

Breakfast With Jesus

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn once more this evening to John 21 and looking at the second part of that passage from verse 7 especially to verse 14.

That's John 21 and from verse 7 through to verse 14. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, It is the Lord.

And when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work and threw himself into the sea.

And so on. This morning we looked at the previous part of the passage from the beginning of the chapter. And we noticed especially how the teaching in it is in regard to the disciples coming to learn more of their need to depend upon the power of Jesus.

And we saw that the unfruitful fishing expedition that they engaged in was something that prepared them for the miracle and the display of power that Jesus himself then showed as he directed them as to where to find fish.

[1 : 12] And then we saw that they caught this great multitude of fish. And that in that respect they were being taught that for their future ministry, for their lives personally, and for their future ministry in the gospel as they would be themselves very much in the forefront of the advance of the gospel and of the church.

As you see in the next book in the book of Acts. They were being taught that whatever methods they themselves had and whatever natural skills they had, they needed to absolutely depend upon the power of Christ.

And to know Christ himself as the risen Christ. As he intervened here and actually brought this miracle about. And so they were made very much aware that this was the Christ.

He was no longer going to be with them physically. Remember we looked at Luke chapter 5 as well. We read that at least and saw it in relation to this chapter. The very close connections between the two chapters in terms of the miracles that are mentioned there.

And the same kind of miraculous catch of fish. But there Jesus was in the boat with them. Here he's on the shoreline. He's after his resurrection. It's on the other side of death. And he's preparing them for the fact that despite the fact that he will not be present with them physically as they used to have.

[2 : 38] He would still be with them and have the same power with them in their ministry as they had known even before his death. And now we come to the following part of the passage where we see what happened next.

And the first thing you see is John and Peter. Well we take it that the beloved disciple, the disciple Jesus loved, that it is John that's mentioned, that's meant by that.

Because he's along with Peter and that's where you find him frequently in this gospel. And generally it's been the case that people have commentators have taken it that this writer of the gospel describes himself for whatever reason in this way.

But in any case, this disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, it is the Lord. And Peter's reaction as he heard that was to cast himself overboard and just to make his way as soon as possible to Jesus followed by the other disciples.

In other words, we're going to call that recognizing Jesus and the importance of recognizing Jesus as the risen Jesus and how that fits with our own everyday experience and our ministry for Jesus, our service, whatever that service might be.

[3 : 58] Then secondly, we look at how as they came to drag the net full of fish from where they were towards Jesus, how that really is in a way symbolic of putting Jesus first.

Whenever Jesus was made known to them, whenever they realized that this was Jesus, everything took on another perspective, didn't it? They were no longer concerned to stay out at sea.

They were no longer concerned to stay out at sea.

Along with recognizing him and putting him first, there is fellowship with him. We'll see that from verse 9, where you find this meal prepared for them, where they have to take of the fish they've also caught and add that to what Jesus already had there.

And responding to Christ's invitation, come and have breakfast. And in the gospel of John, that's so full of symbolism and so full of rich meaning in some of the ordinary words that are used.

[5 : 25] We'll see that this is really itself indicative of fellowship with Jesus, sharing life with him and being fed spiritually by him as the risen Lord of the church.

Recognizing Jesus first of all. It is the Lord, John said. He exclaimed, it is the Lord.

Suddenly, in the breaking of the day, as the day was dawning, and especially after what had happened with regard to this miraculous catch of fish, John then realized this is the Lord.

And very often you find John as the one who has the insight, who has the speed of thought in the way that he relates to Jesus, to recognize Jesus, to recognize what he's about, to recognize his significance, his importance, his person and what he means to his people.

And in fact, you could take that along with the response of Peter as two things that are really so crucial for us in our own Christian lives.

[6 : 33] There's the recognition of Jesus, but then on Peter's part, there's the immediate action that follows. As soon as he heard, he launched himself into the sea to get to Jesus.

So there's the recognition, there's the way in which Jesus is discerned, and then there's Peter, the more practical action on his part.

But let's look at this recognition of Jesus. This is Jesus risen from the dead. This is Jesus that met him already, but now he's on this distant shore, and he is revealing himself in his risen power through this miracle.

It's such a vital thing for you and for me. We mentioned this this morning as well, but to actually recognize Christ in your life, to recognize the place that he must have in your life, to recognize where he fits into your life.

Maybe fits in isn't the right word because he really has to preside over your life. You don't just fit Jesus into a section of your life. You don't just fit him into a corner. You don't put him along with others to whom you give the same status.

