

"Just One Question (or 'Fish Naked')"

John 21:1-19

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Opening Prayer

By the age of 23 Alexander the Great had conquered most of the known world. In the spring of 331 B.C., seeking to expand his kingdom to the east, he set out with his armies toward India. All went smoothly until he came to the region of Bactria and to a well-fortified city.

When he arrived at the city, Alexander sent two-thirds of his army on toward India. He kept one-third, including his personal bodyguard of 100 choice soldiers. With these he marched to the wall of the city and demanded to see the king. When the king of this city-state appeared, Alexander screamed, *"I am Alexander! Surrender immediately!"* The king laughed. *"Why should I surrender to you? We've heard of you, Alexander, and we're prepared for you. We outnumber you."*

At that, Alexander gave a command to his elite guard...these 100 men lined up single file, facing a cliff at the edge of the city. Then Alexander said, *"March!"* and they did, right to the cliff, and they kept marching. The king watched in amazement as the first man marched right off the cliff, falling hundreds of feet to the rocks below . . . and then the second, and the third . . . one by one without hesitation, until Alexander commanded, *"Stop!"* and the eleventh man stopped on the edge of the cliff.

Alexander looked at the king, and the king surrendered on the spot.
The power of obedience . . . and Alexander conquered the civilized world.

Awesome obedience

I've read or heard this story in a number of different places. In one book, it was entitled, *Awesome Obedience* and then ponders the question...What if? What if the followers of Christ were as obedient as the followers of Alexander? You know Jesus did say, "If you want to follow me, pick up a cross"...."a cross"...I think I'd rather jump off a cliff...Well anyway...

Awesome Obedience —► Awesome Results

You've heard how at a Bible study once upon a time a man said, "The world has yet to see what God could do through one man fully surrendered to the cause of Christ." And another said, "By God's grace I will be that man" and that man was William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army.

*Awesome Obedience —► Awesome Results
And the kingdom of our Lord Advanced*

We pray “Thy kingdom come...on earth as in heaven.” The kingdom in our families...homes...school... businesses...our world.

We have been appointed to bear fruit.

Like Peter, we too have been called to be “fishers of men.”

¹After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathaneal of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon 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.

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, “Children you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” ⁶He said to them, “Cast the net to 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 there were so many fish.”

John 21:1-6 (NRSV)

I heard a famous preacher preach on this text back in the early 80’s and then I started teaching it to my Young Life kids and youth group kids. The thing that impressed me so was the...Awesome obedience and the incredible results...Just think how tragic if the disciples had not obeyed and therefore had no fish and no breakfast of Easter joy on the beach with Jesus.

So, do you hear and obey? “Cast it on the right side and you will find some.” You know they’d been fishing all night and caught nothing. Peter was a professional fisherman and this man calls from 100 yards away, “Other side of the boat!” That’s absurd...

“Wait until you’re married to have sex.”

“Sell your possessions and give to the poor.”

“Pick up a cross and follow.”

“Cast the net on the other side.”

Absurd...

But they cast it...do you cast it? They didn’t argue; they didn’t debate; they didn’t ask for an explanation...they immediately and fully obeyed the Resurrected Christ and look what happened...AWESOME!

And to these disciples...fish were not sport...but literally Life.

Maybe you feel like your life isn’t working...

Maybe you feel like you aren’t catching any fish...

Ask yourself “where’s my net?” ...“Am I obedient?”

If you want fish...have you cast where Jesus tells you to cast?

If you want a good marriage...are you looking at porn?
If you want honest children...do you tell white lies?
If you want converts...do you preach the gospel?
If you want to bear fruit, Bride of Christ, what do you do? What do you do?

Throughout the Old Testament, it's God's message to Israel over and over...

"Obey and you will occupy the land and be blessed."

"Disobey and you will be exiled and cast out."

If you want fish, cast your net where Jesus tells you.

