

Breakfast with Jesus

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[0 : 00] And reading again at verse 9, John 21 at verse 9, when they got 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. So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled a net, a shore full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. And so on through to where we finished reading at verse 19.

Now we saw last time in continuing with the studies we have had for some time of Simon Peter's life in the passages in the Gospels where we find that set out. We saw last time how in the early part of the chapter here, down to verse 8 particularly, Jesus revealed himself to the disciples.

First of all from the shore and then through the miracle that he worked there, which was really in a sense a repeat of the miracle that he had worked as recorded in Luke chapter 5.

[1 : 07] Where we saw that in putting these together, the Lord was demonstrating that he was really the same in the sense of his power and his ability and his presence with them as he had been prior to his death.

And indeed there's a common theme running through from that through the rest of the chapter. And it's important just to note that before we move on to the passage we're looking at this evening. It's all to do with Jesus revealing himself. Remember, this is Jesus having risen from the dead. This is the risen Christ. In the power of his resurrection, this is him now showing himself to the disciples as one who has overcome death.

And as he showed that in terms of the miracle that he worked there in showing his power, verses 1 to 8, so we come verses 9 to 13 to really have what's effectively Christ's fellowship with them.

As he shares this meal or they share this meal together with him, it's really a way of Christ again manifesting or revealing himself to them as one who, though now risen and on the other side of death, if you like, is nevertheless going to be, as they will experience through the Holy Spirit when that happens, he is going to be present, he's going to be sharing in fellowship with them, he is not going to be absent entirely from their lives, though he will be physically.

[2 : 34] And that's something that we can look at in a bit more detail. And then you come to verses 15 through to verse 19, where you find Peter restored by Jesus, first of all, interviewed or questioned in regard to his love.

I remember that goes back to the denial that we saw a short time ago, a few weeks back when he denied the Lord three times. And we'll see how this incident fits in with that and how Jesus is effectively restoring Peter and doing so in the presence of the other disciples, but its restoration, as we'll see, not merely for Peter's own personal individual benefit, but a restoration that anticipates what he's going to be as an apostle and a leader of the church as the next book of the Bible and the book of Acts will actually show us.

So the emphasis really throughout these passages, really the common theme or the thread, if you like, throughout these passages, the spiritual thread or theme is the continuing ministry of Jesus to his people.

The continuing ministry of the risen Jesus to his people. And that is what we tonight have come here for. To be under the ministry of the risen Christ, now the glorified Christ, through his Spirit, through the Gospel, so that he will actually come to once again reveal himself to us.

That is our privilege. And hold fellowship with him. That is our privilege. We are here not just to have fellowship with one another, although that is good and though we're conscious of that.

[4 : 25] Above that we come to an anticipation of meeting with Christ himself through his Word, through his Spirit.

But also to come once again to be reassured that in the way in which Christ restores us, whatever lapses have been or will be in our lives, small or great, noticeable or private, as through disciples Christ deals with his people, as through disciples Christ deals with them in a way that wants to show restoration is towards further service, as he is here showing in the case of Peter himself. So these two things then, the continuing ministry of Jesus, as we've seen it through the power of Christ still being present with his church, now we'll see it through fellowship with him and through restoration on the part of Peter.

To have a meal in the Bible, throughout the Bible, indeed, in many cases is itself representative of fellowship, or part, if you like, of fellowship.

And nowhere better is that set out for us than in the Lord's Supper, which although it is not effectively the kind of meal that you have in the ordinary sense where you have more food than you have in the Lord's Supper, which, after all, is just bread and a cup with wine.

[5 : 58] Nevertheless, the fact that it's seated at a table and in the church in Scotland, that is, of course, something that was in the past emphasized, that it's the table of the Lord. It's a place where the Lord's people come for feeding.

It's a place where they enjoy and come to know fellowship with himself. It's not just that they gather together, as we see them coming at a communion, to be sitting together at a communion table.

Their communion is with the Lord. It's a fellowship. It's a fellowship with him. It's communion with him. It's an imparting from him to them of the power of his resurrection through the means that he himself uses to that end in word and sacrament.

