

John 21:1-14

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Preacher: Caleb Maloney

[0:00] The sermon text for today is John 21, 1-14. 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 Canaan and Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, I am 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 and threw himself into the sea.

[1:11] 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 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. Now none of the disciples dared ask him, Who are you?

They knew 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.

Let's pray. Lord, we search for your will to be done in this place today.

[2:11] We earnestly are looking for and seeking after your word, and we pray that just as Brad was praying, that our hearts are softened and our minds are opened to the word that you have for us today.

We pray for patience, and we earnestly listen to this scripture today and seek the things that are to be taught within it.

Just open yourself up to us as we open ourselves up to you, and I just pray these things over this congregation today. Amen. So just like Brad mentioned as well, I'm really excited.

There's a lot of new faces here today. It's really exciting. It's really enjoyable. For those of you who don't know who I am, my name is Caleb Maloney. I'm one of the members here at Shoreline.

This week, I've been blessed to be able to bring the word from John 21 to the congregation today, while Pastor Mike is away having some time with his family.

[3:19] But before we really dig into today's passage, last week we just finished up John 20, verses 30 and 31, which very likely feel like and seem like a conclusion to the book of John.

Yet, as we all know, if we open up our Bibles, there's one more chapter. We have John 21 as it comes into view. So why John 21?

Why are we here? Why did John write it? As we dig into it, I want you to, for all the adults in the room, I want you guys to think back to when you were in elementary school. What did your teachers tell you about what makes up a good story?

Okay. Let's imagine kindergarten, first grade. The teacher might say, when you write a story, it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Right? A beginning, a middle, and an end.

I like to think back to those notebooks that we used to write in that had the really large ruled lines at the bottom of the page, and then they had like a square at the top where the kids could draw a picture as they were working through the stories.

[4:25] As a matter of fact, my wife, as a kindergarten teacher, and then now as a homeschool mom, we have a stack of those notebooks at home to use with our kids as we teach them. So as we would work to write with our teachers, our first stories as kids, they would guide us by talking about what is included in each part of the story.

The beginning is where you would introduce your characters. It would set up the setting or the context of the story. The middle poses the problems or the conflicts and contains the meat of the story.

The end is what resolves the problems and conflicts and brings closure to the characters of the story. However, how often do we read a story, whether fiction or nonfiction, come to the end and find something missing?

We come to the end, we think, well, what happened next? Or what about this thing that they talked about three chapters ago? Oftentimes, authors will include epilogues in their stories.

Oops, there we go. John 21 is often described as the epilogue of the book of John. When you step back and look at the book as a whole, everything that has needed to happen in the account has happened.

[5:41] The beginning sets the stage for Jesus and introduces us to his disciples, as well as places the story within the nation of Israel. The middle follows through his entire ministry and sets up the future discontent with the Jewish leaders.

The end is the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet even after the resurrection appearances and John 20, verses 30 and 31, where John says that, you know, I can't possibly write everything that there is to write.

John 21 is here in the book of John. John 21 also balances out John 1's prologue in verses 1 through 18. So with the epilogue kind of out of the way, there's also some scholars out there that kind of believe that somebody else wrote John 21, that it wasn't in fact John, it was some other author, and it might have come later.

There are certain differences that are not quite the same as the rest of the book of John, and then they often point to the idea that John 20 is a solid conclusion for the book of John, and that there's nothing left to say.

These things are relevant because there's little subjective evidence that it was not written by John, and it makes it simpler to just agree and believe that he wrote it, and he wrote it for a particular purpose.

[7:05] John 21 does in fact tie up loose ends that bring the gospel account to a more complete closure and sets up events that are going to come and happen in Acts.

In John 21, we also see Jesus appears to his disciples one last time by the sea, and he shares one last intimate meal with them. John restores Peter and confirms his future mission, and Jesus emphasizes his will over all else while John concludes his gospel.

So with why John 21 out of the way, what sets us up for the events that are about to happen? What is the context of what has come before?

The whole turn of events have started with Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection. The empty tomb was found by Mary Magdalene, and it was later verified by Peter and John. Jesus then appears to Mary at the tomb.

Mary tries to run off and tell the disciples, but they don't immediately believe her. Jesus then also appears to two on the road to Emmaus, but intentionally conceals his presence so that he can have a more casual discussion with them on the road.

