

Sermon Title: **“Jesus is Back, Now What?”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead*

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Text: John 21:1-

Introduction

“Stand firm, and you will win life.” -Luke 21:19

We began this year with a look at what Kingdom endurance is. **Standing Firm** here means *Endurance* and is a very rich word embodying an **upward, consistent, contagious, and outward** motion that goes against the current. *It is swimming upstream after Jesus.* We saw this is the work the Spirit of God does in our lives, just as He did in Jesus’ - He leads us upward to higher ground and a higher life in Him.

We also looked at some of the outward challenges we face when going upward with the Spirit, including the spiritual forces of darkness which our on their way downward. As they are being cast out of God ’s Kingdom, we are being brought in. This is the nature of our Spiritual Battle. Unlike the generations that came before Jesus since His Ascension the Spirit has now come upon us to take the battle to where it truly is at.

What does this look like lived out in or lives? Following Jesus as His Disciples.



“Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.”

-Matthew 4:19

This series is set to be a journey answering this question- *what does it mean to follow Jesus?* How do we today answer His invitation and see this journey with Him unfold as it did for the first-generation followers of Jesus? Together we will discover anew what it means to follow Jesus- *to be a disciple making disciples culture that **learns, lives, and leads!***

I. Perpetual Monday (John 21:1-3)

*“After Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will go with you.’ They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.” **-John 21:1-3***

We all face Monday morning. No matter how great the weekend was, or how incredible Sunday worship hit us, Monday is inevitable. Monday presents the opportunity to step back into what the weekend afforded us the potential escape from. While some of us work the weekends, Monday is a reality that can hit us any day of the week. Without focus on Sunday mornings, Monday can make our worship together seem like another rhythm, fading dream, or an increasingly distant “that was nice” nod.

For the followers of Jesus, the news of His Resurrection was incredible! Yet, things had changed. For the Disciples, they were now eleven and Jesus’ is not with them the way He was before His arrest and crucifixion. He has appeared twice; the third being our text today. In a sense, the Disciples experienced the greatest of Sunday mornings with His Resurrection. Now, they face the hardest of Monday mornings.

Yet, Jesus is going to redeem these Monday morning blues by reminding them, and us, that down moments are crucial to the preparation for the work ahead of us in Him! Remember Jesus’ words,

*“And they said to him, ‘The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.’ He also told them a parable: ‘No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But the new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’” **-Luke 5:33-39***

This was a time now of fasting for the Disciples; the abundance they enjoyed of Jesus’ presence was greatly diminished and it is in the place of fasting they will be allured to return to the way things were. Jesus warned the audience in Luke 5 that to desire the Old Covenant ways they understood over the New Kingdom Jesus is bringing is why the patch will never be able to be sown on them as a garment, nor His wine into their lives unprepared and unfit to receive it.

By leading the others to go fishing is not a bad thing since idle hands can be great tools for the enemy, there is a strong lesson Jesus is lovingly reminding them of. He is preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit to step into Jesus’ family business! ***Trying to go back into yesterday to live and fish will always leave us with empty nets!***

II. Jesus Redirects Their Focus (John 21:4-25)

The focus of this section is upon Peter, so we will take some time to connect with him and see how Jesus redeems both Peter’s attention and devotion by ***reclaiming*** yesterday, ***affirming*** today, and ***leading*** into tomorrow.

- a. *Yesterday* with Jesus (Vv.4-14)

*“Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.” -**John 21:4***

When I gather to worship on Sundays with the community of saints, I rightly expect to encounter the living King of Kings. Yet, when I find Him in the everyday moments on the trail, grocery store, work, conversations with neighbors, etc, there is something very intimate. *Imagine missing church one Sunday and find Jesus shows up to your job asking where you have been?*

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Children, do you have any fish?’ They answered him, ‘No.’ He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved (John the author) therefore said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.” -**John 21:5-8***

This entire experience must have been like déjà vu for Peter. Luke narrates this for us,

*“On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ And Simon answered, ‘Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.’ **And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.** They signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, **‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’** For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken., and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, **‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.’** And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. -**Luke 5:1-11***

What I want us to note is that while Peter may have went back to his trade of fishing, he did not go back to the man he used to be.

Yesterday, Peter gave Jesus the option to depart, which in the Greek implies Peter acknowledged his unworthiness of Jesus’ presence and afforded the invitation for Jesus to walk away from him and out of his life. Yet this time, Peter leaps out of the boat and swims toward he whom John said was Jesus! Surely, Peter would have a much larger list right now providing Jesus reasons to abandon him.