Well the fish here represent more than the disciples' life or livelihood...they represent the lives of others. Jesus had told Peter when he first called him on the Sea of Tiberious, "I will make you a fisher of men." It was then that Jesus had first told Peter to "put out to the deep and let down his nets"...Peter did ...out of respect for Jesus. And the catch was so large the nets tore and the boats began to sink under all the weight. And when Peter saw that...those awesome results, he fell on his knees and begged Jesus to leave crying, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Not obedient man – sinful disobedient man.

That's weird, huh? Incredible results and Peter cries, "Please leave." I mean just when he's about to receive...the full Gospel Fishing Trophy; just when he's about to be clothed in glory...he begs Jesus to leave... Whatever! My point is awesome obedience...awesome results.

Several years ago I was in California doing a wedding for two of my old youth group kids.

At the pre-wedding barbeque one of my old small group Bible study guys, Brian, came up and grabbed me. In high school, he'd been through really hard times. One night at Bible Study he said, "Do you guys ever think about killing yourself?" Immediately, I prayed and that night we had an incredible discussion.

But at the barbeque, he pulled me aside and said, *"I've been praying I'd have a chance to tell you what an impact God had through you, on my life. Your talks hit me. God used you."* He'd just come back from a mission trip to East Asia. It was incredible.

And just think...times when I felt exhausted and spent
but offered just a little obedience and fish, fish, fish.
Instead of a suicide...a missionary!!!!

Another example...

That very same week, right after I returned from California, I called another kid from my youth group in LA – Billy Baldrige
and the thought covered my insecure and naked heart like a robe.

Bill was that kid in my youth group that I invested in, more than any other. He'd confessed Jesus watching TV, then come to our Youth Group looking for answers. His dad was an alcoholic

who caused Bill a great deal of pain, but he found solace and found Jesus in our fellowship. And Bill changed our fellowship...his hunger for God was contagious...his mind was brilliant...and he was the life of the party. He was planning to go into ministry. In many ways, he was my best friend in LA at the time. And one day he told me, *"Peter, God used you to change my life."* He was the poster child for "Peter Hiett Ministries..." Whenever I felt like a failure....I thought of Billy Baldrige and the thought covered my insecure and naked heart like a robe.

Well, like I was saying...I called Bill. I hadn't talked to Bill for a long time...I knew he'd been struggling some with his faith, but I hadn't called...for 8, 9 months, I had been thinking, "I really ought to call."

Well finally that Tuesday, about 15 years ago now, I called Bill and when no one answered, I called Wade, Bill's friend and mine.

Wade's dad answered and so I talked with him a bit and then he said, *"Well, I guess you heard about Bill."*

I said, *"No."*

He said, *"Oh Gosh, I guess Wade never got you..."*

I said, *"What about Bill?"*

And Wade's dad said, *"A few weeks ago Bill took a walk in a garden...somewhere over near UCLA where he was a student. He took a walk in the garden, sat down in a corner...pulled out a gun and shot himself in the heart and died."*

And a little voice seemed to say, "Peter you weren't obedient." ... "Peter, you should have called." ... "Peter you didn't throw the net and now the fish is gone for good." And I felt like I wanted to get drunk...'cause I couldn't handle the weight.

Maybe you've heard that voice...

"You wrecked your marriage."

"You ruined your kids. They're dead...gone forever..."

"You failed...judge yourself...shoot yourself."

Well, I just wanted to get drunk...I couldn't handle the weight. Fortunately I called Susan and said, "Honey, pray...pray to Jesus for me." ... "What if I'd called..."

Well that was bad enough, but to make matters worse, I was preaching through John at the time and in just four days, I was scheduled to preach on this text -

Awesome obedience.

Incredible results.

It terrified me...but then I read the text...read it well..and it set me free and it's still setting me free.

