

Dinner With Jesus  
*Breakfast on the Beach*  
April 17, 2022

Good morning everyone! I'm so glad you're with us on this chilly Easter Sunday.

I love the chorus to that song we just heard:

I thought that I was too far gone

For everything I've done wrong

I'm the one who dug this grave

But you God, called my name.<sup>i</sup>

The reason I love it is because it's true.

- We tell ourselves that we're too far gone.

- People who know us tell us we're too far gone.
- The world tells us we're too far gone.

But God says “no one is too far gone” ...

... which, as it turns out, is going to be the point of today's final message in our series *Dinner With Jesus*.

If you're joining us for the very first time or the first time in a long time, you should know that for the past month or so, we've been talking about one of the most surprising aspects of the way Jesus did things.

I think pretty much everybody (Christian or non) ...

- I think pretty much everybody knows that Jesus was a preacher and a teacher.

- And pretty much everybody knows of his reputation as a forgiver and healer.

But what is less well-known about Jesus is that much of what he said and did took place around a dinner table.

Jesus liked to eat.

And he liked to eat with all kinds of people whether saints or sinners, losers or winners.

... which is why so many people who were *not like* Jesus *liked* Jesus.

So, we've been looking at the eyewitness accounts of some of those dinners over the past month or so; what Jesus said and did at those tables ...

And how it applies to *us* be we saint or sinner, loser or winner.

So, if this is your first time with us and you'd like to know more about that ...

- You can go to the media section of our North Heartland app (which you can download from your favorite app store)
- As well as the media section of our website (which is [northheartland.org](http://northheartland.org)) ...

And once you're there you can watch, listen to, and even read the manuscript of all the messages in this series.

Actually, you can watch, listen to, or read *all* of the messages that I and the other pastors have done since, well, pretty much forever.

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Anyway, we've been looking at these "dinner

events” over the past month or so, and today we’re going to look at one more.

But this particular event is actually not a dinner. It’s a breakfast.

And it doesn’t happen around a table. Instead, it happens around a campfire ... on a beach.

## **Why We Know (and Care)**

And I want to tell you that story but, before we get to it, I think we should take at least a *few* minutes especially for anyone here today who may not be a Christian or have much of a church background ...

... and we know that, in a room this size on an Easter Sunday, it’s likely that more than a few of us fit into that category.

Before we talk about “breakfast on the beach,” I

think it would be good to consider why we even *know* about this event in the life of Jesus or, for that matter, why we even know about *the life of Jesus*.

After all, Nazareth, Jesus' hometown in first-century Roman-occupied Palestine, was a tiny, hole-in-the-wall, out-of-the-way village in the far northern reaches of Galilee.

In Jesus' day, a common joke was "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"<sup>ii</sup>

So, how is it that a guy from *that* place became known all over the world?

Why did anyone think *his* story was important enough to write down and painstakingly copy by hand again and again and disseminate thousands of those copies ...

- Again, all over the world

- And often at great expense and threat of persecution and death?

Why would anyone care to do that?

The reason they cared ... the reason they did that ...

**And the reason we know the story of Jesus is because of the resurrection of Jesus.**

The reason we know anything at all about Jesus who grew up in first-century Nazareth is because ...

- He was executed on a Friday afternoon
- Placed in a guarded tomb that evening
- And then on Sunday morning, He wasn't either of those things – dead or in a tomb.

Without a resurrection, not only would no one

have ever *known* what He had said and done. No one would have *cared*.

Without a resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth would have been just one more in a line of would-be “Messiahs of Israel” who wound up nailed to a Roman cross ...

... would-be Messiahs you and I have never heard of because not only did *they* die, the movement they started *also* died right along with them.

That’s something most people don’t know – that Jesus wasn’t the first to come along believing himself to be and proclaiming himself to be “the Son of Man” which is how the Hebrew prophets spoke of the long-promised Messiah.

But his movement didn’t die following his crucifixion.

