are burdened And who are crippled By an unrelenting Sense of guilt And shame It's for people Who get up Each morning And a little voice Is there at the Back of their head Saying You failed Your Lord In fact Is he even Your Lord It's for people Who when they Close their eyes At night Can remember That moment When they fell And failed As if it were Only yesterday When maybe it was Weeks ago Maybe it was Months ago Maybe it was Years ago Maybe it was Decades ago But they're still Lugging around That sense Of failure It's for people

Who have written Themselves off And who feel Like they can Never move on My friend If you are Here today And you feel Like an incredible Failure This passage Is for you If you feel Like a failure As a Christian As a follower Of Jesus This passage Is for you Or if you're Here today And you're saying I could never Be a Christian I could never Be a follower Of Jesus Because I fail In so many ways This passage Is for you A fruitless Expedition Second A friendly Direction Look at verses Four down to Eight And here John focuses On the miraculous Catch of fish A miraculous Catch of fish Verses four Down to six John records The appearance Of Jesus We're told That day was Breaking And that Jesus Stood on the shore Verse four The night of failure Gives way to a new Dawn And on this new day

[38 : 07] Jesus comes To his disciples In his book When we get it wrong Dominic Smart writes Jesus goes to meet Peter where he is He gets down with him When he is down Not standing over him And sticking in the Spiritual boot Not crowing over him Saying I told you so The devil does that The devil will make you Squirm The devil will kick you When you're down The devil will pile Guilt upon guilt Reminding you of Past failings That you know Are forgiven Dredging up old sins That you had forgotten About because they Were dealt with And you had moved on But God never will If the story of Peter Teaches us anything at all It should teach us For our own reassurance And for the comfort Of our souls That when we are down In the depths Even when God Has placed us there He gets into the mire To lift us out Isn't that a comforting Thought That Jesus Goes down Into the pit

To lift his people up That's the gospel The gospel Isn't good advice Where Jesus Is a cheerleader Saying come on Come on Come on You can do a little better Get out of that pit That you're in The gospel Is good news About the Jesus Who steps into And stoops into The messiness The brokenness The sinfulness Of his people's lives Just to rescue them But the disciples Don't know That it's Jesus Who's standing On the shore And so we're given The conversation Between Jesus And the disciples In verse 5 Jesus opens With a question Children Do you have any fish Literally Guys You don't have any fish Do you It's a question Designed to expect A negative answer Jesus knows About these men And the disciples Reply no There's

Nothing more to say There's nothing more That needs to be said And so we come To the response Of Jesus Verse 6 He gives a friendly Instruction Cast the net On the right side Of the boat And you will find some The disciples do so And the net fills With so many fish That they're unable To haul it Into the boat It's a miraculous event A supernatural event You cannot explain This event By anything But appealing To the sovereignty The supremacy The deity The divinity Of Jesus Verses 7 and 8 John records The reaction Of the disciples John The disciple The disciple Whom Jesus Loved Is the very first To react At the beginning Of verse 7 He's the one Who had entered The empty tomb Of Jesus He's the one Who had believed That Jesus Was risen From the dead And now He gasps It's the Lord He's got that level Of spiritual perception Maybe that's why Jesus loved him So much So much That John John was always The first To get it

And upon hearing This Peter bursts Into action Look again At verse 7 John might be A man of spiritual Perception Peter is a man Of action He puts on His outer garment Throws himself Into the sea To get to Jesus There's no Sheepish embarrassment With Peter No holding back As far as Peter's concerned He has already Met the risen Jesus In the upper room He has already Seen the risen Jesus Pierced hands And fit side He has already Heard the risen Jesus Priestly word Peace And now Nothing and no one Will keep Peter Back from Jesus Not the waves Of the sea Nor the words Of the other disciples Nothing will keep Him back He just throws Himself in How many people Say I cannot Come to Jesus Because of what Other people Will think Because of what Other people Will say Not Peter Whatever waves