And you notice here that he had actually prepared this for them. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place and fish laid out on it and bread.

And John's Gospel gives us these mysterious little details at times, or it really conveys to us something that's very appropriate in the passage itself and in our relationship indeed with Jesus, as we know that relationship of fellowship with him.

[7 : 13] There are things that you just simply cannot define in very adequate terms humanly. Where did this fish come from? Where did this charcoal fire come from? Where did the bread come from?

All we see there is that it was there. It was there when they got out on land and everything points towards the fact that Jesus prepared it. He had it there ready for them when they got out of the boat.

When they stepped out on land, that's what met them. And that's really indicative of telling us straight away that in fellowship with Jesus, it is Jesus who feeds his people.

It is we who come to be fed. It is we who anticipate the feeding of Christ, of our souls through the Gospel, but it is he who feeds us.

It's not the minister who feeds you. It's the Lord who feeds you. It's the Lord who comes to impart his power, his spiritual ability, and his spiritual teaching, his spiritual ministry to you.

[8 : 16] The Lord, the risen Lord, feeds his people. And here they are after a night's unsuccessful fishing.

We're not told here that they toiled in that fishing, but they probably did. The corresponding passage in Luke chapter 5 tells us that Peter said, Master, we've toiled all night and caught nothing. Fishing was hard work and still is. You can't really fish in the sense in which they were fishing here, hauling nets and so on, letting the nets down, hauling them back in again. That's real toil.

And there's a disappointment after a whole night's real toil when there's nothing to show for it. There are no fish. And Jesus is really teaching Peter and his companions, and he's teaching us through that as well, that there will be times in your life when you toil and there seems to be nothing.

Really as a result of it, but more disappointment. And maybe you're here tonight and your heart has been toiling and your life is marked by toil, by different things in the providence of God that are making you toil right at this moment, where you're feeling the going really hard, where the road is tough, where you're struggling, where God has brought about things you didn't anticipate, things that have surprised you, things that are painful, things that are very hard, really, to find meaning in, at least at the moment.

[9 : 53] And Jesus is saying, I've got food for you. The food that you need is in my hands. I've prepared it for you.

It's all ready for you. You don't need to go on and actually try and prepare the meal for yourself. And as you come tonight with your toil, with your worries, with your concerns, with the pain of your heart, with the disappointments of life, with the struggles of life, be assured that Christ has plenty from which to feed your soul, that his food is designed specially for you in all your circumstances.

And as you step ashore tonight, if you like to put it that way, just for a brief moment at this service of worship, where you're here to worship him, as you step ashore, as it were, and just maybe just for a moment step out of your circumstances and other ways, here is Christ meeting you.

And the food of the gospel is laid before you. And he's inviting you to come. Have your breakfast.

Take your fill of what he has. It's designed for that very person, that very situation that you have.

And you notice verse 10 that there is a contribution from them as well, interestingly, brings some of the fish, he says, that you have caught. So Simon went, it was Simon Peter, who went and hauled this net ashore full of large fish, and they contributed that to what Christ already prepared for them.

[11 : 42] In other words, there's a suggestion there, at least, that it's not just simply Christ providing all the feeding for us. We're required to actually contribute something towards our benefiting from what Christ has prepared.

and the gospel spiritual food that Christ has prepared through his death and through his resurrection that's laid out on the gospel table for us. It is there in all its abundance.

We don't need to create it. We don't have to. We can't. But we need to come, as we do at ordinary mealtimes, to prepare.

We need to make some preparation. We need to pray. We need to come with a desire to be fed, with a concern to meet with Christ. And that's why we're here tonight.

We have not come here to be entertained. And if we have, then we're not going to receive that.

We've come to be fed. We've come to be fed by Christ.

[12 : 45] And he has that feeding to offer to us in the gospel. And setting it before you, whatever your circumstances tonight, there's food on this table for you.

And then he says, come and have breakfast. Now, we're told, I'm sure us young folks, I was told, certainly my generation, don't skip breakfast.

