

From Resurrection to Pentecost or the Beginning of the Last Days

Early Sunday morning the angel rolled the stone from the tomb. Mary Magdeline, Mary (the mother of James the Less), and Salome went to the tomb. Discovering the stone had been rolled away, they were told by the two angels, "...Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen..." (Luke 24:5b, 6b). Mary Madeline runs to tell Peter and John. John 20:2b: "...They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." Peter and John run together to the tomb. John outruns Peter, but once Peter arrived, he barged right in. The Bible says in Luke 24:12, "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." John 20:8: "Then went in also that other disciple [John], which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed." In great angst Mary Magdeline returns by herself to the tomb and there our Lord uniquely revealed himself to her saying, "...Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17b). This first day of Resurrection was a busy day for Jesus, because the next event for our Lord was to take the Emmaus walk with two disciples and explain, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:26, 27). After Jesus disappeared, the two disciples speedily returned the seven mile journey back to Jerusalem and while they were telling the skeptical disciples, our Lord appears again on this first Sunday night with the greeting of peace, assuring the disciples that they were not entertaining a ghost. He asked for some bread and honeycomb and He ate before them. Thomas was not with the disciples on that night and said, "...Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25b). Eight days later Jesus revealed Himself to Thomas and then Didymus makes the outstanding confession of faith, recorded in John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Soon after Christ's resurrection He gave this promise in Matthew 28:10: "Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." And that is where we begin our study today.

THE CURIOUS EXCURSION

Text: John 21:1-17

THE SELECTED SEVEN

John 21:1-2

The disciples with whom our Lord performed this revelation and miracle were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John and two other unnamed disciples. We often don't have all the answers why and to whom our Lord interacts. We are reminded later in this chapter when Peter asks about John: "Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?" (John 21:21). Christ's answer is quite direct in the following verse: "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." Those words, "...what is that to thee..." would be profitable for all of us to

remember. In other words, let us mind our own business and let God deal with others in whatever way He chooses. 1 Thessalonians 4:11: "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." And we can always rest assured, as Genesis 18:25b reminds us, "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

I. THE FISHING TRIP

John 21:3

With everything the disciples have experienced, it seems most strange that Peter would suggest they go fishing--even stranger that the disciples agree to go with him without hesitation. Had these disciples forgotten Luke 5:10? "And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Why, then, would these fishermen forget their calling? I would suggest it may have been because:

- A. They did not get the results from their new calling that they anticipated (John 6:66, 67).
- B. They did not feel the driving force of the physical presence of Jesus (John 16:16-22).
- C. They had not yet received the Great Commission (Mark 16:15).

II. THE CATCH

John 21:4-11

The disciples went fishing and caught nothing. But there was:

- A. The unseen Presence – John 21:4. How our hearts would be strengthened if we would remember, even when we don't see God's hand in all that we do, that He is still there.
- B. The inquiry -- John 21:5. For those of you who are fishermen, does it ever seem like when you have caught some whoppers, no one comes by – but when your stringer is empty someone inevitably inquires, "Caught anything?" The Lord often lets us experience failure before He comes through with a miracle.
- C. The command and the results. John 21:6-11. Blessings follow obedience. What a catch! Peter quickly threw his clothes on after John recognized Jesus. This tells us of the reverence Peter had for his Lord. Notice the contrast from Luke 5:6: "And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." John 21:11: "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken." I believe it was the Lord telling Peter and the disciples, once they get back to fishing for men, He will bless them.

III. THE DINNER

John 21:12-14

"Come and Dine!" These are the welcome words of Jesus. He did not rebuke them for their fishing excursion. He raises the event to another level. Christ performs a miracle within a miracle. He created fish for the fire as well as bread. I have often wondered if this wasn't the first meal of fish and hushpuppies. God will take care of the servants that have abandoned all to fish for men. 1 Timothy 5:18: "For the scripture

saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”

IV. THE QUESTION

John 21:15-17

This is the question that gets to the root of all Christian service. “Do we love Jesus?” is the penetrating question. If we do, there is absolutely nothing we would not do for Him. In John 21: 15, Jesus asks the question, “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.” The word Jesus used was “loved”, taken from *agape*, meaning God’s love. Peter answered, “...Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love Thee....” The word for love that Peter used was *phileo*, meaning I love you like a good friend. The command of Jesus was to “...feed my lambs....” This is referring to the very young lambkins. John 21:16: “He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” Again our Lord uses the word *agape* for the unique God kind of love. Peter answered once more that he loved Jesus with *phileo* friend kind of love. Now Jesus says. “...Feed my sheep.” Christ moves on to the more mature grown and growing sheep. John 21:17: “He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” Now Jesus asks Peter, do you even love Me with the *phileo*, very good friend kind of love? Peter, in grief, says in essence, Lord, You know everything about me and You know that I do love You with the weaker form, i.e., the best man can do kind of love. And even with that kind of love, Jesus still commands him to take the leadership to feed His sheep. Our Lord is allowing this line of questioning to let Peter see himself for what he is now, but what through Christ he shall become once, as Christ told him earlier in Luke 22:32: “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

-Pastor Pope-