

**John 21:1-14**

**“Now What”**

What does one do when the party is over? When the excitement or even disappointment of the situation subsides? In most instances, I would argue, we return to what is familiar. This tendency of ours is why change is so hard and uncomfortable. It is why we stay in bad situations far longer than we should. Sticking with or returning to what is familiar is easy, even when it is not good. Consider the disciples in our text this morning. They had everything they needed to trust and wait. They had received everything they needed to look towards the future with expectancy. Jesus had indeed accomplished what he said he would and thus they could be sure that all he had promised them would come to pass. But they don't trust. They don't wait. They fail to look to the future with expectancy.

Now what? I can hear Peter asking himself this question, silently. And his response, audibly, is not I will wait on the Lord. It is not I will trust his words. Neither is it I will pray. All, which would have been faithful responses to the chain of events up to this point. Instead, he says emphatically, I am going fishing. In other words, I am going back to that which I know, to that which is familiar, to that which requires no faith on my part. To that which Christ called me from.

Here, I make my first move with the text. Let us be fair to Peter and the other disciples, most of us, if not all of us are like them. When we face a 'rubber meets the road' situation, the unexpected we look for our easy place. Does not matter the

condition of that place, we simply want what's familiar, because what's familiar is easy. So, they go back only to discover additional disappointment. Can you imagine the frustration of these experienced fishermen. They had an experienced leader, the right team members, the necessary equipment, the best location, and nothing! They fished all night and despite their collective experience and effort they caught nothing. Are you fishing and catching nothing, metaphorically speaking? *Church, no going back. The resurrection calls us to forge ahead.*

**Luke 9:62** "Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

**Phil 3:13-14** "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

The beauty of this story is that God does not leave them in their disappointment. Can you imagine how defeated they must have felt given their effort all night, given their collective expertise and yet they came up short? Their situation went from bad to worst. But thanks be to God that he did not leave them in their despair. He comes to their aid. In verse 5, Jesus calls from the shore, "Children, have you any food?"

Here, I make my second move with text. Their answer to this question is critical. They could succumb to pride or humble themselves and be honest with the Lord. They could have said man, we are good. They could have been offended by Jesus' terminology and said, "who is he calling children?" See, pride.

They didn't respond in this way. They responded in humility and gave the simple truth, no. *Church, when we are honest with Lord, we find relief. We receive deliverance.* Verse 6, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*." Don't let pride get in the way of your honest response to questions from God.

**Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

**James 4:6, 10** "But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."

Now, let me state the obvious and this is my final point. *We must obey. We must do what the Lord tells you to do.* Are we doing what God/Christ has instructed us? I believe the opportunity for the church today is for us to get back to that which Jesus instructs. He was clear and the mandate has not change (see Mathew 28). We must do what the Lord instructs! Verse 6, "So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish." Deliverance, blessing, forgiveness, reconciliation, sustenance, grace, all that they needed and longed for was in their obedience. We must obey.

Now what? The excitement of our first Sunday together has waned. Resurrection Sunday is in our rearview and the risk will be for us to go back to business as usual as the dust settles. I caution us against this and charge us to get on with the business of disciple making. To be willing to go where God leads, to do what God instructs and to let go of that which is behind us, often referred to as the good old days. You know the good old days.

Men, when you had a head full of hair. Ladies, when you were a size three. Those days are long gone. But that is okay. We can still look to the future with expectancy. We can forge ahead. And when the way forward is not clear or becomes hard, we can be patient and pray. Knowing that all that God has promised us through faith in His Son will come to fruition. Now what? In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**