[8:11] Then Jesus appears to ten of the disciples without Thomas, and finally appears to Thomas with the ten disciples who saw him before, which all of this leads us into the appearance now at the Sea of Galilee in John 21, verses 1 through 14.

So in verses 1 and 2 we read, there we go. 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, which otherwise known as James and John, and two others of his disciples were together.

Here we're seeing the seven of the disciples gathering in Galilee. It lists Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and John, and then two others who for some reason remain unnamed.

Yet, why were they in Galilee in the first place? Last we saw them, they were holed up in a house, locked up in Jerusalem with no particular direction, except for them communing with Jesus one last time.

[9:16] However, looking at the overall course of events, we see in actually Matthew 28, 16 tells us that the 11 were directed to go to Galilee and wait for Jesus there.

It says, Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And then also in Mark 14, 28 and Mark 16, 7, it says, But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

And in Mark 16, 7, it says, But go, tell his disciples and Peter he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you. So Jesus has already set up the direction the disciples are supposed to take.

It's just likely that they're showing up at different times, why we only see seven of them here. So they're on their way to the place Christ has directed them to go. So it's surmised by some scholars that there was also not just a call for the 11 to go to Galilee, but there is also a greater call to head to Galilee for all of Jesus's followers, because we know Jesus had more than just the 12 disciples following him at times.

But he had 12 who were specifically called out as friends for his mission. And while we don't know the exact timeline between the events in John 20 and the events here in John 21, we know that some amount of time has passed.

[10:41] So what were the disciples going to do while they waited for Jesus? So as we read again in verses 2 and 3, Here we're seeing Peter is listed first, which is not uncommon throughout the Gospels.

Peter is often listed first when it describes stories in which he was involved. This kind of sets him up in a place of leadership, and if not leadership, a position of influence over the other disciples.

So he's proclaiming, I'm going fishing. And the other disciples with him concur say, sure, we'll go with you. Yet, despite all of their effort that night, they're catching nothing.

And many of these men called out in this story were experienced fishermen. So for them to go out and toil all night and catch absolutely nothing, it may not be uncommon for them, but it also might be a little bit demoralizing and stressful for them to go out for a purpose and come back with nothing.

So the first section in this passage really points to the accuracy of the witness and the events to follow. So in that it's telling us who was there, who's witnessing these events, and then it's also telling us the disciples are not being successful in their efforts.

[12:17] It sets the stage to show the humanity of those witnessing and also places John as one of the many witnesses. So while John doesn't call himself out, he's part of the sons of Zebedee.

So he often likes to refer to himself casually throughout the Gospel of John and not specifically call himself out. But when I think back on this passage, honestly, this whole story is a little bit nostalgic for me.

When I was a bit younger, my dad attended a men's retreat a long time ago. And at that men's retreat, there is a two-man theater group called Ted and Lee.

Ted and Lee were a kind of like a theater comedy group that did biblical stories from a true to scripture, yet humorous and comical way.

They would play characters within the various stories throughout the Bible and insert maybe a little bit of their perspective of the events unfolding. In the depiction of this passage, though, Jesus has already died and resurrected.

[13:23] Peter's back in the boat. He's back fishing. And he's doing what he thinks he's good at. He knows how to fish. Yet, he's catching nothing. Like I said, this would be demoralizing.

This would be stressful. Then, however, Jesus is appearing on the shore and a little bit of hilarity in their enactment ensues with them misunderstanding what Jesus is actually saying.

It's kind of like they were playing telephone and Peter hears something to the effect of cashew nuts on the other side. And then, after they realize that, no, that's impossible.

He couldn't possibly be talking about snacks. They play charades. They start playing charades. Like, you know, one word, two syllables, you know, and eventually understand the meaning to throw the nets on the other side.

So, while dwelling on this passage, it was fun and humorous for me, but also insightful to dwell on that video and experience, because I used to love watching those videos that they would have.

[14:25] Peter and the others are human. They have human needs, and they have human emotions. They have all been through quite a roller coaster due to the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

And now, what are they supposed to do? Okay? So, Peter, in this situation, is declaring, I am going fishing. Why does he do this? Was he bored? Was he just filling time with something to do?