Might come Between him And Jesus Whatever words Might come Between him And Jesus Peter gets In And the rest Of the disciples Make their way To Jesus Verse 8 John tells us That they were In the boat Tells us that They were dragging The net That was full of fish And he tells us That they were About a hundred yards From land Just a little Eyewitness detail As if John Is saying I really was There Well as we Consider these Verses We have been Shown The indispensability Of Jesus The indispensability Of Jesus That's what we See in John 21 Peter and those With him Have failed As followers Of Jesus And perhaps That was to Be expected But they Have also Failed As fishermen Skills That they Have been Trained In from Childhood And Jesus Enters The situation And blesses Them With a huge Catch of Fish Fish It's a clear Illustration

[43 : 11] Of the truth That Jesus Had told them A few days Earlier Back in John 15 In the upper Room Where he Had said To them Apart from Me Without me You can do Nothing Even Even the Very best Skills That these Men possessed The ability To catch Fish Would amount To nothing Without Jesus Jesus is showing Peter and those With him That the power And the effectiveness For the future Ministries that he Will call into Will come From him And from him Alone He is Indispensable And that friends Is so important For us to reflect On today Without Jesus we Can do Nothing As individuals Or as a Congregation Bruce Milne Writes The church In the western World Has never Had such An array Of helps Resources And methodologies As at present The psychological And sociological Sciences As well as

The fruits Of the technological And communications Revolution Have been Plundered For secrets Of successful Mission Sadly Although much Time and money Are often Spent Acquiring These tools Or attending The inevitable Conferences And seminars Where they're Unveiled The long term Results Are commonly Meagre One recent Responsible Survey Of evangelical Churches In a major Canadian city Showed that After the dust Has settled On the often Phrenetic Struggle To employ Successful Strategies Of evangelism These congregations Reach on Average Now listen Now listen To this These congregations Reach on Average Only 1.9 Genuine Outsiders For Christ Every Year Despite All the Technology All the Skill All the Ability Without Jesus We can Do nothing He is Indispensable

And essential When it Comes to This congregation And all The plans All the Projects All the Programs That you Might be Involved In You need Jesus You've got Donald and He's full Of enthusiasm He's full Of excitement He's not Reached that Jaded free Church minister State yet He is just Full of Drive But you Need Jesus Friends He is Indispensable And essential When it Comes to Us living The Christian Life Here in Lewis Here in North Tolstain And seeking To share The Christian Gospel The message Of salvation With our Friends With our Family With our Neighbours We need Jesus I look At people I meet People in The co-op And I think I would Love them To come To Christ I would Love them To come To the High Free I would Love them To profess Their faith In Jesus But we

Need Jesus In order To do That It's not Just going To be About the Skill set Of myself Or our Elders Or the High Free Congregation Or the North Tolstain Congregation We need Jesus He is Indispensable And essential When it Comes to Just our Daily Business Living In the Home Living In the Workplace Living In the School We need Jesus Sometimes You just Need to Say Lord I need You to Get my Feet Out of Bed This Morning Without Jesus We can Do Nothing But with Jesus We can Do Anything And I Hope my Friend That that Is an Encouragement To you Today If you Are feeling Empty And inadequate As a Christian These verses Are reminding You That you're The kind Of person Whom the Lord Loves To use And maybe If you're Feeling Empty And inadequate As a Congregation Today

These verses Are reminding You That you're The kind Of congregation Whom the Lord Loves To use One of my Favorite Preachers Is an American Ray Ortland I remember Going through A really Hard Season A few Years Ago And I Was just Feeling Really Discouraged Really Disheartened And listening To Ray Ortland's Preaching Is just So full Of warmth I said To someone Not so Long ago It's like Someone giving You a Great big Hug And as They hug You They draw You to Jesus And he Writes Jesus Says You feel Overwhelmed You feel Frightened You feel Threatened Don't Worry When you're Defeated I'm Victorious For you When you're Confused I'm Clear Headed For you When you're Fearful I'm Brave For you My Glory Is Upon You Now Give Your Weakness To me And I Promise To give You My Power So