Don't cut out your breakfast. You need your breakfast. You need a good breakfast in order to get through the day. And how true that is, especially in spiritual terms.

You can neglect your breakfast from time to time in the ordinary sense of breakfast, in the ordinary food that's put before you, though it's not advisable. But if you skip your breakfast in a spiritual sense, then you're going to be very soon in trouble, especially if you're repeated.

because we need this breakfast, this food of Jesus. We need to meet with this risen Christ every day we awaken because he's offering us this food.

[13 : 46] He comes to us, if you like, in the gospel as we read his word, as we pray to him, as we meet him in fellowship. What is the whole point of it? It's to feed our souls. And yes, sometimes we're in a hurry doing it, but don't skip it.

Don't actually leave it out, even if it's for a shorter time than you would want. Read something of the word. Pray to him. Ask him to help you through the day.

Tell him to feed your soul. Carry that into the day. Because to face providence on an empty stomach is not advisable.

An empty stomach spiritually, I mean. After all these people, Peter and his fellow disciples here, they were actually going to go shortly after this into the world as Christ's missionaries.

Jesus was preparing them for mission, for going out with the gospel, for facing a hostile world. They would not be able to face a hostile world effectively. And Peter, in fact, had learned that from what we saw of his denial.

[14 : 52] It'd been so confident that if all of these other disciples would forsake Jesus, he would never do such a thing. But he did. And really, Jesus is showing him here.

Peter, you really need to breakfast on the spiritual food that I've got to give you. Because he's going to be sent out into a hostile world.

He's going to be a leader in the church, in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. And following a wonderful event of Pentecost, as you find in Acts 2, in the following chapters, who is it that's to the fore?

The man who denied Jesus. Yes, but he's now in a position of strength because he is spiritually fed and being spiritually fed and knows that he needs to continue to be spiritually fed by Jesus Christ. Is that our concern tonight? Is that really the main purpose why we've come here? I know it's to worship the Lord. But in the worship of the Lord, the Lord is kindly laying out this gospel table, this gospel food for you, this spiritual feast that he himself has obtained by his death and resurrection. [16:07] The risen Jesus is saying, come and dine with me. Come and take your fill from this table. Don't be afraid that it's not for you. It's there for every needy sinner.

And Jesus' invitation is, come and have breakfast. And you know, this is not for just an elite few people. You mustn't think tonight that this kind of thing, this fellowship with Jesus, this feeding upon Jesus, this feeding upon the spiritual food, the redemption, the salvation that is in Christ for us. That that's really, to that extent, that that is really just for a very elite, select body of people. Maybe for elders, maybe for more prominent, professing Christians in the church. Just look at the people who are actually named there at the beginning of the chapter in verse 2. Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel of Canaan, Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

What are they saying? What is that saying to us? It's saying that here were people who had failed. Peter had failed. Here was someone who had doubted in the resurrection of Christ, Thomas, and hadn't accepted the word of his fellow disciples when they said that they had met the Lord. [17:32] There was somebody very hesitant, Nathaniel, as you find in John at the beginning of the book. The failed, the doubting, the hesitant, and the unnamed.

They're not named here because they were unnamed simply because John didn't know their names. They're unnamed so that we can actually put ourselves and our own names in that. It's not how important we will be in the church. It's not what position we might have in the church. It's not what we might have in society in terms of status or anything else. It's that we are included in the service and in the fellowship of Christ.

Never mind if nobody really ever hears about you as a Christian. Though you want, of course, to testify to your Lord. These are people, all of them with flaws, all of them with some failure or other. And yet Jesus is saying to them, you come and have breakfast with me. You come and partake of what I have to offer you, what I've paid for with my blood, and take it.

[18:52] You might say to yourself tonight, I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy to have breakfast with Jesus. I'm not worthy to have in any way this kind of fellowship with Him.

I'm someone who is just nothing like other Christians that I know. Well, as we'll see in a minute, it's not whether you like or dislike other Christians that really matters.

But Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me? Do you love me? And here is really your qualification. Someone once said that the church is so different to every other organization because unworthiness is the only qualification you need to know Christ as your friend.

Your unworthiness is not a barrier. barrier. It's in that sense a qualification. Didn't He Himself say, I have not come to call righteous, but sinners to repentance.

[20:06] So tonight, if you've never dined with Jesus before, if you've never taken the spiritual food that He's offering you in the gospel, in other words, if you have not actually come and responded to Christ's invitation to have Himself as your Lord, to be His disciple, to be nourished by Him, to have your soul filled with that which will enable you to meet temptation, the temptations that are within your own heart, let alone out in the world, then listen to Him and respond obediently to His call, come and have breakfast.

Come and take this. It's His own voice. And then you find, secondly, restoration, a restoration of Peter by Jesus.

We could spend more time on the previous part there. They did not dare to know, to ask who it was. They knew that it was Jesus. And there's that same element, really, isn't there, of mystery, of indefinable something there, that they were in awe because they knew who it was.

And yet, John says, they dared not ask Him because they would be told, I am. That's who I am. And we can't really just capture everything and define everything in our own words and by our own ability of what it means to have fellowship with Christ.

There is an element of mystery in that, that you just cannot put into a compartment where you know every single aspect to it and you can analyze every detail of it.

[21 : 47] It's the Lord. It's beyond our total definitions. But the great thing is they know Him. They know who it is.

And they're glad that they're there and that He's there with them. The restoration of Peter by Jesus then in the second point of breakfast.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, feed my lambs.

And so on. You read the interview there as we've read it through. Now, there are two aspects to that, as we've said. Peter himself personally needs to be restored, needs to know in his own soul that matters have been mended by Christ in his relationship with him.

He had grieved the Lord. He had failed the Lord. He denied the Lord three times. He had failed to live up to his promise. And here the Lord is asking him, Simon, do you love me?

[22 : 57] Do you love me more than these? But there's also the other side of it. He needs to be restored prior to the service that he's going to give in the church and to the church and for Christ.

This needs to be put right before you read in Acts of the Apostle the great leader that Peter became. For his own personal needs, for his own personal relationship, but also for what he's going to be as a servant of Christ publicly.

Jesus is restoring him and he's doing so in terms of asking him about his love. Same with Psalm 51, wasn't it, when David came to express his sorrow and repentance before God over the sin that he now came to acknowledge?

He said, Lord, create in me a clean heart. Cleanse me from this blood guiltiness. You see, he's got his own guilt, his own personal need of restoration there.

Then you proceed through the Psalm and suddenly it changes in verse 13, where David says, then will I teach transgressors your ways and sinners shall be turned unto you.

[24 : 14] He's not just concerned that he himself will have a renewed heart, that he will have his relationship with God fixed up properly. That's not enough for David.

It's not enough for Peter either. He wants to serve his Lord further and he wants to be effective and he wants to be effective through being restored and then sent into further service.

And so that's how it is for Peter as well. And isn't it really such a wonderful point to note in itself that Jesus didn't write Peter off when he came to know what he had done?

We saw from Luke's Gospel the look that Jesus gave to Peter from which Peter went out and wept bitterly. And then we don't read anything else about him until he appears as we said last time in John 20 with the beloved disciple in relation to going to the sepulcher.

We would probably have written him off. We'd probably have said well it's alright if he gets restoration personally himself but surely he's not going to use this man anymore in his service in his kingdom.

[25 : 31] That's not how Jesus is. Christ's restoration means full restoration and we as a church have to remember that in our restoration of people who have fallen on sad times.

Because that's what Jesus is about. He's there to restore this man and to restore him to his usefulness and to restore him to leadership in the church so that he can be a leadership in the church.

He's not far from writing him often Peter is going to be a very prominent and a very effective disciple of Christ. I will take that to heart my friend if tonight you know in your heart that things are not as they used to be or as they should be between yourself and the Lord.

Or if you know of others for whom that is the case. Lapses, failures, sins, privately, publicly.

