



Life Group Study Notes

“The Net Work, Part 2”

Ps. James Lowe - September 18, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Who taught you to drive? How was the experience for you? How was it for them?
- What's one specific thing you enjoy teaching people (assuming they are interested)?
- Would you rather learn something new or teach someone something new? Why?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

John 21:2-3 ESV *Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon 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.*

Confusion

Peter and the other disciples were in a state of confusion at this point. They had abandoned Jesus. Peter had denied him to the point of calling down curses upon himself as a way of asserting his supposed truthfulness about not knowing Jesus. One of their close friends, Judas, had betrayed Jesus and then committed suicide in remorse. Jesus had been horribly tortured and put to death by crucifixion. The disciples had then plunged into despair and fear. But then Jesus appeared to some of the women disciples, and then to the men. He told them to travel north, back to Galilee. They had done so, but Jesus had not showed up. In this state of shock and confusion, not understanding exactly what was going on, Peter resorted to what he knew best from his past. He decided to go fishing, and some of the others went with him. We too can be doing what is familiar and not be engaged in God's mission and work.

John 21:4-14 ESV *Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on 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 of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.*

Cooperation

The disciples unwittingly cooperated with Jesus, who now appeared to them again. By doing so they miraculously caught a great catch of fish. Whereas their own efforts at fishing had come up empty, they now had a super abundance of provision because they followed Jesus' directions.

The whole experience was designed by Jesus to teach them (and us) an important lesson. God's ultimate work for them and us is to engage in fishing, but instead of fish we are called to catch souls for God. If we try to do it in our own strength and by our own wisdom, we will not be successful. Though the disciples were experienced fishermen, they had caught nothing. But with Jesus' instructions they caught a huge catch of fish. If we will follow Jesus' instructions, we will be led by him to bring people into relationship with God through him. Jesus instructs us through Scripture in general ways, but through the leading of the Holy Spirit he leads us in specific ways. We need to read and study the Scriptures to learn from Jesus. And we need to pray and cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to learn how to daily apply what we learn in Scripture as we seek to lead people to Jesus. The Holy Spirit will lead us, instruct us, and empower us to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

John 21:15-19 ESV 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." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved 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. Truly, 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 and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Conversion

Jesus spoke with Peter to deal with his heart. Jesus spoke graciously yet truthfully with him in such a way that Peter was pierced in his heart. It was necessary to deal with Peter's pride that had led to his denial of Jesus and his failure as a disciple. Peter's denial left him in a state of guilt and shame, which would've hindered him from being able to serve Jesus with a clear conscience. Without a clear conscience Peter would've lacked the confidence and boldness requisite to the task of fishing for souls. Because Jesus spoke with Peter and dealt with all of this, Peter's heart underwent a fresh change into a state of grace.

We too need our hearts made strong in the grace and mercy that Jesus offers us. If we are at peace, knowing we are forgiven, and are confident in God's heart toward us and his view of us, we will be in a good condition to work with the Spirit to lead people to Jesus.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- Do you regularly view people in light of the Gospel? Do you think about their eternal destiny and their current spiritual condition?
- Do you know the core teachings and story of the Gospel? How well do you think you can communicate the Gospel with others?
- Do you cooperate with the Holy Spirit in seeking to bring others into relationship with God through Jesus? What are some ways the Holy Spirit leads you to do this?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God to speak to us to bring our hearts into alignment with his.
- Ask God to teach us how to communicate the Gospel well.
- Ask God to lead us by his Spirit to be faithful, effective witnesses for Jesus.