Yesterday, Jesus said to Peter do not fear, which in the Greek is Jesus returning Peter’s words to him in that *I’m not leaving, so don’t you run away!*

Paul would later write and echo this sentiment with the following words,

*“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” **-Philippians 1:6***

*“When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ Now none of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord. And Jesus came and took bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.” **-John 21:9-14***

Yesterday, Jesus invited Peter to **let down his nets** for a catch. In the Greek, *let down* means to gently loosen, slacken or relax. **Today**, When Jesus invited them to **cast their net** to the right side of the boat, the Greek implies *to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls*. Jesus dealt gently with Peter in the beginning, and while still gentle shows him so much has changed in these 3.5 years with Jesus! **Jesus asks a little, that becomes more, until ultimately, we hold nothing back from Him!**

Yesterday, Peter objected to Jesus’ invitation to even give a little in obedience. **Today**, Peter throws all in.

Yesterday, their nets were breaking with the size of the catch. **Today** the net is strong enough to contain the catch. *Remember Jesus’ parable about new patches on old garments or wine into new wineskins!*

Jesus meets Peter in his retreat into yesterday to bring him back into today.

b. *Today* with Jesus (Vv. 15-17)

*“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’” He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.” **-John 21:15-17***

Here, Jesus uses different Greek words for love (Which we covered in a sermon a few weeks back) *agapao* and *phileo*. *Agapao* is used the first two times and employs the sense of God’s love which is poured out upon us without measure. It is to love sacrificially and selflessly others as God loves us. It is driven by will, not feeling. *Phileo* is intimacy between friends based on a common or shared affection toward something and is validated by feeling more than will.

Both the first and second time Peter answers Jesus' *agapao* with *phileo*. The third time Jesus asks Peter, He uses *phileo* in which Peter affirms. Note that both *agapao* and *phileo* bear the fruit of feeding Jesus' sheep. ***Peter, called to be a fisher of men, was anointed to serve pastorally and feed God's flock whether he felt like it or not.***

Paul would write,

*“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” **-2 Timothy 4:2***

c. Tomorrow with Jesus (Vv. 18-25)

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.’ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, ‘Follow me.” **-John 21:18-19***

This transitions in preparation for what is to come. God was going to be glorified by Peter's upside-down crucifixion. Peter wasn't there yet. He wasn't fully at the *casting the net out*, but neither was he at the *slowly, little by little letting the net drop*. Peter continues to be a work in progress.

His journey with Jesus began with, *Come, and follow me*. The journey continues with Jesus inviting Peter to *follow Him*.

III. Becoming Stronger Nets for Jesus to Use

What did this whole experience mean for Peter? The first 12 chapters in Acts note Peter's leadership in the early church, feeding the flock of Christ faithfully. The Epistles, or Letters that bear his name were written in the final decade before his death. Near the end, Peter writes,

*“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” **-1 Peter 5:1-4***

How did Peter become that new garment? How did he become the new wine skin able to stretch with the new wine? How did he become a stronger net? How did Peter become the fisher of men Jesus spoke with anointing over him with?

How did Peter navigate the Monday blues?

Well, for starters there is no record Peter went back to fishing for fish. He left yesterday behind him.

Peter led by example to be focused on both prayer and the ministry (training and equipping) of the word in order to feed the flock of Christ faithfully.

“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” -Acts 6:4

This was what Peter did in his free time; recharged and prepared for the next assignment. His life was viewed as a living sacrifice for the Glory of God alone. He believed this, cultivated this, and pursued this. As a result God used him to preach with anointing, God’s Kingdom increased among both Jews and Gentiles. Peter was continually transformed to receive more of the new wine Jesus was bringing.

Peter was a net growing stronger for His Lord to cast out in the Will of the Father for His Glory alone.

Objections I hear often.

- 1) *Pastor, when I have a day off, I just want to unwind and relax.*
- 2) *Pastor, why doesn’t God use me like he did Peter or Paul, or the others I read about?*

To be used of God to such a degree, we must be willing to be transformed into the nets Jesus can cast out for His glory. How do we do this?

By casting out in full obedience simply at His Word when He gives is.

We must *do to become*. Not *for* our salvation, but *because* of our salvation.

Peter’s final words to us before his death,

“Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot of blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” -2 Peter 3:14-18

Jesus is back, *now what?*