I began to think about Peter that night floating on the restless sea

Three years earlier Jesus told Peter that He would make him a fisher of men...pulling life up from the abyss of the sea. It was Peter who first declared, *"You are the Christ"...*

And it was to Peter that Jesus said, *"You are Rock and on this rock, I will build my church. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."*

Peter was being groomed to shepherd the Lord's church. When Peter felt insecure, those thoughts must've covered his naked heart like a warm robe. Just a few days before, Peter had promised Jesus, *"I will lay down my life for you. I will follow."* Peter knew his obedience would be Awesome! But then within a few hours he denied Jesus...3 times...he did not follow and was utterly disobedient...even as Jesus was nailed to the tree. Well...by now he'd seen Jesus risen at least two times, but as far as we know, Jesus had not addressed Peter personally since that night.

So, if I'm Peter, I'm wrestling with some furious questions:

"Am I still called to be a Fisher of Men?"

"And if I am, how can I bear that weight...that burden?"

Peter's call had become an open wound and I bet he heard a voice. It said, "You failed...curse yourself...judge yourself and die...there's a rope...there's a tree."

Well, in his despair, Peter goes fishing - one thing he knows he can do. He's a professional fisherman. He has the knowledge of Good and Evil fishing. He knows how to make it work....but nothing...nothing...no fish and Jesus watches. You know the catching of nothing on one side of the boat...maybe just as much a miracle as the catching of everything on the other.

Isn't Jesus Lord of your quote, "failures" ...or only Lord of your "successes?"

Isn't Jesus Lord when you think life isn't working?

Romans 8:20 – God subjected all creation to futility...to "not working."

Romans 11:32 – and consigned all to disobedience...maybe nobody's life works and nobody's been obedient.

Well, all night they catch nothing and some guy (they don't even know its Jesus)...some guy yells,

"Children" (calls 'em children)...

"You don't have any fish, do you?"

"NO!"

"Well, throw it on the other side."

They don't even know its Jesus...and now what have they got to lose? You see it's anything but an Awesome Obedience. It's just the desperate cast of some humbled fishermen with nothing left to lose. In the past Peter would've yelled, "Cram it down your pie hole...you moron," but now he's been stripped...of all of his pride...nothing left to lose.

⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net to 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 there were so many fish.
⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea.

John 21:6-7 (NRSV)

"He was naked..." Why did John have to tell us that?



I saw this bumper sticker last Thursday..."Fish Naked"...took it as a sign...
Why did John have to tell us that?

Twenty-five years ago my bride wanted children...four little fish if you will...she wanted to bear fruit. And so she did all she could...she listened to Christian family radio...How to be the Proverbs 31 woman...she cooked the most delectable meals...fashioned elegant clothes... and covered herself in glory...hair...make-up...beautiful apparel. And still she didn't conceive...

I'm forever grateful to a wise old woman, who said to my bride,

"Dear I know this is counter intuitive...but you must be naked to conceive...not covered, but uncovered. For you must let your husband touch you in the place you've hidden...the wound...where you feel incomplete. Don't let anyone else touch you there...but he must touch you there to fill you with his life and clothe you with himself."

Well it didn't really happen...not to my bride. But, it did really happen, because I'm talking about us.

John has reminded us...Jesus is the "Eschatos Adam"...and we are His bride.

Jesus is God, stripped naked of power and might...on a tree in a garden...forming a covenant and revealing His naked heart...so we might trust Him and let Him touch our wound.

We can't bear fruit by covering ourselves in fig leaves...but stripped of all, He clothes us with His righteousness: He fills our faithlessness with His faithfulness.

That's how we bear fruit, fruit that is life, and how we catch fish. You know people think that God can't use them because they've failed: because they've been stripped of all their accomplishments. People think God can't use them because they're a failure...and maybe it's just the opposite: God won't really use you until you realize that you are.

Ironically I preached on this text about six years ago at the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. It was a big deal. I was a big deal...but in two years I'd lost my ordination, my church, my accomplishments...a bunch of fish and my pride.

My wife heard the Lord say this...September 28, 2008. She wrote it down and I keep it in this frame behind my desk. I'll read part of it.

Peter, you are my heart. Now that you know who you are, I'm calling you to walk in freedom...to free people...to be who you are supposed to be...totally stripped of all. God has been allowed to clothe you.