Instead, it rapidly expanded all over the Roman



Empire accompanied by the strange and outlandishly foolish proclamation that, *precisely because* of His resurrection from the dead, *Jesus* was Lord and not Caesar ...

... which was foolish because *saying that* would put you at odds with “the powers that be” and at risk of being imprisoned – and maybe even worse.

And yet, that’s exactly what the people closest to the situation said and did.

And you don’t put your life at risk for such a strange and outlandishly foolish proclamation unless ... unless ... it’s true.

I think it’s important to put that out there – especially for people who aren’t familiar with what Christianity is all about ...

... because what a lot of us have been told is that Christianity is ...

- At best, just a “happy fairytale” or ...
- At worst, a cleverly designed tale invented to control the masses.<sup>iii</sup>

But neither of those are true.

**Christianity exists because of a *real* person who *really* lived and *really* died and *really* did rise again.**

As improbable as that might sound, there’s simply no other explanation that fits all the facts as we have them ...

... especially the survival and rapid spread of his movement (otherwise known as “the church”) ...

... which is why the story of Jesus – the story of what He said and did – *matters* ...

... and why the “breakfast on the beach” story that I’m about to tell you<sup>iv</sup> also matters.

So, let’s get into it.

## **Gone Fishing**

After three years of following Jesus all over the land of Palestine (literally) ...

After three years of hearing Jesus talking about how to live as if the Kingdom of God was near and now and not just something that happens after you die or when God calls an end to human history ...

After three years of seeing Jesus love the least, the last and the lost – i.e., the people who the religious leadership of his day considered to be “too far gone” ...

After three years of seeing Jesus do miracle after

miracle ...

Jesus' closest friends – his disciples, his apostles – watched him die a cruel and painful death on a Roman cross ...

... which was the kind of death reserved for insurrectionists and common criminals – of which Jesus was neither.

And I think for those of us who are familiar with that part of Jesus' story, it's *so* familiar to us that we simply cannot comprehend the absolute and utter shock that it was to them.

After it happened some of them said, "We had hoped that he was the one God had sent to save Israel. But we were wrong."<sup>v</sup>

It was a crushing turn of events for all of them.

And yet, what happened next was even more shocking. In fact, no one expected there to *be* a

“next.”

What they expected was that their movement was “done” ...

- ... which is why there were no disciples gathered around Jesus’ tomb on Sunday morning counting down “3 2 1.”
- ... which is why they were all in hiding.

But then, amazingly, the stone was rolled away from the tomb and Jesus was alive.

And suddenly, shockingly, he was *there with them* where they were hiding!

**Luke writes that when Jesus appeared ...**

*They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.*

So, Jesus said to them:

*“Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” Luke 24:37,39 (NIV)*

**slide**

*And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement ...*

They were so overjoyed and amazed that they couldn't believe their own eyes ...

*... he asked them ...*

And I think in light of what we've been talking about for the past month or so, what Jesus asks them is hilarious.

**Jesus asked them ...**

*“Do you have anything here to*

*eat?” Luke 24:41 (NIV)*

Even after his death, burial, and resurrection, the “Son of Man comes eating and drinking.”

Luke writes that ...

*They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.*

*Luke 24:42-43 (NIV)*

It’s like Jesus was saying, “you know that it’s really me because I’m always up for a good meal!”

Anyway ... my point in all of this is that the week leading up to Jesus’ death and burial, and then the weeks that followed his resurrection had to be terribly confusing times for these people.

One moment, they were literally afraid for their lives, fearing that what had happened to Jesus might also happen to them.

And then, in the next, they were overwhelmed with joy because Jesus was alive ... and yet, afraid, because dead men don't walk out of a sealed and guarded tomb after being crucified.

Anyway, my point is that when that kind of stuff happens to you in a short period of time, you don't always think clearly and act rationally ...

... which is where the story of breakfast on the beach begins.

Another of Jesus' friends – maybe his closest friend, the Apostle John – tells us that after all of this had happened, Peter and several of the other disciples left Jerusalem and returned home to Galilee ...

