

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

“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.” —JOHN 21:6

There are many Christians who have been tempted to give up the Christian life because they think it's just too hard and they don't have what it takes. Even the disciples of Jesus probably felt that way.

In the interim between Christ's death and ascension, at Peter's suggestion, seven of the disciples went fishing in the Sea of Tiberias. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Early the next morning, Jesus appears on the shore, and calls out to them. “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” They didn’t recognize Him at first. “No”, they answered, and Jesus told them to throw their nets on the right side of the boat. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Peter’s suggestion of going fishing is significant because three years prior, Jesus had told them to leave their fishing behind. During those years, they had been with Jesus, witnessed His miracles and listened to His teachings. They mourned His death and had taken quite a battering in deserting Jesus at the time of his arrest. That would have left them feeling defeated, disillusioned and certainly discouraged. Peter was probably thinking, “I’m a hopeless failure, and I’m going back to fishing, back to what I know.”

Peter’s devotion to Jesus was as high as anyone’s, but when faced with the reality, he discovered he couldn’t do it. If, like Peter, we’re trying to

live the Christian life purely by human capability, and realize we cannot do it, that is actually a wonderful discovery to make. A sense of futility and failure is the gateway in which the Lord Jesus enters and meets our needs. Often, when we despair of ourselves, there comes a turning point, and the disciples going back to fishing may have been an expression of that. They didn't expect to see Jesus. He had ceased to be part of their calculations.

If we're not relating our situations to Jesus; if He's not part of our calculations or expectations, we won't see Him even though He's right there. The disciples knew it was the Lord, but they were just beginning to discover who He really is. The great adventure in the Christian life is getting to know Jesus. It's progressing from knowing that He is our Saviour, then our Lord, and more than that, He becomes our life. Jesus is the antithesis to all our disillusionments and failures. 2 Peter 1:3 says, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him." In Jesus we have wonderful freedom, because the more we come to experience Him, the more we realize the unlimited resources we have in Him.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I pray I never become disillusioned or disappointed in the Christian life, and that I always draw upon your strength and presence within me. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I counteract feeling disillusioned by the Christian life?