



## **John 21:1–6**

21 Afterwards Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), 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. 4 Early in the morning, Je-

sus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise 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.

## **Reflection**

My text today is John 21:1–6. It takes place after Jesus appears, raised to life, to the disciples and after he lets Thomas touch his bloodied hands and side. Thomas falls down and exclaims: 'My Lord and my God.'

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A miracle.

Chapter 21 of John's Gospel is fascinating. If it weren't there, we might not have even noticed it. Chapter 20 finishes with the resurrection of Jesus, and a strong comment from the author about his purpose for writing.

20:30 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 that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So that's what we want to do! Believe and find life in his name. Then Chapter 21. Chapter 21 finishes similarly to Chapter 20, in a note from the author:

21:24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

And in between, Chapter 21. What does Chapter 21 give us?

The answer is that it outlines what the

raised-from-the-dead Jesus did with his disciples, and with Peter in particular, after his resurrection from the dead. The detail is so particular and interesting. The reason is so that the reader is left in no doubt that we are talking about a physical resurrection. They haul in fish, they eat breakfast, and Jesus talks to them in sentences. You see how this is not just a spiritual experience in the heart. This is Jesus, raised from the dead. A truth for which almost all of the disciples were ready to die.

How does our passage begin? It begins with the disciples still at a loss to know what to do. They've seen Jesus alive. Thomas has believed. And then seven of them are together.

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again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

What do seven fishermen do when they've seen their Lord die a horrible death, and with his death all their hopes and dreams for the kingdom of God? And yet they've now seen their Lord alive again, and all their hopes and dreams are back on the table! But they don't know 'what's next'? What do fishermen do when they are waiting for 'what's next'? They fish!

'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 little like their hopes in Jesus were dashed when Jesus died, so their hopes of a great catch were dashed with no bites. And yet with the arrival of Jesus comes new hope. And perhaps it's represented in the catch of fish.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. V5 He called out to them, 'Friends, haven't you any fish?' 'No,' they answered. V6 He said, 'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.'

As if fish care about which side of the boat



you are on. But, 'When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.'

## **Think & Pray**

Jesus is alive. And he proved this by appearing at multiple moments where the disciples saw him alive. And his resurrection is the start of something new and profound and miraculous. It is the start of the kingdom of God being made known in all the earth. And it ultimately means abundance of joy, rather than defeat.

1 Corinthians 15:1 'Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel

you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ‘

This is of the utmost importance. How? I read a story once of a prisoner in a concentration camp who looked out over the

death and the mud and the foulness of his imprisonment. In many ways, the mud that he saw represented how people felt: that there was nothing beautiful in that place. But then he saw a single sweet flower in the middle of the muddy field: life in the midst of all the death. He decided in that moment that if this small thing could come out of so much death, then there really was hope.

Jesus' resurrection is a shoot of life, a flower in a muddy field, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

So pray for a resurrection shaped life. The future is necessarily bright, even if frustration must come first. And pray for the resurrection to order your life, your loves and your hopes. Pray for a renewed hope

for yourself and for those you love. Name them to God. Pray over 1 Corinthians 15:51-54:

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’