... where, at some point, they decided to go back into the fishing business (which is what he and those other disciples were doing before they met Jesus).



... back into the fishing business ... *as if ... nothing out of the ordinary had happened!*

After three years of hanging out with Jesus and seeing what they'd seen and hearing what they'd heard ...

... and then seeing Jesus killed and then resurrected ...

**One day ...**

*"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.*

That's just a very odd decision after all that had happened.

And you have to wonder why? What were they

thinking?

**Anyway, John continues ...**

*But that night they caught nothing. John 21:3 (NIV)*

It was not a good start to the “grand reopening” of their business.

**And then a strange thing happened.**

*Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.*

Maybe it was still too dark for them to recognize him.

But then ...

*He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” John 21:4-5 (NIV)*

And, actually, the Greek word translated as “friends” in that statement is “teknon” which literally means “children” ...

... which is definitely *not* what you would call a boat full of smelly grizzled fishermen who had struck out after a night on the water.

So, I think what’s really happening is Jesus is playing with them. I think he’s teasing them.

“Hey boys! You didn’t have a very good night out there, did you?”

*“No,” they answered.*

*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*  
*21:5-6 (NIV)*

... which, if you know the story of Jesus, is very similar to what happened on the day when Jesus had shown up three years earlier at that exact spot and told them to do the exact same thing!<sup>vi</sup>

**... which is why ...**

*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.*

*The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.*

*John 21:6-8 (NIV)*

**By the way, I want you to notice the level of detail included in this part of the story.**

- The boat was 100 yards from shore.
- And Peter was basically naked, which was typical of fishermen on the water.

That kind of data isn't typical of a myth or a made-up story. Instead, it's more typical of eyewitness accounts.

**Anyway, John continues ...**

*When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

*Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."*

*So, Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many*

*the net was not torn. John 21:9-11 (NIV)*

Again, notice the historical detail.

**And then ...**

*Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." John 21:12 (NIV)*

I don't know how that strikes you but to me, there is something about this scene that is so inviting and attractive.

- The same Jesus who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life ..."
- The same Jesus who said, "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- The same Jesus who said, "I and the Father are one."

That same Jesus says, “come and have breakfast.”

That same Jesus has prepared everything and as is his custom, he serves them.

Remember, years ago, when a lot of Christians were wearing those WWJD bracelets?

The idea was to remind us to ask in any situation, “What would Jesus do?”

Who would have thought the answer would be “He’d start a fire and have a cookout!”

But that’s what He did on this particular morning.

And that’s why, whenever you think about the “Jesus” who Christians believe in and follow and serve and worship, you need to think of more than just ...

- “Healer” Jesus
- “Teacher” Jesus
- “Savior” Jesus

You need to think of “campfire Jesus” and “breakfast Jesus.”

Because while Jesus certainly wants to be your healer, your teacher, and your savior – he also wants to be your friend.

And if I could wish anything for you and that would make it come true, it would be for you ...

- To experience Jesus as friend; as the one who says, “come and have breakfast.”
- And to know that there is room not just *at the cross* for you. But that there’s room *at the table* for you.



And I know what some of you are thinking.

“Yeah, well, Rick, you don’t know me.”

“Look at who was at the campfire that morning. Those guys were *The Apostles*. You know, *Saint John*, *Saint Thomas*. I mean, throughout history, artists have painted those guys with halos!”

“And I get why they were invited. They were saints. They *belong* around that campfire.”

“But I don’t.”

And I understand why you might think that which is why it’s important to remember exactly *when* this breakfast on the beach occurred.

- It’s after Easter Sunday.
- It’s after the resurrection.

- It's after the crucifixion.
- It's after the arrest and trial of Jesus.

... a very painful and humiliating night which had to be still very fresh in everyone's mind.

... which I think might be the answer to why Peter was fishing again; the answer to why he had led the others to go back home with him.

