

John Chapter Twenty-One

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~ **This final chapter** in the Gospel of John is his epilogue, and it is the substance of our last report from this book of the Bible in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. This was obviously added as an afterthought at some much later point in time - after the conclusion of the Gospel writing itself. I'm not prepared to assert this was written from the isle of Patmos - but that is certainly plausible. Three distinct incidents are recorded in this chapter. We have the fishing on the lake and the breakfast on the shore; and then Jesus announces the death of Simon Peter as Jesus commissions him to His service. In the fishing experience, we see Jesus is to be the Lord of our will. In the breakfast on the shore, He is to be the Lord of our hearts. The announcement of the death of Simon Peter reveals Christ is to be the Lord of our minds. So, let's go down to the Sea of Galilee for one final, wonderful and lovely lesson....

1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

~ So much of the ministry of Jesus is connected with the Sea of Galilee, also called Tiberius, that it should be a very familiar place to us geographically. Well, Jesus said He would appear to them there, so that's where the disciples are waiting. I suppose Simon Peter needed to do some fishing to pass the time, too. Well, we have a group of disciples here that I think we could call the Convention of Problem Children. Peter was fervent but failing; he was warm-hearted but walking afar off. This impulsive and impetuous man is, at the same time, an affectionate failure. Next, we have Thomas, the magnificent skeptic with a question mark for a brain. We examined him in our previous report. Then, we have the other doubter and wise crack, Nathanael, who made jokes, but ended up very quickly on his face worshipping the Lord Jesus. The sons of Zebedee were known as the sons of thunder – James and John. This is definitely a meeting of some of the most problematic problem children in Israel. There are two others, and we could speculate about whom they were – but I'm going to say that YOU

and ME are the other two. If there's a group of problem children, then I certainly belong to that designation, also – maybe not you, I don't know you – I know about me....

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

~ Most commentary I have read on this passage condemn these men for being out there fishing, and they blame Simon Peter for leading them away like this. Well, Jesus isn't going to rebuke them for fishing. Jesus wasn't concerned that they didn't wait for Him. I, personally, do not see any harm in this fishing expedition. Jesus told them to go to Galilee, and it is springtime – specifically, the Easter season. There would have been warm zephyrs from the south creating beautiful white caps out on the sea. The wildflowers in profusion would have covered the green hillsides. The anomaly is that they caught nothing all night.

We aren't told whose ship this was, but I tend to think it was Simon Peter's family fishing business vessel. I can almost see Peter pacing up and down on deck while waiting and waiting; and after a while, Simon Peter looked up and down the shore, and didn't see Jesus, so he just blurts out this statement and off they go fishing. All of the others voted yes, too. They weren't sitting around twiddling their thumbs in idleness. Idleness hurts the cause of Christ today more than anything else imaginable. You won't catch fish lying on a feather bed; and a net cannot be cast from an armchair. We have a whole lot of those types of Monday morning quarterbacks and bleacher umpires – more specifically, pew preachers - who like to sit back and make judgment calls on that which has already happened. So many people seem to be able to tell others how to do it, but they do nothing themselves. Thank God for those who actually get out of the pew and do some fishing. Many blunder – and may not wait for orders from On High –

but if those saints weren't out doing something for God, then nothing would ever get done at all.

We have too many so-called Christians who do absolutely nothing to get out the Word of God to the entire world; but they sure can criticize me and tell me I'm doing it wrong. Most of them advise the man who is honestly trying to work for God that he should do something else. May God have mercy on their souls. For the man attempting to execute the will of God by stepping out in faith, the Lord Jesus will never condemn them for their service. His Word does not return to Him void. Even so, the apostles fished all night, and we are told how much productivity they produced - none. We witness here the failure of the experts. These men were Piscatologist's; and that means they knew how to fish. Peter had made his family living fishing for decades and they knew all the methods and locations. Well, this night of utter failure was in the plan and purpose of God for their lives. God says we are to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water – and that “water” is the Word of God. That's the only way we will ever bring forth fruit in our season; we won't always catch fish, friends. However, we should always be fishing.

