

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 1
WEEK OF APRIL 23RD

Spring
2017

GROWTH GROUP SPRING 2017

WEEK 1 – APRIL 23, 2017 - JOHN 21:1-14

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) The disciples went back to doing what they knew how to do. They went back on the water to go fishing. Do you have a place that you go to when you need to “re-group” or just “take a break?”

SETTING THE CONTEXT

During the next five weeks we will be hearing from Pastor Paul, Pastor Stan Beard, Sarah Carter from Urban Life, as well as some of our high school students on Youth Sunday. They will be exploring different texts and sharing their insights.

John 21 serves as a sort of epilogue to the gospel of John. There is a great summation of the gospel in John 20:30-31, yet John wants to add a couple more stories. These stories speak to the restoration of Peter, as well as shed some insights into the Apostle John, who is the author of the gospel of John.

Jesus appears to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee, which is about ninety miles from Jerusalem. This is the only time Jesus appears by the Sea of Galilee, although in Matthew 28:16 he does appear on a mountain in Galilee. The gospel of Luke places Jesus’ resurrection appearances mostly in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Peter decides that he is going fishing and the other disciples join him. They dragged their nets in the lake all night long, but were unable to catch anything. The themes of night and darkness are important in the gospel of John. Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. Judas departs from the upper room after darkness had fallen. The resurrection occurs while it is still dark.

Now as morning breaks, something new is happening as well. This new day marks the arrival of a new era. Jesus calls the disciples to join him (verse 5) and it is interesting that he uses the word “children,” even though it is usually translated friends. This can be a term of intimacy and it is how John addresses the congregation he is writing to in 1 John 2:18.



At this point the disciples still do not recognize Jesus, but choose to throw their nets to the other side of the boat even though they have caught nothing all evening. And then they have a miraculous catch. John recognizes Jesus and Simon Peter jumps in the water to go and meet Jesus on the shore. The boat was probably about 100 yards off shore, so the rest of the disciples bring the boat into shore, along with the rest of the fish.

Jesus has prepared a charcoal fire which would certainly have reminded Peter of when he had stood by a similar fire during Jesus' trial and denied knowing him in John 18:18. Now the fire serves as a reminder of how Jesus plans to restore Peter and remind him of his mission, which comes in John 21:15-19. The first fire reminds us of the dark and uninviting situation Peter found himself enduring, at the trial of Jesus, whereas this second fire shows us Christ's invitation and hospitality.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read John 21:1-14

21:1 Afterward 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, 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. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 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.

- 2) Galilee is about ninety miles from where Jesus was crucified. The disciples made a long journey back to a familiar place. What do you think they talked about as they made their way back to Galilee? Why do you think the disciples went back to fishing after Jesus had been raised from the dead?
- 3) In Luke 5:11 Jesus tells Peter that if he leaves his fishing nets behind, he will fish for people. Peter leaves everything behind to follow Jesus. What does it look like to "fish for people?" Is this language helpful for you in considering how you share God's love with others in our society?
- 4) Do you think it's odd that professional fishermen listened to the advice of some stranger on the shore? Do you think there was some significance to their inability to catch any fish?
- 5) Why do you think that Jesus' followers didn't always recognize him at first? Was there something different about him?

- 6) The last time that Peter had seen a charcoal fire was when he was standing in the courtyard where the trial of Jesus was happening (John 18:18) and he had just denied knowing Jesus. Now, Jesus has prepared a charcoal fire. What do you think was going through Peter's mind as he saw this fire?
- 7) Why did Jesus make breakfast for the disciples? What does this teach us about the importance of extending hospitality to others?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) What are some ways that you can show hospitality this week to the people in your community or at your work?