Does Jesus write his people off? Does he say that's it? No more service for you? Thankfully no.

[26 : 46] In fact he makes this man a more effective witness and a more dynamic leader through this and from what he's learned than you might say he would otherwise have been.

And he does so by way of focusing on his love. It's restoration personal and for service but it's restoration focusing on the question of love.

Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? And you see he's taking Peter back in the language that he's using in the name that he's using to what we saw at one of our first studies in John chapter one where he was introduced by Andrew to Jesus.

He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, so you are Simon, the son of John. You shall be called Cephas, which means Peter or the rock. And it's as if he's now taking him back to

the moment that Jesus first of all met him and specified what he would be.

Now he's saying, Simon, son of John, do you remember what I said to you? Do you love me more than these? And more than these kind of three meanings in the way that the words are set out in the text there of the chapter, it could be that he means, do you love me more than these disciples love me?

[28 : 14] Because that's what Peter had alluded to, though all should forsake you, I will not do that. And he's saying, as if he's saying to him now, well Peter, how is it now? Do you love me more than they love me? Or you could say, do you love me more than you love them?

That could be another way of taking it. Or it could be the word these could actually mean even the things that he's just been using in fishing, these objects, these things of what used to mark your life. Do you love me more than you love these? And it really doesn't make a much difference which of those who would actually decide because the question really is about whether he loves him. Whether he loves him genuinely. Do you love me? And Peter is grieved because he asked him three times. I think that's what we take from the verse there, verse 17.

He was grieved because he said to him the third time, do you love me? as if Jesus is in a sense recreating the occasion of his denial.

[29 : 22] Indeed, when you look at the charcoal fire, the circumstances there, and you go back to chapter 18 and verse 18, you'll see that that's exactly how it was that night that Peter denied Jesus.

When the charcoal fire, as it's mentioned there in verse 18 of chapter 18, now the servants and officers made a charcoal fire because it was cold and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them standing and warming himself as if, at least in terms of John's presentation of it, it was a moment where Jesus was confronting Peter with what had happened and what he had done and with his failure and with his circumstance.

And now he's saying, do you really love me, Peter? Do you love me genuinely? Will you say now from your heart of hearts, that you do love me?

And he says, Lord, you know that I love you. And the third time he went further and he said, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.

[30 : 30] Maybe tonight you and I are not able to say to the extent we would like that we love the Lord indeed. maybe you hear tonight and saying, well, I wish I could say more in a more confirmatory way to myself and even to those who know me in my life that I do love the Lord really and truly.

Maybe you think there are aspects of your life that really perhaps some people might see and call into question whether you love the Lord or not. Well, Peter is really, as it were, saying, Lord, I know that my love isn't perfect.

I know what's happened in my life. I know that I failed you. Lord, you know all things. You know that my love isn't what it should be.

But you do know that I love you. That I love you genuinely. And yes, it would be great that all of us could say tonight, I have a great love for the Lord.

But really what he's saying is, begin at least with this. Do I have a true love for the Lord? A genuine love for the Lord? A love that I would want to be greater than it is.

[31 : 56] But at least it's love. And it's love for him and I know that I love him and he knows that I love him. I came across this comment on that particular point by Henry Clay Trumbull, an American who was a companion or at least an associate of the famous evangelist Dwight Moody.

And he says here, Peter gave the best answer when he said, thou knowest. Mere professions of love and devotion amount to but little at any time. Peter had already overdone the business of professing his unflinching affection for Jesus.

Yet he was sure that in spite of his failure under peculiar trial, he was known by Jesus as at heart a loving disciple of Christ. So he put himself back, as it were, into the care of Jesus, appealing to Jesus to recognize the love which was underneath all his surface swaying of conduct.

A loving heart is always its own best witness. It will speak as no words can speak in its own defense when doubted. And when a loving heart is pained at being called in question because of some seeming failure, it cannot do better than to trust itself to the consciousness of the one towards whom it outreaches in love.

If, indeed, every human friend should fail to recognize the love of another's loving heart, Jesus never so fails.