Today, our societal status is measured by the worldly yardstick of gross materialism. Mathematics seem to be the only language of success; statistics the only inspired word. Those are the fool's gospel of the world right now. Modern Christianity wants to bi-pass the cross and go straight to Heaven on their own terms. Well, I like to give numbers, too; and I am just as guilty as the next man of measuring things in a worldly way. Even so, no fish were caught by the apostles this night. Zero. That frustration added to their impatience and disappointment, I'm sure. They were restless before, but now they are simply seized with inferiority; and, friends, when the problem children become frustrated to this level, we have an altogether unlovely scenario. It's easy to fish when you're catching fish. It's very easy to quit when you constantly come up empty. I can sympathize with old man Noah as he preached for one hundred twenty years without one single convert. I would have quit a long time before that....

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

~ I think it was a very normal experience for them not to recognize the Lord Jesus because they were likely a good distance from shore. Interestingly, Peter has to have Jesus pointed out to him. Did Peter not believe Jesus was coming back to them? Either way, we see them both returning immediately when Jesus speaks to them. Jesus is bound to ask every single one of us someday if we caught anything. What are you doing for God today, friends? I hope you don't have to answer like the apostles did, telling Jesus they had nothing. See, the whole thought here is that the Lord directs the lives of His own children. When we fish our own way - a way the Lord did not direct, then we catch nothing. When we fish according to His instructions, our net is filled. It is critical we recognize the point the Lord is making.

Well, a new dawn breaks forth on that awful night of fruitless fishing – and not a moment too soon, either. The apostles need hope today; and the net is now filled with fish. Remember, the nets broke before - but not this time; their net now is unbreakable. That net speaks of the Gospel. It is the net of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These men are now witnesses to those things. I believe a very dark and discouraging night dawned on a glorious day for the disciples. I'm sure they feel elated and relieved as the darkness is driven away by a spectacular sunrise - and Jesus is there waiting for them.

The “disciple that the Lord loved” is John; and John, obviously, had a sharper spiritual perception than Simon Peter and the rest of them. I imagine they were a hundred yards or more out when Peter “cast himself into the sea!” Simon Peter was a good fisherman and likely a very good swimmer, too. Three years ago, Jesus called them to service at this exact same location. They returned to fishing before, and Jesus called them again at that time; and here He is now calling them a third time to fish for the souls of men. They won’t be doing any more fishing for fish after this, either....

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

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.

~ Jesus has told us already that if He be lifted up, then He would draw all men unto Himself. Friends, there is power in a lifted-up Christ. The weakness and impotence of the church today is for one reason and one reason only: they refuse to uphold the Lord Jesus Christ. The net of the true Gospel will never be broken. The danger today is to allegorize these episodes; and that’s exactly what men are doing with it. Only ONE or TWO men in the world today – and NO MORE – are actually teaching the Gospel properly, correctly and completely right now. Yes, I whole-heartedly mean that; and you can just write that figure down – and go ask God about it – and see whether I’m right or wrong!

In Matthew chapter thirteen, there was no Gospel when the nets broke, my beloved. Here, after the death, burial and resurrection, the net does not

break. The Gospel will not only save you, but it will hold you and God will bring you all the way in from the sea of mankind. God's purpose is to keep believers – even in failure. The Lord is not a catch and release angler – He never has been. When we come to Christ, we are kept by the power of faith. Simon Peter will teach us that in his first epistle chapter one verse five. The life of the believer is full of details given by Jesus, such as casting again on the right side. That means full of failures. Maybe He meant the CORRECT side. This is the great purpose of the Lord of our will. Now that they have listened and obeyed the One they love – they have breakfast prepared for them - and Jesus is sealed as the Lord of their hearts at this moment. If you are going to serve Christ, your heart will have to be right with Him, and you will have to be in obedience to Him....

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 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.

~ They still don't seem to fully recognize Jesus. They only know it could not be anyone else. It may be wonderful to eat breakfast with Jesus, but Simon Peter was interrogated three times while dining with Him. If you're ready to eat with Jesus, you're going to need to have some answers for His questions, my beloved. Jesus is borderline antagonistic with this fumbling failure of a faltering disciple as He commissions him into His service; and my friends – this is more than critical to understand. If you do not have the blood tipped ear, you have no idea what you are reading in this report – and if you have no idea what you are reading, it is for one reason and one reason only - because you do not love Christ. Simon Peter responds all three times to his commission. Jesus asked Peter this question

mechanically, and three times, because Simon Peter denied Jesus three times. They had to get that straightened out. Only AFTER the miraculous catching of fish is Simon Peter called to ministry. Three affirmations from three exhortations are the response of Simon Peter to the Lord Jesus. I honestly wish I could have heard the tone Jesus used as He speaks to Peter here....