[7 : 47] This is really indicative of it is the Lord. It is the one rightly called Lord. And he's now Lord over death, and he's Lord over all things.

And he's standing on the shore. It's this majestic figure. It's this great figure that fills the universe with his presence. And that has come to stand victorious over death.

Paul, when he was giving his testimony to the Philippians in chapter 3, like we mentioned this in the Gaelic service in the morning, maybe not in English, but you remember as he was giving the testimony there, he was going through what he once used to be, how he once used to see things, to see life, to see himself, to see Jesus, to see his relationship with God, how a person comes to be right with God.

All of these things and all of these thoughts, he said, I now count worthless. In fact, I consider them but rubbish or dung, is really the word he uses.

Why would he say that? Well, he tells us, so that I might know him, so that I might have his righteousness, so that I might know him and the power of his resurrection.

[9 : 06] You could say that the Lord's people, those who know Jesus as their Savior, they actually view all things from inside the resurrection, if you like.

What I mean by that is the power of Christ's resurrection that has opened up things for us, that has opened our mind, opened our understanding, opened our souls to give us life.

The power of Christ's resurrection that has made us a new creation. The power of Christ's resurrection as he's come into our lives, to change our lives, to put them back up the right way, to make us face the right direction.

We're living inside that life. That is itself resurrection life, if you like, begun, because it's the power of Christ's resurrection that has brought that about. And it makes all the difference in the world to live by the power of Christ's resurrection compared to what is the case ordinarily.

That's where this question is so vital for you and for me. Do you know this risen Lord in your life? You know the gospel.

[10:16] You know the teaching of the gospel. You know what it says about this Jesus. You understand that he came into the world, that he was born into this world, that he's the Son of God, that he died on the cross, that he rose from the dead.

You read all these things in your Bible. You know about them. You believe them to be true. But is the risen Christ himself prominent in your experience?

Do you have an ongoing relationship with him as the risen one? Has he given you in your life victory over death and over sin?

Because you can know about him and still be in your sins. You can know about him and not be equipped to face your own death and to face eternal things and the judgment of God.

Just look at these words again. It is the Lord. And we have to carry that, friends, into every avenue of life.

[11:25] It is the Lord who deals with us on a daily basis. It's the Lord's providence that unfolds before us as we go through day by day, hour by hour, week by week of our lives.

The events that come our way are part of God's program for us. They fit into the plan of God for our lives individually but collectively.

Do we see the risen Christ in them, presiding over them? Are we able to say, it is the Lord. It is good because it is he himself I find in this.

It's to him the whole thing belongs. And then you see Peter, when he heard this, just typical Peter, isn't it? Very quick actions.

He has a fisher's coat. We understand here that while he was stripped for work, he would have an outer garment on and in order to not have that garment get in the way as he was going to swim back towards the shore, he tucked it up.

[12:36] He probably tied it closely around his waist or whatever and then he just threw himself into the sea. He had led this fishing expedition, this fruitless fishing expedition.

He was the leader. He was the one who led the others into that. But you see now, he's the first to make for Jesus when he knows that that's who it is.

He leads the dash back to Jesus. He can't wait to get to be beside him again. He's that important to him.

And that too makes its mark tonight upon our own thoughts and our own lives, doesn't it? How important is Christ to us? Is he so important that we can leave our ordinary things in order to get to him just because he's that important to us?

Do we find it difficult to switch off the telly and come to actually read our Bibles and pray to him? Do we have to tear ourselves away from Facebook or whatever else we're doing because Christ takes priority because it's important that we actually make our way to him above all things?

[13:57] Do we take the things that we find in our daily lives and actually bring them to him? Do we give up too easily in our spiritual exercises? Do we persevere in prayer the way we should?

Or do we just give up halfway to shore knowing that Jesus is there but we're just too tired, we can't reach him? Are we satisfied tonight with a little of the presence of Jesus?

Are we making our way through life with minimums of his presence, of his power, of his lordship in our lives, of our experience, of his risen power?

You see, this is telling us you have to put Jesus first as we'll see in a minute but there's Peter and as soon as he hears it's the Lord, he just acts instantly to get to him.

And there's a lesson for ourselves. Is this how I begin each day? By bringing myself and this day to him?

[15:13] Am I concerned to get to Jesus at the beginning of each day so that everything else really has to play second place to him? Do I end my day committing my life into his hands?

Do I thank him for looking after me, for being my guide, for not giving me what I deserve, for showing me such kindness, for being so patient with me?

Do I want to get to Jesus in all of these ways and others too? How big is he in your life and mine? So, recognizing Jesus and the action of Peter when he recognized and when he was given this word from his companion, it is the Lord.