Or, as some might surmise more terribly, was he abandoning the mission Christ had for him? On a positive note, though, there's no evidence that they were abandoning the mission. There's no evidence that they decided, well, Jesus is gone, we give up.

I look at it as, in Peter's character, Peter is a very bold, often acts before he thinks type person.

So, he may have been trying to sit there waiting patiently for Christ, because he told them to go to Galilee. But, oftentimes, I can imagine him kind of being the one pacing throughout the room, twiddling his thumbs, trying to figure out what to do next.

[15:30] And he just kind of gives up, says, I need to do something with my hands. I need to be productive. So, he chooses what he knows, and he goes fishing. Plus, the disciples need to eat. So, that's why they might perceive fishing as a positive thing to go out and do.

This, realistically, leads us into the first point. When living out God's mission, we still need to attend to our daily responsibilities. We, as Christians, are called to obediently follow after God's will and do everything for the glory of the Lord.

This includes, we still need to eat, clothe ourselves, provide a roof over our heads, and many other aspects of human life. God still expects us to put in the work to provide for ourselves.

In many cases, as in many in this church, we still need to care for and provide for our families. What that looks like might take many forms. In my case, I believe I have been called to faithfully raise my family and care for them under God, and then to serve my church and my community faithfully.

Reflecting Christ for those around me. For example, I hold a job at Electric Boat. I'm an engineering supervisor to earn money and care for my family. My wife also does a lot around the house to care for our kids, make sure they're educated, make sure they're fed and clothed, and just many other things.

[16:53] In the midst of fulfilling the mission for our lives, providing for ourselves can look like doing whatever we are trained at or whatever we are good at, and the skills and gifts that God has provided for us.

Using our trained skills to fill the gaps to provide needs. In the case of Peter and some of the disciples, this would look like going fishing. This is one way that they could ensure that everybody was taken care of in this situation and wait for Jesus faithfully.

As we move into verse 4, there we go. Oh, Jesus provides. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

So here we're seeing Jesus here. Jesus has shown up in the way that he often does, but the disciples have no idea who it is. So why didn't they recognize him, though?

If they knew Jesus so well, why don't they know who's there? It's unlikely this was the same as when Jesus appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus, because in Luke 24, 16, it says specifically that Jesus intentionally hid himself from the two on the road, and then they didn't realize who it was until much later.

[18:09] This is a clear supernatural interference, so that Jesus could walk with them unrecognized and converse with them as if he was just some random bystander. The lack of this statement in verse 4 leads to the idea that it was likely just a combination of the disciples' emotions, their expectations at the time, and the conditions they were fishing in.

So it says later on in the passage they were about 100 yards off of shore, you know, 300 or so feet, which is just close enough that you should be able to see the people on the shore, and if you know who it is, you can probably recognize who it is, but it's also far enough that if you don't recognize the person, it's really not that unusual.

Plus, they've been fishing all night. They're tired. Their emotions are in turmoil because they didn't catch anything. And at this time, it was break of day, dawn, early morning time, so lighting wouldn't have been great.

So with all of these factors considered together, it's almost like, of course they didn't recognize Jesus. All of these conditions, I would, you know, it would be a challenge for any of us to recognize anyone in that situation.

And so it also lends itself to the idea that Jesus didn't intentionally hide himself from the disciples as we move into the events of verses 5 and 6.

[19:30] So 5 and 6 say, 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 the fish.

So here Jesus is going on to direct them with action. You know, him saying, Children, do you have any fish? And then them saying no.

He's giving them advice. He's saying, Okay, cast the net on the right side of the boat. Jesus is telling them to do this. In following this direction, they end up catching a numerous quantity of fish, more than the net can even technically hold.

This story, as we read through it, is also very similar to the account in Luke chapter 5. In Luke chapter 5, similar to this situation, some of the disciples, before they were called to ministry, were in a boat fishing, and Christ shows up on the shore and tells them, Hey, why don't you fish in this other location?

And then they do so, and once again, they catch so many fish that the net starts to break. This here is a different story at a different time. This is a post-resurrection account of a very similar event that happened early in Jesus's ministry.

[20:56] But similarly, they're catching so many fish that they're struggling to get it into the boat. But unlike Luke chapter 5, later on in John 21, it specifically mentions that the net did not break.