Well Peter had been stripped of all...Remember the first time that Peter caught all those miracle fish? He focused on the fish and then, on himself...and he begged Christ to leave. WHY? Because of his PRIDE...

If I think those incredible results are dependent on me...I can't handle the weight...whether its failure or success or shame or arrogance. Peter couldn't handle the weight...of fish...of glory. His net tears. His boat sinks.

But now, after his failure and Christ's gracious success...after Easter; Peter forgets fish. He forgets results. He forgets his obedience or disobedience. He forgets himself. He forgets his pride. He puts on some clothes (Thank God!)...dives into the sea and swims the 100 yard freestyle away from all the fish...away from all the fish and straight to Jesus. He wants Jesus.

Brennan Manning writes:

Suppose for a moment, that in a flash of insight you discovered that all your motives for ministry were essentially egocentric, or suppose that last night you got drunk and committed adultery, or suppose that you failed to respond to a cry for help and the person committed suicide. What would you do?

Would guilt, self-condemnation, and self-hatred consume you, or would you jump into the water and swim a hundred yards at breakneck speed toward Jesus?

Verse 7

⁷When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread.

John 21:7-9 (NRSV)

Did you see that...Jesus already has fish and cooked with a side dish? He doesn't need the disciples' fish. In fact it's like Jesus has fish coming out of His ears. Bus loads of fish are just as easy as no fish for Jesus.

Fish are not the issue here.

Do you realize you serve a sovereign, all powerful God, who created an entire universe with a Word and can make rocks and stones sing his praises and donkeys prophesize...

For Him, making you a millionaire is just as easy as not making you a millionaire;

And...He's the one that turns the hearts of man toward Himself;

And...He's the one that breathes Life into people - dead in their trespasses and sins;

And...He's the one that controls the results - the successes and failures in your life. And so the results must not be the issue here. I mean the kingdom will come, regardless of your bad decisions. If they hadn't cast the net...Jesus still had fish on the barbeque. Jesus doesn't need your fish.

But listen to the next verse,

¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have caught."

John 21:10 (NRSV)

"That you caught!" If this is a fishing contest, I'd be ticked. But they didn't catch 'em! Jesus made them swim into their nets...maybe He always does!

Or did you think you could save somebody's eternal soul?

Or...How about your own?...Now that would be pride...a very dark and heavy cloak.

When my kids were little and I'd take them fishing. I'd bring the gear. I'd bait the hook. I'd spot a trout in this hole. I'd drop the worm in front of the fish. I'd set the hook when it bit and then I'd let the kids reel it in. When we'd get back to the house they'd say, "Mommy look at the fish I caught!" And I'd say, "Yep! Just look at the fish they caught."

Jesus said "Come on guys; bring some of the fish you caught." And they knew...my kids knew...they caught them by their father's grace...100% grace. If one of my kids dropped the pole and the fish got away, I didn't make them pay for gas and buy me a fish at Safeway on the way home.

¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Jesus said to Simon Peter...

John 21:11-15 (NRSV)

Imagine how his heart jumped when Jesus turned and spoke to him?

- Would He say, "Peter you've proven to be untrustworthy. John will now lead."
- Will He say, "Peter I'm so disappointed...I never would've thought you'd do that..."
- "Peter, let's review so it doesn't happen again."
- "Peter have you developed a plan of action so this sort of thing will not happen again?"
- "Peter have you determined to call people whenever you get a notion"

OR

- “Peter don’t you realize Satan gave you that notion so now you’d be trapped in shame?”
- “Peter have you admitted to yourself you kind of didn’t want to call when you should’ve called and then you called when you shouldn’t have called cause you called out of guilt, not love.”

Peter had so many questions and there was so much Jesus could’ve said...on the edge of the sea...by the fire...at the border of time and eternity. So much! But he turned and asked only one question:

¹⁶*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*

John 21:16 (NRSV)

That’s the issue. “Do you love me more than these?”