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.

~ Two Greek words in this passage are all-important for a correct perspective of the account. The word used for “love” is the highest and noblest form of the word, and it is “agapao.” The question from Jesus is really, “do you love Me with all your heart?” All salvation really consists of is a love affair, and we only love God because He first loved us; the most supreme word in all of religion is “love!” I might have chosen “faith” if it were left to me, but out of faith, hope and love – the greatest of these is love. It’s a greater compliment to be trusted than it is to be loved. Faith will die every single time the object proves unworthy; but love lives on. Simon Peter failed, and Jesus had no confidence in Peter, but Jesus still loved Peter. There is no greater love than a man lay down his life for his friend and that is exactly how God commended His love towards us. While we were yet ungodly sinners without strength we began to love Him – because He first loved us. Here is a chart of the interrogation, affirmation and exhortation Jesus gave Simon Peter:

I. Interrogation

1. Agapao
2. Agapao
3. Phileo

II. Affirmation

1. Phileo
2. Phileo
3. Phileo

III. Exhortation

1. Feed My lambs
2. Discipline My lambs
3. Feed My lambs

Now, when Jesus says “...more than these...” There are two ways of reading that. One way is, more than material things or, two, more than these other disciples. My personal opinion is Jesus meant the latter, more than the others; because Simon Peter has already boasted about a willingness to lay down his life for the Lord Jesus. The answer Simon Peter uses is “phileo” – meaning I have “affection” for you. Simon Peter couldn’t come up to Jesus level and just tell Him that he really loved Him because of the boasting Peter did before - and Jesus rebuke - has made him afraid to reveal those feelings here. Simon Peter can only tell Jesus that Jesus knows his heart. The next exhortation from Jesus is, “be grazing, My little baby lambs.”

I am of the opinion most people have misinterpreted this as: be CRITICIZING My little baby lambs. That’s the way we do it here on this forum, but it’s wholly incorrect. We are to simply give them the Word of God. The third time Jesus leaves off the phrase “...more than these...” and Simon Peter is not about to do any more boasting now. Jesus doesn’t let up, and Peter is grieved terribly. See, the sheep and the lambs simply have to be fed. This is the secret of service; and it remains a secret to anyone who has never truly come to Christ today, my friends. Do you really love God? Jesus ONLY tells you to keep His commandments if you love Him. One of those commandments is to go forth into the entire world and preach the Gospel. If you don’t love Jesus, you can just forget about keeping His commandments. You won’t be taking the Gospel to anyone unless you love Him. That happens to be the most important thing of all; and that is exactly what the Lord Jesus is saying to Simon Peter. This also means that you and I must pass through the gate of affirmation before we can serve. There is no other way, my beloved. Understanding this is, actually, more important than anything else in your Christian walk. Jesus MUST be the Lord of your

will and the Lord of our affections and Lord of our hearts. God wants your LOVE above everything else....

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.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

~ Finally, we come to the Lord of our mind. When Jesus tells Simon Peter that Simon Peter is to become a martyr, Simon Peter was definitely taken aback. Peter had already volunteered to lay down his life; well, he's going to be required to do exactly that. Peter is just as full of questions as he ever was. Basically, Jesus answer to Simon Peter is, "it's none of your business." Jesus is telling Peter to simply follow Him – and stop asking questions. Jesus is not saying John would live to the rapture; but if John did live to the

rapture, it's still none of Simon Peter's business. Christ wants to be the Lord of your mind, heart and everything you consist of – and if Jesus ISN'T ALL of those things to you – then He is nothing to you; or worse, YOU are nothing to Him. If Jesus isn't Lord of all, He isn't your Lord AT all. If He isn't your Savior, then He isn't anything to you. That, my friends, is the true Word of God as taught by the Holy Spirit through Andrew Curtis Hunt. What I have taught all of you is NOT hyperbole, and it is not a sensational exaggeration – like you will find from just about every other so-called teacher of the Bible – we're talking about the One Who died upon the cross, was buried and rose again from the dead – we're talking about God the Creator. All I care to know in this world is HIM and the power of His resurrection ~

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written ~

....A-Men ~

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