So there's a lot of similarities between Luke 5, but there's also a lot of key differences in John 21 as well. So if the disciples didn't recognize Jesus on the shore, why did they listen to him?

If they had no idea who it was, why would you listen to some random guy telling you, Hey, go fish over here. You'll catch some fish over there. As I was reading up for the sermon, D.A. Carson describes this as, think about whenever sport fishermen are out fishing, there's no shortage of people on the sidelines giving advice for where and how to fish.

It is likely true of the disciples in this situation. People on the shore yelling advice, trying to tell them, Hey, if you fish over here, it's going to be better. Or, Oh, you're not going to catch anything over there today.

Or try a different bait. You know, there's no shortage of, you know, sideliners that love to give advice in different situations. So it's, so after a whole night of not catching anything, the disciples probably figured, well, why not?

[22:11] What's going to hurt us to toss the net into one more place? You know, because maybe the person sees something that we're not seeing right now. We're tired, but let's give it one more try. So at the man's suggestion, at the end of a long futile night, their decision to listen to the advice of Jesus culminates in them catching a bounty of fish that they can barely handle.

Here we are seeing the second point of the passage that when we are pursuing God's mission and will, he will provide for what we need, just not always how or when we expect it.

As is clear here, we, the disciples were not expecting Jesus to show up. They were in Galilee waiting for him. So they knew he was coming. But in this moment, they didn't know Jesus was going to show up at this time in this way, providing for them.

So they were in Galilee because they were directed to do so, but there's no evidence that they had any other information to go on besides go. At this time, they would have been wholly reliant on the

provision of others and or providing for themselves, yet they're still faithfully pursuing Christ because they followed the direction to show up in Galilee and wait for him even in the uncertainty. When have you felt so strongly that God is telling you to go to do something, but you have no other direction than that?

[23:32] You have no idea what's next. You just know I need to do this thing or I need to go to this place, but God hasn't necessarily revealed to you the next step.

What are you doing in those times? In those times, God is promising that he will bless those who follow his will. We just need to be patient and faithful in everything we do and pursue him.

We may not know the timing of when or how God will provide for us or give us direction, but God says he will bless us when we search after him. So with this, let's read the rest of the passage.

So 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 and he threw himself into the sea.

The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish for they were not far from land, about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw charcoal fire in place with fish on it and bread.

[24:33] Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish you have caught. So 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 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.

So in the midst of this event, John immediately realizes who it is. He immediately realizes that it's Jesus. Whether it was he realized something miraculous happened or he's recognizing the events that happened earlier when they were called to ministry through Christ.

But either way, he's the first one to recognize it. But after he says, it's the Lord, Peter in a very Peter way immediately drops everything he's doing, jumps out of the boat and starts swimming towards shore.

This is very similar to many other interactions that Peter has had with Christ in uncertain situations. They were confident that it was Jesus based on their other interactions with him, specifically, like I said before, the account in Luke chapter five, when Jesus does the exact same thing with them to call him to be his disciples.

[26:00] Jesus, however, now is sitting by a fire preparing some breakfast. Even though this passage tells us that Jesus is already preparing food, he tasks the disciples to bring some of the fish that he caught and join him for breakfast.

He then breaks the bread, serves the fish, sharing a meal with them just as he had many times before. This here is setting the stage for a far more intimate conversation that Christ is going to have.

And then the final recorded events before we get into the events after the ascension. During this time, John points out in verse 12 that none of the disciples dared ask who it was.

They knew it was the Lord. This is definitely different from many other times Jesus has interacted with the disciples. There are other times throughout the Gospels where the disciples either doubted it was Jesus or doubted in his divinity.

But here it's clear that they know it is you and they don't even question it. And so this is opening us to the third point that I have before we get to the main purpose of the whole passage is that Jesus is calling us to spend those intimate moments with him.

[27:11] When we are hungry, when we are tired, when we're stressed out, or even just existing sometimes, Jesus is continually calling us to him. The disciples had been laboring much of the night and early morning.

They were also tired and weak and probably didn't want to do anything else. They were probably going to finish up fishing and pack up for the day. However, Jesus is now saying, come, start your day with me.

I wish to share a meal with you. Meals are a way in which we can grow closer to each other. It is a comfortable place to open up communally and share close times with those we call friends. With these seven men sitting down around a fire, spending breakfast with him, he has now opened up the floor to further spiritual growth and to deliver his will to them.

In the same way, we must spend intimate moments with Christ. It does not need to specifically be a meal, but it needs to be open and personal time spent with him.

[28:13] And we are called to do these things together as believers as well. These intimate moments do not just have to be alone. We are called to spend alone time with Christ and communing with God, but we are also called to come together and spend those times with him.

Just as the disciples here, there's seven of them gathered around with Jesus, spending this intimate, personal moment and meal with him. So to spend intimate times with Jesus, not just alone, but as a body of believers, through Jesus, will grow, through this, Jesus will grow spiritually and reveal both himself and his will to us.

So with all this being said throughout the passage, what are we to do while we wait for Jesus?

Another example of waiting in the Bible can honestly be found in the story of Joseph.

Joseph, as found in Genesis, follows a similar pattern. In the beginning, Joseph is given dreams and direction for his life, but he doesn't really know what's going to become of them or how they're going to come about.

They were clearly God-given prophecies for Joseph's life, but like I said, he had no idea what was next. But then throughout the story of Joseph, Joseph is setting his heart towards God and doing everything for the glory of God in everything he does, and he trusts that God will have a plan for his life.

[29:43] So much so that as he's using those gifts and skills that God has given him, he rises to a position of leadership within Potiphar's house. He becomes a head over all of the other servants through God's blessing, but then after he is falsely accused of trying to sue Potiphar's wife and he is thrown in prison, once again, doing everything he does for the glory of God, he is once again risen to a position of almost leadership, second only to the warden within the prison, and everything he touches, it comes out good through the blessing of God and through him searching after God's will in those times.

And then through that, he eventually interprets Pharaoh's dream, resulting in Joseph being placed in a role over all of Egypt. and Joseph continues to use these talents and gifts that God has given him to provide not only for Egypt, but for the surrounding nations as well, and then for his extended family that will become the nation of Israel.

And throughout all this, in God's timing though, he fulfilled the visions that he had given Joseph as a child. Joseph did not know how or when any of these events would come to fruition, but he remained faithful and he did everything for the glory of God and God was faithful to provide for Joseph.

Joseph was also careful in all of these times to recognize God and to give him credit for all that occurred in these times. So just like Joseph, just like the disciples, in this way, we as Christians are also waiting on Jesus.

The biggest way in which we are waiting is for the day that Jesus returns again and we are able to join him in eternity. This we know and have hope for because he has promised it to us through the Bible and he promised it to his disciples.

[31:41] We also wait for many other earthly things in this life. We wait for answers to our prayers, both large and small. We wait for God to show us his will for our lives and our communities.

And sometimes we wait to be filled with the spirit to assist us or to show us what's next. About a year and a half ago, I needed to make a change in my life.

Through prayer and the wisdom of conversations with some of the elders, I chose to leave one of my positions at EB because it was having such a negative effect on my life and my family that I needed to take myself away from that and devote more time to my family.

I felt strongly that this is what God was telling me to do and that I needed to do it. So at the expense of some comfort, because it was a relatively high-paying position, for me and my family, I chose to

leave the chaotic higher-paying job for one where we had a much tighter budget. But shortly after joining this other job where our life seemed to start to get a little bit better, my wife blessed me with the news that we were having our third child. And while this was wonderful news, I was excited.

[32:55] I was certainly like wrought with emotion over the idea that how were we going to provide for this third child? We were already kind of tight as it was and as all of you parents in this room know, kids can be expensive.

Yeah, both Christine and I reminded ourselves that God would provide and care for us as long as we stayed faithful to his will. But this didn't let me off the hook though. My number one job then was to care for my house and to raise my house under God.

I continued to work hard in the position that I had and even working small amounts of overtime to start trying bringing in a little bit of money to pad the bank account for when the baby would be here. But then I was presented with a surprise opportunity. I accidentally, I actually accidentally applied for a position at Electric Boat that I was not sure I was qualified for and I wanted to reach out to the hiring manager to get more information but as I'm clicking through to see what was required it said, thank you for your application.

So, that was a surprise. I wasn't truly expecting to do that but it was kind of a happy accident because I knew the manager and I wanted to reach out to him but well, now the cat's out of the bag.

[34:16] I applied. But before I could even really reach out I got an interview. I then shortly after received an offer and then I got a start date all within less than a month.