...More than 153 big miracle fish;

...More than what I’ll do through you or not do through you;

...More than 3,000 converts in one day...when the Spirit falls on you...and 5,000 the next day;

...More than your pride Peter, for you’re still gonna blow it Peter.

A guy names Paul is gonna publicly rebuke you in Antioch...and we’re gonna get the whole thing published in the Bible...#1 best-selling book of all time...Galatians, chapter 2.

...“Will you swim to me then, Peter?”

...“Do you love me more than your pride, Peter?”

...“When you’re stripped of all and feel “naked as a Jay Bird” ...will you sing my song and preach my Word...just because you love me?”

...“Do you love me more than these

...fish

...Fruit

...success

...respect?”

You know if my children came to love fish more than the father who took them fishing...they’d be miserable and I’d never take them fishing.

If you’re not content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, calamities, and life not working for the sake of Christ; maybe you don’t love Him more than these. But you will; He will see to it.

¹⁵*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.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt 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 (NRSV)

- 3 times for 3 denials
- 3 times – “If you love me, then obey” – “Feed and tend my sheep.”

I think that means...

“Peter Fish” ... “not because you’ll catch fish – I control the fish.”

Fish Peter because you love me and I ask you.

“Peter preach” ...not because your church may grow

Preach Peter because you love me and I ask you to and you want to.

“Christian obey”...

Not because you want a good marriage...

Not because you want your kids to obey...

Not because you want a strong society or good business...

And, certainly not to clothe yourself in arrogance and self-righteous deeds.

Obey me because you love me and don’t you know “every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Light;” HE CONTROLS THE FISH...ITS ALL GRACE.

Remember - you are the New Israel. You live in the New Eternal Covenant of Grace; where good things are not earned by your awesome obedience.

Good things are already earned by the awesome obedience of one man...fully surrendered to God...Jesus is the soldier who laid down His life and won the kingdom. The world is now seeing what God has already done through that one man. Jesus Christ. He’s done everything through Him.

Now it’s true that in space and time, according to His plan, God works through people. But it’s rather a strange statement. “The world has yet to see what God could do through one man, fully surrendered to Christ.” God can do anything he chooses to do. God chooses what’s weak in the world to shame the wise. Just look at what He did through one faulty, insecure, weak and naked fisherman...whom He chose to fill with His Spirit. Look what He did - He caught you!

“On this rock I will build; I will build my church and the Gates of Hell will not prevail against it.”

*Awesome Results from the Awesome Obedience of
One man “Eschatos Adam”
Jesus Christ*

Well, I don’t know what Billy Baldrige was thinking 15 years ago when he pulled out a gun and shot himself in the heart...I don’t know if I should’ve given him a call. I don’t know if God changed Bill’s life forever through me. If He did, Bill told me how it happened. I remember hoping at the time that he’d recite some awesome obedience; something to pad my résumé and cover my naked ego: a great talk, a sacrificial good deed! But he didn’t. He told me about a moment in Mexico on a mission trip building a house. He bent a nail. He told me that in that moment, he fully expected me to scream at him and beat him...like his father would’ve done. “But,” he said, “You didn’t. You laughed...made a joke...and showed me how to fix it. It was then that I first saw the love of my heavenly Father.”

And now I hope you see: that was no Awesome Obedience on my part. It was more like the desperate cast of an insecure Youth Pastor trying to keep kids in the youth group...and maybe a little love. LOVE...but that wasn't to my credit and it didn't come from me..."Love is of God."

I'm not even sure I remember it. It's kind of like those sheep on Judgment Day who look at Jesus and say, "When did we see you thirsty and give you a drink?" But maybe Jesus thinks its awesome because its LOVE.

But hardly an AWESOME OBEDIENCE...

And when I get to heaven and meet Jesus, perhaps Bill Baldrige will walk up (He did confess Christ and Jesus said He would make all things new)...Perhaps Bill Baldrige will walk up. It would not be atypical for Jesus to turn to me and say, "Peter...look, it's one of your fish...a fish you caught" and I would know...Bill would know...all Heaven would know... it was 100% grace. So, I love Jesus and sometimes I think I actually want to obey Him...just because I love Him...fish or not.

