

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 22

John 21:1–25

Breakfast with Jesus

The Gospel of John reads like an action movie, complete with amazing special affects, the quintessential battle between good and evil, and the most extraordinary climax of all time. For it was at the cross of Christ where the satanic foe was vanquished, the Son of God became the Victor, and death was forever overcome!

Following the Resurrection, John offers the reader an in-depth look at just a few of the Lord's appearances. It is here in chapter twenty-one where we see an up close poignant look at the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples. It will be the final preparation for their service.

At a glance ~ **Read John 21:1–25.**

The setting for the closing scene of John's account is the Sea of Tiberias (also known as the Sea of Galilee). It was at this lakeside where the disciples had listened to Jesus' teaching and where they had experienced for themselves the wonders of His glory. In your initial reading of this final chapter, who do you see emerging as the dominant character among the disciples? What do you perceive about him at this particular point in time?

Following His resurrection, Jesus gave these words to Mary to take to His disciples: "*Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.*" There were still a few "loose ends" remaining regarding His instructions to them that He would now take care of in very familiar surroundings.

1. On this occasion at the seashore, seven disciples were present, five were mentioned by name. Who are they? vv. 1–3

The other two unidentified men are believed to be Philip and Andrew.

- a. On this ordinary day, what were these men doing that came naturally to them?
 - b. It was common for fishermen to fish at night, using the light of torches to lure fish toward the boat. Since these men were experts at their craft, what does John note about the result of their all night labor?
2. What does John record about this particular appearance of the Lord? v. 4
3. Initially veiling His identity and addressing them as any ordinary person might, what does Jesus ask them? What was their answer? vv. 5–6
 - a. In response to their disappointed “No,” what does Jesus tell them to do?
 - b. This time what was the result?

As far as the disciples knew, a perfect stranger had just suggested they throw their net out on the right side of the boat, and they complied. When their net filled with fish, John may have recalled the similar happening (recorded in Luke 5) when Jesus made a similar command and they caught so many fish their nets broke apart and the boat began to sink?

4. What declaration does John make that spurs Peter to act? v. 7
 - a. What does this impulsiveness on Peter’s part reveal to you about his heart?
5. The rest of the disciples came to shore in the boat, dragging the net full of fish with them. Once they made shore, what did the disciples find? Summarize the scene in vv. 9–14.

Jesus built a fire and prepared breakfast for all the disciples. Eight “brothers” enjoyed a meal and fellowship by the sea that morning; and, even though they dared not ask, they knew it was the Lord who blessed them!

Selah ~

Jesus guided the catch that day and the disciples brought the fish to Jesus to be used for His purpose. When the disciples cast their nets on the left side of the boat—their choice—they caught nothing. But when they cast it according to the Lord’s direction, the catch exceeded their expectations! It was a lesson He wanted them to remember. Look back at John 15:5–7. . . When you attempt to go out and do things in your own strength, what happens? If you remain joined to Jesus in your efforts, you can ask what you will and He will take care of the results. Please share your thoughts.

Take a closer look ~ John 21:15

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, 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.’”

What does this verse reveal to you about Jesus’ priorities?

In focus ~ (Key words) agape; phileo

In the verbal exchange between Jesus and Peter, two different words are used for love: one that is a deep-seated sacrificial affection, and one that is a practical friendship expression of love. Look up these words using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

agape: _____

phileo: _____

The Call to Follow

Outlook ~ Read John 21:15–25.

Once this group of brothers had eaten breakfast, Jesus turns His attention to Peter, who now begins to emerge as the leader. Previously a fisherman by profession, Jesus focuses on Peter's new call to be a fisher of men. Three times Peter had denied the Lord and three times Jesus will ask him about his love.

1. In the verses that follow, Jesus changes the command after each of Peter's responses. Write out the question and the response where indicated below. Take your time as you work through this exercise and then record any personal observations you make. (Note: Keep in mind that in the first two questions, Jesus uses the form *agape*; the third time He uses *phileo*. In each case, Peter uses the form *phileo* to answer Jesus.)

Jesus' question (v.15): _____

Peter's response (v.15): _____

Jesus' question the second time (v.16): _____

Peter's response (v.16): _____

Jesus' question the third time (v.17): _____

Peter's response (v.17): _____

2. Personal observations:

Each of Jesus' questions probes more deeply and the third time Peter is grieved. But after three denials, there are three affirmations of Peter's love and a three-fold commission by the Lord to care for His flock. Jesus is restoring Peter to a place of faith and trust for the ministry, making it crystal clear that all is based on one thing—LOVE!

3. Personal: Jesus would ask *you* today, just as He asked Peter: “*Do you love Me?*” If so, how are you answering the call to feed and tend His lambs?

4. Once Jesus set the right perspective for service, He went on to tell Peter the direction his life would take. Knowing the direction would ultimately lead to death, Jesus still asks one thing of Peter; what is it? v. 19

When Peter thought of his future, he must have looked over at John (who was standing by listening) because he asks: “*But Lord, what about this man?*” Jesus’ gentle rebuke to Peter is simply, “*What is that to you?*” And without naming himself, John goes on to point out that he is the one referred to in their conversation. John wrote down with greatest accuracy and testimony all that he saw and heard. In verse 25, John indicates that the story he told was just the beginning—that all the words and works of Jesus could not be contained in his gospel or all the books ever written!

Selah ~

If there is a personal take-a-way lesson we can learn from these closing words of John, perhaps it is that we must keep our eyes focused on the One who died for us, who calls us to Himself, who equips us with His Spirit, and who gives us the marvelous privilege of carrying His Word out into our world. What a trust—what an honor—what a joy! Close out your study with a time of prayer . . .

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you’ve learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes