

**Sermon Study Guide Based on
Robert Meade's Message of November 15, 2009
"Jesus' Surf 'n' Turf Breakfast Buffet"**

[Today's message will look at a special breakfast Jesus prepared for his disciples (John 21) and how these verses can apply to us today.]

[Topics: Feed My Lambs; Feed My Sheep; Follow Jesus; God's Calling for Us]

Excerpt: How many of you ate breakfast this morning? It doesn't count if you just had coffee. For those of you who didn't have anything to eat, don't you know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day?

This morning we'll look at a very special breakfast Jesus prepared for his disciples – one of the last big events that's in the Gospels. It's all recorded in John 21, which is John's last chapter of his story of Jesus. We'll also see how this account applies to us today!

John 21:1, "Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias."

At this point, Jesus was already resurrected and had seen his disciple several times. Most of us recall the story of how doubting Thomas was able to touch Jesus and know that he, indeed, was alive and had come back from the grave. Now these events happened in Jerusalem.

But the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee, is more than 65 miles north of Jerusalem. Why did Jesus meet his disciples there? Well, he told them that he would meet them there in Galilee as well. This would be the equivalent of having Jesus tell us to meet him at Lake Arrowhead from where we are. It's a 4-5 day trip back then to go to there from Jerusalem.

This area around the Sea of Galilee was where many of the disciples grew up and first met Jesus. On this journey, the disciples had time to reflect on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and what that had meant to them.

Now today, God gives us that same kind of time to reflect on what's happened in our lives, or to think about what Jesus is doing in our lives. Another lesson we can learn from this example is that we need to discuss with others what Jesus is doing in our lives and not just keeping it to ourselves.

2) "Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (that's James & John), and two other disciples were together."

Notice that not all the disciples traveled to Galilee. The way John writes this account is a way for us to inject ourselves into the story and travel along with the others because John did not name the other two disciples.

3) "I'm going out to fish,' Simon Peter told them, and they said, 'We'll go with you.' So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing."

What the disciples went out into the water was probably a pretty small boat. Now there's a lot of speculation as to why Peter was going fishing. Some scholars feel that Peter had just given up and went back to his old profession of being a fisherman. Others feel that the disciples at this point needed to provide some food and income for themselves.

It's kind of rough for these seasoned fishermen to go fishing all night and catch nothing, even though they been out of practice for 3 and half years. How many of you been night fishing or net fishing? When Robert was young – he grew up in Michigan on the Great Lakes – he went smelt fishing at night using a net attached to the end of 20-foot long pole. After pulling up an empty net three times, he was ready to go home!

At this point in the story, we don't see Jesus with the disciples at all. They had done all the work trying to catch fish on their own.

4) "Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus." Now in the morning the disciples saw Jesus there, even though they didn't recognize him. Did he suddenly appear or was he there with them all night, watching them and encouraging them, but they were too busy to notice?

Now do we run into the same thing today, where we are so busy at our jobs, that we don't see Jesus there with us? It's something to think about.

How many of you are familiar with the series of books called, "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid"? In the latest book, it talks about the Wimpy Kid going to church on Sunday and the pastor is talking about how you never know where Jesus is, so you want to be on the lookout for him.

In the child's mind, he is thinking that this is horrible. He feels that he will be talking with someone and mistakenly think that he's talking with Jesus, and that Jesus will pass him right by. We don't have to think that we would miss Jesus, because he will be there with us and for us. Jesus will make himself plain to us, if we are looking for him.

5) "He called out to them, 'Friends, haven't you any fish?' 'No,' they answered."

Now the term "friends" in the Greek means children or little children. Some scholars believe that many of the disciples were under the age of 20 and probably were in their teens the whole time they were with Jesus.

You can't be too young to follow Jesus. The typical rabbinical system back then started with children 13 years old and older. So don't discount your young age and think you can't be a follower of Jesus.

These disciples weren't too happy that they had worked all night and hadn't caught any fish. Now they didn't get paid by the hour; they got paid by the fish. So zero fish was zero pay for them. They didn't recognize Jesus. But he was there to help them.

6) "He said, 'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.' When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish."

This is an incredible miracle. The disciples spent all night rowing back and forth over this lake and came up with zero fish. And the next thing you know someone shouts out from shore – throw your net on the other side of the boat and when you do, your net is full of fish. Then you know something is going on here.

One big advantage of listening to Jesus is that remarkably it works! They listened to his one instruction and they were overflowed with what he had to give them. Now Jesus doesn't always doesn't work this way but it's encouraging to know that he works this way sometimes.

On the flip side of that, even though they listened to him and he blessed them for that, it ended up being a lot of work for them. This was a huge catch for them. Be careful what you ask for. You may ask for blessings or good health or closeness to Jesus and he may give it to you but many times it's not in the way you expect! But it will always be done in a good way for you.

7) "Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water."

From the Greek, we see that Peter had nothing on at all. It was a custom for some of them to go fishing naked. But apparently it was only Peter who did that.

8) "The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9) When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread."

Now when you've recognized that the Lord has done something incredible in your life, there are lots of different ways to respond. None are right and none are wrong. Each of us responds in different ways depending upon our makeup and our background. There were three different responses in this account.

John seems pretty introverted at this point. Even though John is the first one to recognize that it's Jesus, he doesn't seem to show any emotion but just tells the leader Peter, "It's the Lord." Now Peter had a totally emotional response. He puts on some clothes and jumps in the lake and swims ashore to be with Jesus. He's not thinking about the fish or the other disciples. He just wants to be with the Lord.

Now the rest of the disciples were kind of in between John and Peter's reactions. Now they were excited as they rowed the boat back to shore. But they didn't want to neglect the blessing God had given them. So they are dragging along this big net behind the boat.

So just remember that there wasn't a right or wrong reaction, because Jesus ended up loving and feeding all of them. It's nice to know that no matter how we react, he's still there with us.

10) "Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' 11) Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but

even with so many the net was not torn. 12) Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. 13) Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish."

This is really a great part of the story – all completely true! It's great that John recorded these miracles so that we have a record of them. Take a minute to picture this, in your mind's eye to see what was going on here.

Here we find Jesus serving breakfast to some very tired disciples in the chill of the morning. Now probably fish for breakfast sounds disgusting to a lot of you. It was pretty popular at that time. And it's still popular in some parts of the world. Robert recalled a time when he and his family visited England and Ireland. In Ireland, at the hotel they were staying at, an older gentleman had for breakfast every morning a kippered herring and a bowl of Irish oatmeal.

We see that Jesus prepared for the disciples exactly what they needed – food. Notice, Jesus didn't preach a sermon to them when they got off the boat. In the same way, Jesus can feed us exactly as we need. We need to come and partake of it just as the disciples did.

Now there are lots of ways we are feed spiritually. For example the music and the drums today were an incredible way to picture God's love through music. Hopefully, there are many aspects of our services that can spiritually feed our needs.

Another interesting thing to notice in this story is that Jesus asked them to bring in their fish that they had caught. Notice it was Peter that responded first to bring in the fish. Jesus wanted them to share in this activity as well. He doesn't do everything for us all the time. He definitely has a role for every single one of us.

Now there's mention of 153 fish. Do any of you know the significance of 153? Well, don't feel too bad, no experts do either. Mathematicians found that if take the numbers 1 through 17 and add them all together, it will equal 153.

One last point for this section. It seems that John remembers an awkward silence among the disciples, because they didn't dare ask him who he was. Maybe it was a time they needed to reflect about the resurrected Jesus or maybe they were so hungry that they just ate and didn't want to talk at all.

14) "This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead."

Now we will see that after the disciples' immediate cares are taken care of by Jesus, he goes on to take care of their spiritual needs. Here Jesus goes from fish analogies to sheep analogies! This is where Robert got the "turf" part of his title from, even though no sheep were served as physical food for breakfast.