I think it should be more important to us. That's why it's so great to see people coming to church. I know all of these pews are empty and I would like them to be filled. Why are they empty?

[16 : 21] Because people out there simply aren't bothered by this great statement, it is the Lord. They don't know the Lord. They don't want to know the Lord. You and I have to go to them, tell them the message, tell them why it's important.

Bring the gospel to them. Rely on the power of Jesus. What's going to fill this place? The power of Jesus alone can do it. Who are the means? Who are the people that are going to actually bring that message to the world?

It's you and it's me. Not just the preaching of the gospel. It's in your life, it's in your witness, it's in your testimony, it's how you live, it's what you say, it's how you go about things.

And if he is, for me and for you, the one we recognize in all things, the one we want to put first, then we will come, as we saw this morning, by prayer to rely upon his power to take our lives further and to hopefully bring others too, to know him in the gospel.

So putting Jesus first, we said Peter led the way and others followed and they're just also in such a hurry to get to him. In other words, when you come to recognize Jesus, when you come to recognize him, who he is and how he stands over death, then you bring everything else towards him in that direction to him.

[17 : 44] You see what it says here, the other disciples followed Peter but they came in the boat dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from the land but about a hundred yards off.

You see Jesus dominates their view of things. Jesus stands on the shore and they just cannot get their eyes off him and they cannot but make their way there dragging the net taking everything they have themselves, the boats, the net, the fish, everything has to be directed and dragged in that direction towards him.

And that really itself symbolizes for us, we don't want to press things too far but in fact it does symbolize for us, isn't it does, as you come to recognize Jesus and his importance in your life well you're going to be as it were dragging everything else towards him.

Everything else then goes in that direction. And indeed it's only by coming to recognize and know Christ personally that we come back to fulfilling the reason why we were created in the first place.

As the catechism, the opening catechism so eloquently though briefly puts, what is man's chief end? What's the purpose for human life?

[19 : 09] Why do we exist? What's it about? Well it's to glorify God and enjoy him forever. In other words, you bring everything you are and everything you do and I know that I feel so much in this though I'm preaching this to others but you try to bring even your thought processes, your motives, the way in which you think about things, the way you go about doing things, the things that you do, the way you speak to people, your conversation, every single thing about us as we've come to know Jesus, we bring everything then in the direction of where he stands as the Lord of life and we bring everything under that lordship and he has to dominate our life.

Away with this idea that Christ can be your saviour but not the Lord of your life, that he can actually save you from your sins but you don't need to recognize him as Lord over every aspect of life.

Where does that idea come from? It didn't come from Jesus. It didn't come from his word. You fail to find it anywhere that Jesus or God divides, puts a division or a cleavage between the Lord and the saviour.

If he's your saviour, he's your lord. If he's your lord, he's your saviour. You have to fit the two together. You can't separate them. And really this is saying to us, whatever you possess, whatever you are, whatever you're doing.

As you recognize Jesus, you do it unto him. Let's put it that way. You direct it unto him, towards him. This is not our word.

[21 : 03] The church is not our church. The congregation is not our congregation. my life is not my own life. I know that's terribly not politically correct in the day in which we live, where people regard their life and their bodies, whether they're male or female, as their own to do as they like with it.

If they want to end life and think they should have the ability and the legal authority to end life when they want it, then it should be. It's their life. It's their body.

If a woman wants to have an abortion, she should be allowed to do it, this philosophy says, because it's all to do with her possession, isn't it? It's not. I'm not my own.

You're not your own. You're God's. You're his creation. You belong to him by creation.

And equally, if not more, so spiritually, that's why Paul spoke to and wrote to the Corinthians in the way he did, reminding them of the cost of their redemption, that it was by the ransom price of

Christ's death.

[22 : 18] So he says, you're not your own. You are God's. You are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your spirit and in your body.

That leaves nothing out. God in your heart. Our whole constitution, body and soul, you belong to him. His possession, his property.

The church is his church. The gospel is his gospel. The kingdom is his kingdom. The word of God, this Bible is his word. We do all unto him because he has the right to it.

And we owe it to him as we belong to him. Putting Jesus first. Thirdly, there's fellowship with Jesus. When they got out on land, they saw 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.

[23 : 25] God. So Simon 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 we remember, of course, that as you read about this meal ready for them, that a meal in those days particularly meant far more than just sitting down to eat something.

together. A meal had to do with sharing things together. It had to do with what we now call fellowship. Sharing together in certain things.

And it's come to have that meaning spiritually, of course, because you carry that with you into what happens at the Lord's supper, at the Lord's table. That is a communal thing.

It's something in which God's people share together in a spiritual meal represented by the physical elements in the bread and wine.

[24 : 26] So this really has to do with fellowship, with sharing with Jesus and his people together as he comes to share with them in this occasion and as they come to share this meal.

But you notice before they were asked to bring the fish that they had caught, there were already fish on this charcoal fire.

We're not told where they came from. But Jesus had provided them and that's the really important point that's made in the text. It's not asking, well, where did he get them or how did he come to have them?

It's the fact that he has already prepared for these disciples something that will actually nourish them, something that will nurture them. Now remember, this is about Christ as a risen Christ.

This is about Jesus having conquered death and now standing over death. And here he comes to tell the disciples, not only must you depend completely on me and on my power, but I will feed you.

[25 : 32] And I have died and I have risen from the dead for your nourishment, for your sustenance. Lord, I have prepared, even before you came on land, I prepared this meal for you.

It's the risen Jesus, represented as providing food for his people. What happens when we come to benefit under the gospel, when our souls, no blessing?

What is it that's really happening? What is meant in the Bible when Peter himself in his epistle says, not to be actually like others who go back, but rather grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

What happens when you grow spiritually? Well, all of these things really are about the same thing. It's being spiritually nourished, it's being spiritually fed. Why did Jesus rise from the dead?

Why is he now standing over death in the way in which he is the Lord of the church? It is the Lord. Why is he the Lord? To feed his people, to nourish them, to provide them with spiritual sustenance.

[27 : 00] Yes, of course, this is the disciples being prepared for mission. They will have to go out and take the gospel into very hostile territory, going to meet with a lot of opposition, with persecution, with so much that is going to cause them extreme pain and difficulty.

But they're going as nourished disciples. disciples. You cannot engage in mission effectively unless your own soul is being fed.

You cannot be an effective witness for Jesus in your life personally unless you're prepared to be nourished by the Lord of your life.

Unless you open your soul to him daily and ask him to feed you and ask him to strengthen you and ask him to give you greater faith and increased love and more commitment.

That is really in a sense the rationale for the gospel as well. Certainly something we all learned I'm sure most of us learned as young folks I remember my own mother when I was a youngster constantly being concerned and even so after I left home and became an adult she would say make sure you don't go out without eating something warm for your breakfast.

[28 : 33] Eat something hot for your breakfast. Don't skimp on your breakfast. How much more is that important spiritually for us?

Don't try and do things for Christ without feeding your own soul. Without having a breakfast every day of the word of God. That's really what it's about.

He comes to say this is what I've prepared for you. I've laid it all out for you here. And Jesus then says come and dine. But before he did so he asks them to take from what they also have caught so that that is combined with what he himself has provided.

And you know there's a spiritual point to be made in that as well. It's not that Jesus provides for us in a way that requires absolutely nothing from us at all in order to look after our souls, in order to further our relationship with him, in order to serve him in the gospel.

There's much required of us. We have to take as it were what we've gathered and bring it to him. And in dependence on him and on what he has prepared for us, that's how we advance in the kingdom, personally and corporately.

[29 : 52] And just think how tired these disciples would be. A whole night fishing, hard work, going from place to place on the lake, hauling the nets, letting them down again, rowing the boat, or if it had a sail, putting up the sail, whatever.

There was a toil. They would be tired by morning. And here is the Lord inviting them, come and have breakfast.

You know what it is to be tired. Not just physically, but especially tired, mentally tired, spiritually. You know what it's like to struggle spiritually, to really find it difficult to go on, to find it difficult to see Jesus through all that's happening in your life at times, to know your own weakness, to be afraid of certain things that you know you need to face as a Christian, to be afraid of openly confessing him, or going out in his service, or having a new chapter begin in your life, changing from where you usually worship him to somewhere else, changing from your home environment.

you may be going to start a new job, or you start a university, or whatever it is. Life has all of these changes, some of them bigger than others. Makes us tired, makes us struggle.

We have to be honest that that's what life is like for Christians too. Here is Jesus reminding us, you need rest. You need to come to me for sustenance.

[31 : 44] You need to take the food that I have prepared for you. You need to take it in and strengthen yourself. Because only then can you really go on, be the kind of person that we need to be for the Lord.

And you know, sometimes people think, well, that's all very well, but I'm not really that qualified a Christian yet.

The means that God has given for our sustenance, where are they? They're in the word and they're in the sacraments. They're in word and sacrament especially, which is why so often they're spoken of together.