- Could it be that he had done something very “unsaintly” at the trial of Jesus?
- Could it be that he had so utterly failed Jesus that even though Jesus was alive again, he thought he was “too far gone” for that to matter?

I think so.

In fact, I think that's exactly why Peter had gone back to fishing.

I think that's why he was out on the water in the middle of the night.

And I think that's why Jesus was on the beach that morning.

## **Fireside Chat**

The worst part about it was that Peter didn't plan on failing Jesus.

In fact, he was so confident that after their final dinner together, when Jesus told all of those future "saintly Apostles" that they were going to run – that they were going to abandon him ...

Peter says, "over my dead body. *They* might run, but I will never run."

*Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.” Matthew 26:23 (NIV)*

- “I’m more committed than they are.
- “I’m more dedicated than they are.
- “I love you more than they do.
- “I will never abandon you.”

**But Jesus responds:**

*“This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” Matthew 26:24 (NIV)*

And again, Peter insists “no way. Not going to happen.”

Yet, just a few hours later, Peter is sitting around a different fire while Jesus is being interrogated.

And from where he is sitting, he can actually see and hear what's happening to Jesus. And it's not going well.

And he begins to get really scared because three separate individuals look closely at him, and they each say, "you're one of his disciples, aren't you?"

And each time, Peter says, "I don't know what you're talking about. I've never met the man."

**And on that third time ...**

*Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.*

*Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows*

*today, you will disown me three times.”*

*And he went outside and wept bitterly. Luke 22:60-62 (NIV)*

And I think it's important to remember that, at this “breakfast on the beach,” that event was not ancient history.

It had happened days or at most weeks beforehand.

And Peter was still humiliated and embarrassed.

And now, sitting around the fire, Jesus says, “Peter, there's something we need to talk about. Let's take a walk.”

And you know Peter has to be thinking, “oh no, here it comes.”

**John writes:**

*When they had finished eating,  
Jesus said to Simon Peter,  
“Simon, son of John ...*

... which is a very formal and serious way to address him, like when my mother used to say “Richard Andrew!” when she really wanted my attention.

“Simon, Son of John ... Mister ‘I will never fail you, leave you, abandon you, even if everyone else does’?”

*... do you love me more than  
these [guys]?”*

*“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know  
that I love you.”*

*Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”  
John 21:15 (NIV)*

And I can imagine Peter thinking, “OK, whatever you ask. I’m just glad that’s over.”

**But it's not.**

*Again, Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"*

*He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."*

*Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."                      John 21:16  
(NIV)*

**But it's still not over.**

Here comes round three.

*The third time he said to him,  
"Simon, son of John, do you love  
me?"*

And Peter is thinking "this is killing me."

**John who is sitting at the campfire and  
watching all of this writes that ...**



*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."  
John 21:17 (NIV)*

And I don't know how this strikes you, but this is uncomfortable even to read.

So, why does Jesus do this to Peter? Is he just trying to rub it in? Is he trying to take Peter down a notch?

That would hardly be necessary since Peter has already *taken himself down* and by *more* than a notch.

By going back to fishing, Peter has taken himself completely out of the game.

John doesn't tell us why Jesus does this, nor does Jesus explain, but I don't think he has to.

I think it's obvious.

**Because Peter disowned Jesus three times, Jesus gives Peter three opportunities to “re-own” him.**

Jesus isn't asking the question three times as a way of *shaming* Peter.

He is asking as a way of *restoring* him from his darkest, most embarrassing, and most disappointing time in his life.

If you could ask Peter “was there ever a time you wished that you could have a do-over – a second chance?” you know what he'd say?

He'd say, “yes, that night in the courtyard.”

How about you? Ever wish for a do-over? For a second chance to do things differently?

If we could go around the room this morning, I bet we could tell all kinds of stories.

- “Oh, all the money we wasted. I’d want a do over on that for sure.”
- “The way I treated him/her ...
- “That spring break when I ...
- “That convention ...
- “That abortion clinic ...
- “That season of compromise in my life ...
- “Those months and years of being checked out emotionally and spiritually ...
- “That person ... that group I started hanging out with ...