15) "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

16) Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

17) The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'

Many scholars tie in these Scriptures with Peter's earlier statement that he would never deny Jesus no matter what. And of course during the night that Jesus was taken captive, Peter denied him three times. Scholars feel that this is the way that Jesus is showing his forgiveness to Peter.

Now what is Jesus talking about when he says, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep"? If you are a literalist, you may think that Jesus wanted Peter to go out and buy some sheep and lamb feed and go out and feed some sheep. Maybe a few of you are thinking that.

But most of you would probably be thinking that Jesus, being the good shepherd, wanted Peter to have a part in feeding his spiritual flock. Now taking his statement and applying it for our day we see that Jesus is calling people of all ages – young and old. Jesus said to feed both lambs (young people) and sheep (mature people).

Robert talked about Children's Ministry and how we have many lambs in this congregation. It's a great time for our children to learn about Jesus in a safe setting with their peers. And if you feel you are called to help out in Children's Ministry because this is where Jesus is leading you, please let Robert and the other teachers know. Teens are welcome to a part of this ministry.

Another application to consider is that there are definite needs for spiritually feeding one another in our congregation as well. And then we can also look beyond the walls of the church and consider helping and feeding people we know and come in contact with. If it's just physical help, that's great. If it's an opening to the spiritual then that's great too. We need to keep our eyes open so that the Holy Spirit can show us when and where that is.

So we need to be aware of where the sheep are – family, friends. We need to love them and feed them as Jesus has asked us to do.

This may have been a great healing to Peter to know that God loved him and was moving forward with him. Jesus had a mission for Peter. It wasn't going back to the fishing business. It was to go into the "fishers of men" business. And Jesus also had a special prophecy for Peter.

18) "I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." 19) Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, 'Follow me!'"

In the end Peter did die as a martyr. Thankfully, no one here is called to be a martyr, but we do give up our lives for Christ. And the more we die to him, the more we live to him. So,

Peter was told that he would be a follower of Jesus to the very end of his life. He wouldn't deny him anymore.

And here Jesus gives all of us his universal command – “Follow me.” He didn't say, “Follow the Bible or follow a teacher.” While these are super great tools, what is most important is to follow Jesus.

20) "Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is going to betray you?') 21) When Peter saw him, he asked, 'Lord, what about him?'"

When we feel we have a certain calling, job or responsibility that God is giving us, do we some times see others and think that they could do a better job, so we want to pull back from that calling? So it's not a question of what about others. It's a question of what about me and God's calling for me.

22) "Jesus answered, 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.'"

The point is that we shouldn't worry about someone else. We should encourage one another and love one another and not worry about how God is working with others.

God is dealing with each of us in his own way – for our own good and for the good of the body of Christ. All of us need to follow God as he directs us. The bottom line is that Jesus said we must follow him. We need to follow Jesus through the Holy Spirit, through his word, through the actions and messages of others.

John and Peter had very different missions in the end. Yet Jesus was with them every step of the way. And it's the same for us. He's with us every step of the way. It's just a matter of seeing him and recognizing that. So, no matter what happens to us – whether exciting spiritual times or just the drudgery of day-to-day life, Jesus is there with us and for us.

We just need to be open for him to feed us in the way we need to be feed at the time. And in the end, hopefully like Peter, we can follow Jesus in the path and in the way for us. And in doing so, we will also feed his sheep along the way.

General Group Question: What do you feel Jesus' calling is for you at this time?

Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.

1. Why do you think Jesus wanted to meet with the disciples at the Sea of Galilee?
2. How did Jesus bless them while they were fishing? Could you explain why he did it?
3. How do you respond when God has done something incredible in your life?
4. What had Jesus prepared for his disciples? Why do you think he did that?

5. Why didn't the disciples ask Jesus who he was?
6. Why is so hard for us to Jesus working in our lives?
7. Who are Jesus' sheep?
8. What did Jesus emphasize to Peter – and to all of us as his disciples – to do?
9. How can you bring glory to God through your life as you interact with other people?

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