[48 : 16] Friends Let's Not be Ashamed To go To Jesus With Our Weakness With Our Emptiness With Our Deficiencies With Our Shortcomings With Our Frailties Knowing That When We Are Weak He Is Strong And When We Are At A Loss He Is More Than Able In Fact He Is Not Just More Than Able He Is Indispensable Apart From Him We Can Do Nothing But With Him We Can Do Anything And And And Third And Finally We Have A Free Invitation Look At Verses 9 Down To 14 Here John Focuses On The Aftermath Of The Catch Of Fish The Aftermath Of The Catch Of Fish Verses 9 Down To 11 We See The Provision And We Can Begin By Noting The Provision Of A Meal There In Verse 9 We're Told That The Disciples Got Out On

Land And That There Was A Charcoal Fire We're Also Told That There Was Bread And Fish On The Fire Now Doesn't This Scene Do Your Heart Good I Hope It Does Your Heart Good As You See Jesus Providing These Tired Hungry Failures With A Hot Breakfast Right Now They Don't Need A Sermon Right Now They Don't Need A Bible Study Right Now They Don't Need A Seminar Right Now They Just Need A Little Practical Kindness It Reminded Me Of Something That Happened At The General Assembly This Week Bob Ackroyd Our Moderator Provided Donuts For All Of The Commissioners Donuts For All The Ministers All The Elders Why It Was Just A Sign That He He Cared About Them He Loved Them He Had Affection For Them And There's Jesus Just Providing A Hot Meal For These Men As A Little Do Can A Little Display A Little Gesture That He Loves

Them That He Has Affection For Them And We Can Also Note The Provision Of Fish Look At Jesus Instructs The Disciples To Bring Some Of The Fish That They Have Just Caught Once Again Quoting Dominic Smart By Asking Them For Some Of Their Fish He Is Reminding Them That They Were Called Into Partnership With Him Jesus Could Have Impressed Them With A Virtuoso Display Of Fish Mongering Dazzled Them With Culinary Master Jesus Could Have Had A Barbecue With A Full Breakfast At too. It's a delicate, deft, and beautiful reminder from Jesus that he wants them to be partners, co-workers, and the task of fishing for more disciples. Do you think that Jesus couldn't do spectacular things on his own in your town, among your colleagues and neighbors, with your friends?

Couldn't he turn on a virtuoso display of evangelism? Of course he could, but he wants your partnership. And Peter, again, is the first to act.

I've met many Christians over the years who failed the Lord in some way, and they feel that they're now disqualified. They're now written off from doing anything more for him.

[51 : 39] But when the Lord says, bring some of the fish, Peter springs into action. And isn't it lovely that the Lord doesn't stop him? He doesn't say, whoa, whoa, whoa, hold your horses, Peter. Let Andrew get the fish. Let Nathaniel get the fish. Let Thomas get the fish. Not you, Peter.

And John records some details about this fish. Tells us that there were 153 large fish, and he tells us that somehow the net holy name wasn't torn. Verses 12 down to 14, we move from the provision to the invitation. Jesus gives the disciples an invitation. Look at verse 12.

The first words that Jesus speaks aren't, wasn't that some miracle, guys? The first words that Jesus speaks aren't, how's it going, you bunch of failures? The first words that Jesus speaks are, come in a breakfast. It's an invitation to eat together. An invitation to enjoy some fellowship and friendship and friendship some time together. But there's a hesitancy on the part of the disciples.

They don't ask who it is. They know that if they ask the question, who are you? They will hear the answer, I am. They know that this is Jesus. But they're uneasy. They're nervous.

And so there's Jesus in verse 13, and he lovingly and graciously takes the initiative. He comes, bridging the gap between the disciples and himself, just as he bridges the gap between heaven and earth, the gap between God and man. He then takes the bread and he gives it to them, and he does the same with the fish. He has prepared the meal for them, and he's not just prepared the meal for them, he is serving the meal to them. And John closes this section by saying that this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. Verse 14.

[53 : 42] Well, as we consider these verses, friends, we've been reminded that Jesus is the saviour who issues invitations. Jesus is the saviour who issues invitations. That's what we see in John 21.

He looks at these tired and hungry men, and he says, come on have breakfast. But even more, he looks at these men who had doubted him, these men who had denied him, these men who had deserted him, and he says, come and have breakfast.

Let's spend some time together. Let's have some food. Let's have some fellowship. And that is so important. Maybe the most important thing we'll hear this afternoon today.

