

## HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 21

### Sequence of events up to this point:

- ◆ *And suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they were like dead men. Matthew 28:1-4*
- ◆ *It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. John 20:1-2*
- ◆ *So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb.[...] Till this moment they had still not understood the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. The disciples then went back home. But Mary was standing outside near the tomb, weeping. John 20:3, 9-11*
- ◆ *Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. She then went to those who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told them. But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him. Mark 16:9-10*
- ◆ *The other women who had joined Mary at the tomb had seen an angel but now they are greeted by Jesus Himself: And suddenly, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings,' he said. And the women came up to him and, clasping his feet, they did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; there they will see me.' Matthew 28:9-10.*
- ◆ *Jesus appears to Simon-Peter [Luke 24:34; 1Corinthians 15:5]*
- ◆ *After this he showed himself under another form to two of them as they were on their way into the country. Mark 16:11*
- ◆ *They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven assembled together with their companions. Luke 24:33*
- ◆ *In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. John 20:19*
- ◆ *Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. John 20:24*
- ◆ *Lastly, he showed himself to the eleven themselves while they were at table. Mark 16:14*

During the forty days between His Resurrection and His Ascension Jesus appeared to His disciples and the Apostles many times. St Paul reports that He even appeared to more than 500 disciples at the same time [1 Corinthians 15:6].

### Please read John 21: 9-17

**Verses 9-11** *"As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread\* there and a charcoal fire with fish\* cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore, full of big fish, one*

*hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. [\*in the singular]*

Does this episode remind you of a similar encounter some of these men had with Jesus recorded in Luke 5:1-11.

**Question:** After reading the story in Luke’s Gospel what similarities do you see with this episode?

**Answer:**

<b>John 21:1-8</b>	<b>Luke 5:1-11</b>
Lake of Gennesaret [Sea of Galilee]	Sea of Tiberius [Sea of Galilee]
7 disciples fish all night	The men had been fishing all night (vs 5)
When it was light Jesus was standing on the shore watching the boat	It is morning. Jesus passes two boats by the water’s edge; fisherman mending their nets
Jesus calls to the fisherman in Simon-Peter’s boat and asks if they have caught anything. They answer ‘no’.	Jesus gets into Simon-Peter’s boat and asks him to put the boat out into deeper water. Jesus teaches the crowds from the boat
Jesus tells them to throw the net out to starboard and tells them they will find something. (vs 6)	Jesus tells Simon to put out into deep water and put out the nets
They threw out the nets and could not haul it in because of the quantity of fish.(vs 6)	Simon tells Jesus they have fished all night without success but they will do as He requests
In spite of there being so many the net was not broken (vs11)	They net such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear
Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore, full of big fish, 153 of them (vs11)	The other boat [with James and John] comes to help and the filled both boats to sinking point.
Simon Peter swims out to Jesus (vs 7)	Simon-Peter falls to his knees saying “ <i>Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man.</i> ”
Jesus re-commissions Peter a second time in vs 15-17	Jesus says to Simon, ‘ <i>Do not be afraid; form now on it is people you will be catching.</i> ’
Peter professes his love for Jesus vs 17 and commands him in vs 19 “ <i>Follow me.</i> ”	Then, bringing the boats back to land they left everything and followed him.

**It is significant that this time the net does not break! It is Jesus Christ who is in charge of the catch!**

The Father’s of the Church saw Peter’s boat as symbolic of the universal Church. She may be tossed on stormy seas but it is Jesus’ will that she should prevail and bring in an abundant harvest of souls. Did you know that the main body of a Catholic Church is called a “nave”? This word is Latin for “boat”.

John 21:15-17

It is not clear what Jesus means when He asks Peter “*do you love me more than these?*”

There are three possible interpretations:

1. Does Peter love Jesus more than the other Apostles?
2. Is Jesus gesturing to the boat with the catch of fish and is Jesus asking Peter if he loves Him more than Peter’s old way of life?

3. The third possibility is preferred by the New Jerusalem translation scholars who include the words “*others do*”, interpreting Jesus’ question to be is Peter’s love for Jesus greater than the other Apostle’s love for Jesus?

However, all of the interpretations agree that Peter is being asked by Jesus to declare his ultimate loyalty. Perhaps Peter was remembering Jesus’ testing of the strength of his loyalty when he, in writing to the ordained ministers of the Church in 1Peter 5:1-4 urges them to “*give a shepherd’s care to the flock of God that is entrusted to you; watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, as God wants..[.]. Do not lord it over the groups, which is in your charge, but be an example for the flock. [..].*”

Exchange #1 verse 15

Jesus: “ <i>Simon, son of John, do you love [agapas] me more than these?</i> ”
Simon-Peter: “ <i>Yes Lord, you know [oidas] I love [philo] you.</i> ”
Jesus: “ <i>Feed [boske] my lambs [arnion].</i> ”

Exchange #2 verse 16

Jesus: “ <i>Simon son of John, do you love [agapas] me?</i> ”
Simon-Peter: “ <i>Yes, Lord, you know [oidas] I love [philo] you.</i> ”
Jesus: “ <i>Look after/ shepherd [poimaine] my sheep [probata]</i> ”

Exchange #3 verse 17

Jesus: “ <i>Simon son of John, do you love [phileis] me?</i> ” <i>Peter was hurt that he asked him a third time, ‘Do you love [phileis] me?’ and he said</i>
Simon-Peter: “ <i>Lord you know [oidas] everything, you know [ginoskeis] that I love [philo] you.</i> ”
Jesus: “ <i>Feed [boske] my sheep [probata].</i> ”

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