

John 21: 1-14

Introduction:

The disciples had gone out fishing but had caught nothing. After his resurrection, Jesus has now appeared twice to the disciples. However, then he seems to have stopped appearing to them. This made them wonder what had really happened. They appear uncertain and unsure. In English we might say that they "were at a loose end". The disciples were left wondering what they should do next. So they went fishing. Perhaps they felt hungry and had nothing better to do. Jesus now tests them. It may surprise us to think that they went fishing at night. However, this was the normal and best time to fish, because the fish were close to the surface. During the day, when the sun was shining the fish were deeper. They fish until the sun comes up and catch nothing. This is now the wrong time to fish. However, Jesus tells them to put their nets over the right side of the boat. Would they now do what they are told? It seems a silly thing to do. They now catch a great deal of fish. This would be 100 meters off-shore. John seems to have recognised that it was Jesus. Peter jumps overboard to go to him. Strangely, they seem to not quite be sure on shore that the man is in fact Jesus. But he shows himself to them. This story is about taking steps of faith and trust, even though we are not sure if what we are doing is right. However, God affirms us and shows himself if we trust.

Notes

There seems to have been something different about Jesus' body, as they did not recognise him

1. No one knows why the number 153 is particularly mentioned. Any ideas?
2. Verse 7 John said to Peter. Traditionally understood as the disciple John.
3. V.11. Sometimes Jesus enables us to succeed. The net was not torn
4. They didn't ask him who he was even though they knew. After the resurrection, Jesus body was different. However, Jesus shows, through offering fish and bread that he is the same
5. Eating together is a sign of friendship and closeness in the Bible

Questions:

1. What do we do when are uncertain? What do we do "to take our minds off things?"
2. The disciples do what they are told even though they are unsure - and catch fish. Do we have to go forward on trust sometimes?
3. Do we sometimes do things even though it seems to be the wrong time?
4. What can we know about Peter from this passage? (see Math 14:28-32)
5. Jesus did not just teach them to the beach: he prepared breakfast for his disciples Why?
6. After this, what role does hospitality and sharing food play in the Bible?

Conclusion:

Jesus appears to us and makes himself known to us. Jesus fulfils all our deepest spiritual needs. And yet he is concerned about our lives and even what we eat. He prepared breakfast for his disciples. He is concerned about all our lives. This passage is about trust even when we are uncertain. We should do what he says anyway, or as best we can, and work hard for Jesus and do what he says. He will

bless us. The fish were large and yet the net was not torn. This means that God will bless our work and help us succeed, despite all the factors against us. The story also tells us about how we now relate to him. We cannot see him with our eyes. We have to proceed on faith and trust. However, Jesus is with us as much as he was with those first disciples.