Verse 18. Let's wrap up. Jesus says,

¹⁸Truly, 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

[Peter was naked, but he will be dressed in Glory]

and carry you where you do not want to go. ¹⁹(This he said to show what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

John 21:18-19 (ESV)

"Follow me." You see unlike Alexander the Great, Jesus goes first...He stretched out His hands; was dressed with a cross and then exalted in Glory.

In 64 AD, persecution broke out in Rome. The legend is that Peter was persuaded to flee the city, but at the city gates he had a vision of Jesus walking the other way. Peter fell on his knees and said, "My Lord, where are you going?" And Jesus replied, "I'm going to Rome to be crucified again." At that, Peter turned and ran back to Rome and was crucified...with Christ. But I bet he didn't consider it an Awesome Obedience. I bet he was just swimming to Jesus.

Well now, Peter is clothed with an immeasurable weight of Glory – "beyond all comparison" (and you will be too.)

An immeasurable weight of Glory – but it doesn't crush him for he knows it's a gift...all gift.

It's the Awesome Obedience of Christ.

Communion

And so on that night, He took bread and broke it; saying this is my body given to you. Take and eat and do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way after supper He took the cup and He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood; poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me.

This is “the Awesome Obedience” ... He’s giving it to you.

Close your eyes for a moment.

Maybe you can picture yourself in this situation. I think in Scripture, we’re supposed to put ourselves in these stories. It’s been a long and difficult night and now you’re sitting on the beach...sun shining. You see the wounds on His hands. He’s cooking you breakfast and He turns to you and says your name. He says, *“Do you see that I am giving all things to you, including my heart.”* *“Now do you see my heart?”* You see that’s the Awesome Obedience...the judgment of God...the grace of God...the love of God. And now I think He has one question for you...“Do you love me?” At any moment...in any situation...that’s the question...“Do you love me?” As you come to the Table, answer His question.

Benediction

And so you’re on the beach...you’re sitting next to Him...He just served you a meal...gave you a cup that is His life...gave you bread that is His very body...and He asks you the one question...“Do you love me?” And you answer. It’s not perfect...you’re still learning...you’re still growing...but there was a mustard seed of faith, wasn’t there? And do you understand if you love you fulfill the whole Law. He says, “Do you love me?” You answer and now listen...‘cuz He might say something like “Well if you love me then...” and then He’ll say something. What does He say to you? Maybe it’s...

“Give her a call.”

“Forgive your dad.”

“Go to China and preach the Gospel.”

He might say, “Well then go back out on the sea and drop your nets.” You see that’s what the Church is...it’s a boat floating on the sea and the sea is a picture of Hades and chaos.

So we drop our nets down into the water and catch fish...lives for the Kingdom. And it’s hard...it’s difficult...sometimes it’s easy...sometimes the fish come easy...sometimes it’s really hard...sometimes life is difficult...so out there while you’re fishing on the sea; at times you may get frightened and when you get frightened you’ll start thinking about the results and you’ll start thinking about yourself...and you’ll think well I don’t really want to do this...I don’t like doing this.

Well go back to the beach. You see I think that’s what we do every Sunday. Go back to the beach. He calls you back to Himself. Go back to that fire and sit by that fire on the border of

time and eternity and just look at His wounds and receive His meal and let yourself feast upon his love. And then answer His question and obey...and then obey.

You see what that beach is? Its judgment...it stands at the boundary of the dark sea and the Promised Land and there's a fire at that place...and there's your Lord Jesus at that place...He sits upon the throne with wounds in His hands and His side...and one question, "Do you love me?" At any point, that's the question..."Do you love me?"

Keep going back to that beach...keep answering that question... listen to His voice...serve Him out of love because you love Him and one day you'll go back to that beach and He'll say, "Son...daughter...it's time to go home...to a New Jerusalem...to a new kingdom." But until that day, may you fish in freedom and joy because you believe the good news...the Gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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