

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY

"The Gospel of John"

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Lesson 70 John 21:1-15 "Fish or Cut Bait!"

⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." ²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

- a. "with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders" – the possibility of Jewish retribution was real, as the Sanhedrin was bent on eradicating Jesus' followership! The doors would have been locked and bolted.
 - a. "for fear of" – fear isolates each person into his own prison of anxious thoughts
- b. "Jesus came and stood among them" – Jesus' resurrected body, now, is not limited to time & space. He appears and disappears at will. This gives us a clue as to how eternity will be for us in heaven.
- c. "Peace...As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." – being a follower of Jesus means being "sent." Question: In what ways are you being "sent?"
- d. "If you forgive anyone's sins...if you do not forgive them" – this the second time Jesus has referenced the "office of the keys," underlining the Christian Church's stewardship of forgiveness. The first time was in...
 - a. **Matthew 16:13-19.** *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"*
¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^[b] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[c] will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[e] loosed in heaven."

- e. "Thomas...Unless I see...I will not believe." – Thomas was, initially, an "evidence-based" believer. His rational mind could not comprehend a belief in what he was being told. He had to see it, in order to believe it!
- f. Question: What is the relationship of fear to faith? Are they mutually exclusive? How do you live a Faithful life in the Fearful uncertainties of:

COVID?
 Masks/No Masks?
 Who is the President?
 Which Lives Matter?
 Lock Downs/Open Economy?
 Fake News/Censuring/Transparency?
 Absolute Truth/Relative Truth?
 Respect for Authority/Defund Authority?

Fear

Faith

Faith

Fear

Common Sense
 Scientific & Medical Knowledge
 Data
 Symptoms & Statistics
 Correlations or Causes

When FEAR covers Faith...

You play the negative "what if" game
 You think "all or nothing"
 You focus on what "can't" be done
 All that matters is your own self-preservation
 You lose sleep at night
 You worry
 Everyone else becomes a threat

When FAITH covers Fear...

You trust God's promises, while you are anxious

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- a. "A week later" – what was Jesus doing during that seven days?
- b. "Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here...Stop doubting and believe.'" – ("apistos" = without faith). Jesus chides Thomas, not for mere "doubting," but for not believing in the witness of his colleagues!
- c. "Because you have seen Me" – evidence-based life is good for many things; not for faith.
- d. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." – a message of hope to the believers (you and me) who would follow in the centuries to come! Faith can be enhanced by personal experience or "evidence," but often faith cannot be "proven" by the senses (what you see, hear, taste, touch, feel, smell).

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- a. "Jesus performed many other signs...not recorded in this book." – a reference to the writings of the other gospels, and the letters. This has fueled speculation, that there is more to be discovered – or sources which are being hidden from the public.
- b. "these are written that you may believe" – the purpose of John's writings.
- c. "and by believing you may have life in His name." – the blessings of the gospel truth, which sets the Bible apart from every other competing "truth" or source of wisdom.
 - a. "life" – forgiven now and in heaven forever!

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.^[a] It happened this way: ² Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus^[b]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³ "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, but that night they caught nothing.

- a. "Simon Peter..." – John mentions a few disciples by name; others namelessly.
- b. "I'm going out to fish" – Peter, James, and John had always been fishermen by trade. Even after Jesus' resurrection, they had to make a living!
- c. "but that night they caught nothing." – fishing in the Sea of Galilee took place at night and early morning, when the larger fish would come into the shallows to feed. Nets were used to round up the fish and drag them into the boats.

⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵ He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for

they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.^[c] ⁹ When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

- a. "but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus." – probably because His distance from land and the darkness of dawn; also, they didn't expect Him to be there!
- b. "Friends, haven't you any fish? No." – an embarrassing moment for any professional fisherman: We've struck out! (It's bad enough to fail to provide; it's even worse to do it in front of someone else, and have to admit to it!)
- c. "Throw your net on the right side" – at this moment, not knowing it's Jesus, they defer to the suggestion from this stranger on the shore! They didn't object.
Question: What reasonable objections might some of them be thinking?
- d. "When they did, they were unable to haul the net in" – overcoming their embarrassment, they threw the net over on the right side of the boat (presumably in the deeper water, where the fish should not have been!)
- e. "Peter...jumped into the water." – true to form, Peter was always the first one out of the boat to go to Jesus! His joy exceeds any thoughts of propriety!
- f. "The other disciples...towing the net full of fish" – too many fish to haul into the boat! Let's hear it for those who stay in the boat!
- g. "a fire of burning coals there with fish on it" – not waiting for the net full of fish, Jesus had a fire going. **Question: Where did Jesus get His fish from?**

¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." ¹¹ 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. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead

- a. "large fish, 153...the net was not torn" – How many miracles occurred in this one episode?
 - a. 1. Catching fish in wrong time of day.
 - b. 2. Catching fish on the wrong side of the boat.
 - c. 3. Catching such an unheard-of number of fish.
 - d. 4. The net didn't break (nets were notorious for breaking).**i. Question: What was Jesus' point?**
- b. "None of the disciples dared ask Him" – No doubting, this time!