

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK FIFTY: JESUS GOES FISHING

READING

1 Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. 2 Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. 3 Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.” “We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. 4 At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. 5 He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?” “No,” they replied. 6 Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it. 7 Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. 8 The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. 9 When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. 10 “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn. 12 “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. 14 This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead. John 21:1-14 (NLT)

TEACHING

The disciples had seen Jesus twice after the resurrection, but he wasn’t with them all the time like he used to be. The disciples must have wondered, “What now?” If Jesus isn’t going to be around all the time then we might as well get on with our normal lives and go back to our old jobs. When Jesus found Peter, he was a fisherman. Even though Jesus was alive, Peter probably believed the rest of his life would be spent as a fisherman. But Jesus had a different plan for the disciple...for Peter.

In Luke 5, you can read Luke’s account of when Jesus called Peter, James and John to follow him. It was just like this story in John 21: The men had fished all night and not caught a thing. Jesus instructed them to try again and they caught an incredible amount of fish. That’s why Peter knew it was Jesus even though he couldn’t see him. Jesus was reminding them of his original call on their lives and re-commissioning them to continue following him. Jesus knew they would spend the rest of their lives fishing for men, not fish. Sometimes God needs to remind us of his plan and purposes for our lives!

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OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever gone fishing? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who said, “I’m going fishing.”?
- What happened when Jesus told Peter to cast his net on the right side of the boat?

CHILDREN:

- In this story, who went fishing?
- Why do you think Peter went back to being a fisherman?
- How did Peter know that the person on the beach was Jesus?

TEENAGERS:

- Why do you think Peter and the others went back to fishing?
- How did Peter know that the person on the beach was Jesus?
- What does this story teach you about God’s plan for your life?

ADULTS:

- Do you remember when God first called you to follow him? What happened?
- How has that call changed the way you live your life?

PRAYER

God, thank you that you call me to follow and serve you. I admit that sometimes I want to follow my own plans and serve my own desires. Sometimes I forget what you’ve called me to do and I go my own way. Thank you that you don’t give up on me. Thank you that you come to me and remind me of your love for me and your good plan for my life. Help me to trust you even in times when I am struggling to understand what you are doing. Thank you that Jesus trusted you perfectly – even obeying you all the way to the cross. Let that truth change and shape my heart. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

This story includes an unnecessary detail: the exact number of fish. John records that there were 153 fish. In the genre of ancient fiction, details that didn’t advance the plot were not recorded like they are in modern detailed fiction. This type of detail indicates an eyewitness account that was widely discussed until it was recorded. In *Mere Christianity*, C.S Lewis says this about the gospels: “*I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this (the gospels). Of this text there are only two possible views. Either this is reportage...or else, some unknown (ancient) writer...without known predecessors or successors, suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic, realistic narrative.*”