And for those of you who know how EB works that is not the normal process. Every other job I've ever applied for in the company has taken like six months. so to have a start date in less than a month was truly providential and was God providing in only a way he could.

So, with this new opportunity I would not only not have to worry about providing for my family in this position but it does come with a little bit more responsibility yet I didn't have to sacrifice any time at home either which was a huge blessing.

It was truly through God and all of our prayers that I needed to recognize God in it immediately. In this account from John we see the disciples waiting as well. They knew where to go and that Jesus had a plan for them but they didn't know like I've said before what's next.

[35:29] So they remained hopeful and faithful in Jesus' words gathering them together and waiting. They continued to find ways to provide for themselves and in this case they decided to go fishing. As it shows here we're not always successful with these efforts.

We're not always going to be successful. For both the disciples and myself like we were unsuccessful. So like when I switched positions that my family needed often months we were just negative in our budget and we would have to readjust for the path forward.

but then Jesus provided in only a way that he could and in this passage in John 21 Jesus provides so many fish they don't even probably know what to do at all.

And then through this the disciples immediately recognize who Jesus is and they recognize his divinity and he recognized that he is Lord and they were satisfied with his presence.

They you know Peter immediately rushes to him and yes they're dragging a net full of fish to the shore but they're joining Jesus on the shore and they're not asking him they're not asking him to provide for them.

[36:41] They're not asking him like we're hungry and tired please take care of us. They're just they recognize it as the Lord and it is Jesus who initiates the feeding. He's the one who initiates breakfast and they they are satisfied with that with being in his presence.

And then with this presence Jesus provides a meal and then he provides more intimate time with them before his final moments in the future.

So in our waiting we need to pursue Christ. We need to spend intimate times with him and then when he does show himself we need to recognize him in those moments and give all glory to God. Through this we can continually find joy even in our suffering and our waiting. We must be clear however sometimes the provision or the answer won't come in this lifetime.

The ultimate blessing for those who believe and remain faithful is that we get to spend eternity with him in heaven and with God. Where we will be blessed beyond our limited human perspectives and what we can fathom.

[37:49] Through Jesus' death and resurrection he paid the price for our sinful lives and expect nothing but faithful obedience and love to receive the ultimate reward. And today if you're someone who doesn't believe these things I encourage you to seek one of the elders within the church or even more so I encourage you to look for the people who are waiting well and are waiting and reflecting God's glory and hope in their lives.

For as it says in my favorite verse in 1 Peter 3 15 or 14 and 15 but even if you should suffer for righteousness sake you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled but in your hearts honor Christ as the Lord as holy always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you.

These are the people that any unbeliever should be searching for. We may not have all the answers but we are willing to pray with you and search for those answers with you and hopefully one day we can welcome you into the body of believers that is the church.

And for all of the believers in the room I simply ask the question are you waiting well? Are you waiting on Jesus and his future promise well?

To conclude I want to leave with a quote by C.S. Lewis. As C.S. Lewis said in Mere Christianity I do not know why there is this difference but I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless he has a good unless he sees that it is good for him to wait.

[39:24] When you do enter your room you will find the long wait has done you some good which you would not have had otherwise but you must regard it as waiting not camping. You must keep praying for the light and of course even in the hall you must begin trying to obey the rules which are common to the house and above all you must be asking which door is the true one not which one pleases you best by its paint and paneling.

Let's pray. Lord I open up this floor to you and I once again ask the question are we waiting well and I just pray over this congregation and I pray over the believers in this room that we would strive to wait for you well that we would fulfill your purpose and your mission for our lives as well as searching for you in those next steps while not being negligent in the times that we are unsure of what the answer is for we know you will provide an answer for us and we look forward to it and we hope for it and then we also ask for the wisdom to recognize it when we see it and when you send it we recognize we ask for wisdom that only you can provide and we ask for patience in the waiting that only you can provide in these times we thank you for the scripture and we thank you for accounts like the one in John 21 when you decided to bring your disciples together another time and to in the future have those intimate conversations and that intimate moment with them and I ask you that we are spending those intimate moments with you as well and that once again that we recognize you in everything we do and that we recognize that everything comes from you and that through you we are saved and I just ask you for these things in Jesus name

Amen