[33 : 39] Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. You know that whoever says I don't, I really do. You know that whatever I've done, I really love you.

Friends, take encouragement from that. When you know failure, lapse, shortcoming, everything to do with those things in your life, as I know in mine, come to the Lord tonight, listen to his question, do you love me?

answer it, and answer it. If you're not able to say, as few will be able to say, of course I love you, I love you greatly. Lord, you know all things.

You know that I love you. That's the heart of a genuine disciple, a disciple recovering his equilibrium spiritually, if you like, and now coming publicly to be restored by Jesus.

So Jesus goes on and says, well, feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my lambs. In other words, he's going to be a pastor, he's going to be a shepherd of the flock. And you see the way Jesus differentiates between the lambs, the young of the flock, and the sheep, the older of the flock.

[35 : 10] And that's what it's like, that's what pastoring is about, that's what we need to take account of. Yes, we need to take account of the lambs, we need to nurture the lambs, we need to be concerned that they indeed are part of the flock already as lambs.

But we mustn't neglect the sheep, even though we come to give attention to the lambs. The sheep are so, so important. And you know, something that strikes me just as I speak is how important it is for lambs and sheep to be together in the one flock.

And sometimes shepherd will still tell you that it's actually better in the long term for there to be no weaning of the lambs at all and just leave them with the flock. Certainly spiritually that's the case. Let's not ever think of the lambs of the flock, the young of the congregation to be, in a sense, weaned from the older members of the flock so that they are constantly in one place and the older ones in another place.

It would be unnatural to see a flock with that happening. What we need is the kind of relationships, the kind of congregational outlook and activity that sees that lambs and sheep belong together.

[36 : 27] So use every opportunity you young ones to be with the older Christians and you Christians who are older be sure that you're giving them that facility of being with you, of learning from you, of following you in terms of what you have learned and the example you hopefully are giving them.

That's what we need to be as a congregation for all that we have, meetings for young folks and meetings for children and of course these are hugely, hugely important but let's also emphasize as we should, meetings for everybody, for all ages, for the lambs and the sheep to be together, to be fed by the one shepherd as they all belong to the flock under his care.

And of course Peter, as you well know, remembered these words of the Lord when he came to write his first letter. I'll just finish with this.

So I exhort, he says, the elders among you, as a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise you who are younger, be subject to the elders, clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

[38 : 07] And then he says this, be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary the devil crowns around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Resist him, firm in your face. How well he knew what he was talking about. He hadn't resisted to the extent he should and he failed his Lord.

But here he is now recovered. And this is indeed Luke chapter 22 and verse 32 that you find beginning there to be fulfilled in John 21.

As Jesus said to Peter, when you are recovered, when you are turned round again, strengthen your brethren. We need each other.

We need to strengthen one another. We need to look out for one another. under the shepherding of Christ himself, fellowship with Jesus, restoration by Jesus, the continuing ministry of Christ to his people.

[39 : 19] How precious it is. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we pray that you would constantly enable us to draw our strength and our spiritual nourishment from you.

And we pray that you would forgive us for the times when we neglect to do this ourselves. Strengthen us, we pray, against temptation, against all that would draw us aside from being effective and being true and faithful witnesses to you.

Grant that your blessing will follow your word in our midst this evening and through this day and pardon our sins for Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll sing in conclusion now the final three verses of the psalm that we were singing.

Psalm 137, sorry, 138, and verses 6 to 8. Although the Lord God dwells on high, the lowly person he protects, whereas the proud and haughty one he knows afar off and rejects.

That's Psalm 138, and that's on page 180, singing from verse 6 through to the end of the psalm. Although the Lord God dwells on high.

[40 : 37] The Lord dwells on high. Christner wants Another night come cross, all three help the Lord serve home are Although I walk out of troubled heart, your tender care presents my life.

You raise your hand against my foes, your right hand saves me from their strife.

The Lord will certainly fulfill, for me the birth of people has.

Your love endured forevermore, we serve the words of your hands.

I'll go to the main door after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

[42 : 38] Amen.