“Yeah, I’d like a do-over on those things because doing those things has made my life a mess. And I’m still haunted by what I did.”

I wonder if some of us are overdue for a fireside chat with Jesus. I wonder if some of us need to talk with Him about our regret; about that season/time we wish we could have a do-over?

**And I know we’re not supposed to *live* in the past but sometimes we need to *visit* the past in order to live with freedom in the *present* and move effectively into the *future*.**

“Well, I don’t know, Rick. Is that really necessary? Isn’t God a forgiving God?”

“Don’t you tell us all the time that when we trust Jesus as our savior, all of our sins – past, present and future, known and known are forgiven?”

Yes. Absolutely yes.

But for a relationship to be mended and for freedom to be experienced, there needs to be a conversation where someone says, “I blew it, and I am sorry.”

And someone else then says, “I forgive you.”

And I think some of us are trapped in our past and by our past – we’ve taken ourselves completely out of the game – because we have never looked up and said ...

“God, I know that *you* know, and I need you to know that *I* know that I blew it. And I let you down and I let everyone else down and I let myself down.”

“And I have been silent way too long. I think we need to talk.”

What if you did that?

And what if ... what if instead of hearing “you are

such a mess, you need to shape up” from the Lord ...

What if you heard “come and have breakfast because I still want to be your friend?”

What if you experienced Jesus as a friend who says “yeah, let’s talk about what happened and how to move forward.”

What if you turned to Jesus like Peter did and received love and not a lecture?

## **Back in the Game**

What if he said, “I’ve already taken care of your sin and failure by what I did on the cross. So, now, be my friend and get back in the game. Help me with what matters to me.”

“Peter, do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me like a brother and friend?”

“Then feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my sheep.”

... which is not what you would expect to hear in this kind of conversation.

What you would expect is ...

“You really messed up, Pete.

“Yeah, I know. I can’t stop thinking about it.”

“Well, do you love me?”

“Yes, you know that I do.”

“Ok, then I forgive you.”

But that’s not what Jesus says.

Instead, His final line is “feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my sheep.”

**See, Peter was not only restored in his relationship with Jesus; he was given a critical assignment by Jesus.**

“Peter, what happened truly was terrible. But it’s OK because I’m alive again.

“But I’m going back to my Father soon. And I want you to lead these guys in seeing that my movement continues. I want you to go back to fishing for people not what you have in that net over there.”

“Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep.”

And that’s what Peter did.

And that’s why – at least in part ... that’s why you and I are here this morning or watching online.

Because Jesus invited Peter to breakfast on the



beach and invited him – challenged him – to get back in the game.

And Peter did.

I wonder what game you might need to get back into.

I wonder if some of us failed in a big way and so we said, “I guess that means I can’t play anymore.”

Or maybe we were failed and so we said, “I don’t want to play anymore.”

Wouldn’t it be appropriate if, on this morning when we remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, we experienced a “resurrection” of our own?

If the dry bones of our failures were healed and came alive again so that we could live as friends of Jesus, helping to feed his sheep – to give our

lives in some way to the people and causes He loves?

“I don’t know how to do that, Rick.”

Just start with someone in your life – someone you live with, someone you work with – and do whatever love requires; do whatever will help them in some way become more of the more they were made for.

Or come and be part of what we’re doing here at this church because our mission is just that: to help people become more of the more they were made for.

That’s why we’re here.

I’m not sure exactly what you should do which is why we should pray. So let’s do that right now.

Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Lauren Daigle, Still Rolling Stones

<sup>ii</sup> John 1:46

<sup>iii</sup> 2 Peter 1:16

<sup>iv</sup> My “telling” is based on the pattern and flow in Jeff Manion’s message *Breakfast With Jesus* which is here: <https://www.adabible.org/series/dinner-with-jesus/>

<sup>v</sup> Luke 24:21

<sup>vi</sup> Luke 5:4