Jesus is the saviour who issues invitations. The saviour who calls those who have failed, those who have fallen, those who are feeble, those who are fragile, those who are fickle, those who can be faithless, to come.

The saviour who invites those who have baggage and a background to come. That is his invitation if you're here today and you're not a Christian.

[55 : 04] Jesus says to you today, come. He doesn't say, come and adopt a certain type of behaviour. He doesn't say, come and sort your life out.

He doesn't say, come and adopt a lifestyle choice. He doesn't say, come and embrace an idea, a creed, a formula. He says, come.

Come to me. He invites you to come and receive all that he has purchased, all that he has prepared, all that he has procured for his people in the gospel.

He says, come. Now just imagine for a moment, Peter standing there on the shore. He's tired. He's hungry.

He's a failure. Peter. And just imagine Jesus hauling out that bread and fish to Peter with his nail pierced hand. And he says to Peter, come on, Peter.

[56 : 04] Let's have some breakfast together. And imagine Peter turning away and saying, I don't need or want you or your miserable breakfast.

My friend, can I say that that is what you are doing. Every single time you resist and reject and refuse the invitation of Jesus to come.

Whether it's Donald preaching, Myrtle Campbell preaching, myself preaching, you're hearing Jesus saying, come.

Let's have some fellowship together. Father. And you're saying, I don't need or want what you've prepared or provided.

And I hope that you would see this today. And that today would be the day when you finally say, Lord, I am coming. I've got nowhere else to go. I've got no one else to go to.

[57 : 22] I'm coming. I'm coming. But this is also his invitation if you're here today and you are a Christian. Maybe you're sitting here today and you know in your heart of hearts that you have failed him in some way.

Or maybe you've not failed him in some way. Maybe you've just grown a little bit cold toward him. Or perhaps you've been deliberately and defiantly wandering away from him.

Or maybe you've just grown weary in his service. Maybe there was once a time when you were passionate about magnifying him. Passionate about making much of him. But now you feel like your Christian service is just going through the motions.

And today Jesus is calling out to you to come. To come once again to him. To come and receive all that he has purchased for you.

Prepared for you. Procured for you. In the gospel. He is saying to you. I have grace added to grace for you. Now come.

[58 : 29] Come to me. Come with me. Don't stay in that rut that you're presently in.

And so in the light of these words. Come and have breakfast. I want to close by asking the question. What are we going to do with the risen saviour's free invitation?

What are we going to do with the risen saviour's free invitation? My Christian brothers and sisters. What are you going to do with the risen saviour's free invitation? When he says to you today.

Come. Come and have some fellowship with me. And my friend if you're here today. And you're not yet a Christian. Not yet a follower of Jesus.

What are you going to do with his free invitation? As he says to you. Come. Come and have some fellowship with me. Come. Come.

[59 : 27] Come. The invitation is full. The invitation is free. The invitation is simple.

And the ball is left in each one of our courts. Amen. Let's close by singing the words of Psalm 51.

Psalm 51 verses 7 down to 13. Page 281 of the Psalm books. Psalm 51 from verse 7 to 13.

This great Psalm where David speaks of his desire for the cleansing, the forgiveness of God. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.

Yea, wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow. Once again, if you're able to stand for this singing, please do so. Psalm 51 verses 7 to 13. Amen. Amen.

[60 : 44] Amen. Amen. Is yeah yeah yeah principally the wisdom that more Born is very born, switch now, hast broken, may rejoice.

All my iniquities blot out, thy face high from my sin.

Create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right, spread me within.

Ask me not long thy sight, nor take thy holy spirit away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy. When thy peace, turn me still.

[62 : 47] And when thy peace, turn me still. Those that transgressors be.

And those that sinners are, shall then be turned unto thee.

Well, as I indicated to the children, my wife does have COVID. I'm completely fine. Well, I think I'm completely fine. I'm certainly feeling right as rain.

But I will stand outside and I won't shake your hands just so that I put you at ease. But please speak to me, even if you want to yell at me from a distance. But do please speak.

Let's pray. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, be with each and every one of us now and to the end of the age as we pray in Jesus' name.

[63 : 58] Amen.