It's nourishment through the gospel, the gospel that includes the word read and the word preached and for God's people to be spiritually nourished, especially the Lord's table, the Lord's supper, because that's really what it's for.

And people will say, but that's more for a kind of elite group. It's not really for me. I haven't, I don't think I've reached the stage where they're at yet.

[32 : 54] Is this an elite group? Who are these people? Look at the names of these people. They're mentioned there so that we will take note of these individuals who are gathered there together.

There's Simon Peter himself. What is he? He's a failure. He's going to be re-examined by the Lord later on in this chapter regarding his love.

Three times, Simon, do you love me? There's Thomas, a doubter, a man who refused to accept the testimony of the other disciples till he had seen Jesus for himself.

He was rebuked by Jesus when needed, he did meet him a week later when he said to him, Thomas, stop doubting and believe. And you find the list here goes on.

There's Thomas, there's Nathaniel, there's the sons of Zebedee who were a bit hot-headed some of them, some of the time, and two other disciples. They're not even named.

[34 : 01] as if God is saying to us by this, well, you may be also like these two unnamed disciples. You're just a kind of background figure in the church.

But I'm here to feed you. And I have something prepared for you too. You're just as significant to me as the apostles, as the ministers, as the elders.

You have a soul that needs to be fed. And I, as the Lord, have gone to these lengths to prepare food for you. Why do you stare yourself? Why do you stay away?

Why do you not take him at his word? Don't think it's just for the elite. It's for the hesitant, for the doubting, for those who've had failure in their life.

for the unnamed, for those that see themselves as insignificant. They're all there. They all belong to the church, to the people of God.

[35 : 12] And they are people for whom God has provided rich spiritual nourishment. Come and have breakfast.

breakfast. And so, they knew that it was the Lord, and none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them, and so on, with the fish.

And of course, you can see in that, it is Jesus himself who's doing this. Very interesting, isn't it, that before he died, most of the time, if not all of the time, that you read in the Gospels about them eating together, Jesus and the disciples, like for example, the Passover meal that was to be prepared, he directed them to go and prepare.

He gave the disciples at the feeding of the 5,000, and they distributed. Now it's Jesus that's feeding them, because you think, you see, something's happened.

He's now risen from the dead. He's representing what he's going to do spiritually by feeding them here physically, and he's doing it, and he's in charge of it, and he is himself indeed the bread of life.

[36 : 35] They knew that it was the Lord, and none dared ask him, who are you? That's interesting, isn't it? You notice that word dared, or dirst as it is in the old translation.

It doesn't just say, none of them asked him who he was, or who are you, because they knew.

It doesn't just say, they did not dare to ask him. It was so clear to them. It had been demonstrated so abundantly to them who it was.

And there's really probably something else in it. there's something similar to what Peter had when the miracle in Luke chapter 5, the very similar miracle took place.

He threw himself down at Jesus' knees and said, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. He was in awe of something holy, something perfectly holy, something awesome.

[37 : 47] something of such magnitude that all he could do was just feel the weight of his sin and say to Jesus, I really shouldn't be in your presence.

And there's something of that here surely as well. They dare not ask because they're really, if you like, under the influence of a holy awe and wonder in the presence of risen majesty, in the presence of the Son of God risen from the dead.

And sometimes, indeed more often than we are aware of, silence is appropriate.

it. I wish I had more times in my own experience when in the presence of Jesus feeding on his word, I was so aware of a holiness and presence with me in that moment that all I could do, and the most appropriate thing to do, would be to sit in silence and meditate as to what this is about.

This is the Lord. And in the Lord's presence, they dare not ask, who are you?

[39 : 30] The whole thing is so incredibly impressive. And yet tonight, that's the Lord that comes to invite you and invite me through the gospel.

Come and take your food. Come and dine with me. Come and take what I have prepared for you, the spiritual food of eternal life.

As one poet put it, come and dine, the master calleth come and dine. You may feast at Jesus' table all the time. he who fed the multitude turned the water into wine, says to hungry, thirsty sinners, come and dine.

Well, come then. Don't stay away. Take him at his word. Fill your heart with spiritual food.

Let's pray. bless to us, Lord, we pray your word, and enable us to know something of what the disciples experienced on that great occasion, when they were so taken with the fact that this was the Lord, and when the impression made upon their souls was evident in the way they responded to you.

[40 : 54] O Lord, make it, we pray, in our experience also, to be a more frequent experience than it is, and to be aware that we are in your presence, that you have come to feed our souls, that we take delight in being silent as we experience that you are with us.

Gracious Lord, accept us, we pray, for Jesus sake, Amen.