



Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.

1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus saith unto them, **Children, have ye any meat?** They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, **Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.** They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. 8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. 9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, **Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.** 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. 12 Jesus saith unto them, **Come and dine.** And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. (John 21:1-14)

We read in this glorious miracle of the resurrected Christ a special glimmer of the abundant provision God has in store for those who love Him; and we also see that we are to add our own resources to those for which the Lord has made special provision. We see, too, the power of LOVE to recognize that object of its affection even at a distance (i.e. the disciple John whom the Lord loved recognized the Personage on the shore of Galilee as the Lord). Jesus once walked on the stormy Sea of Galilee in the midst of His ministry; but now He stands on the shore - His labors and Passion having been fulfilled.

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Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself." It may benefit us to look into the circumstances which led up to this glorious miracle - glorious for its effect as well as for the post-resurrection occasion of it. Just as the changing of water into wine at Cana of Galilee was the Lord's first visible miracle, here is the last of His ministerial miracles in changing an empty net of souls into a full one. There is no greater miracle of benefit to the soul of man than the salvation of his soul from the bonds of sin and the fires of Hell. This final miracle symbolizes the salvation of untold numbers of souls through the work of evangelism and obedience to God.

Peter has not looked into the eyes of Jesus since that horrible and humiliating moment on the night of Jesus' trial when Peter denied the third time. *"And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, **Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."* (Luke 22:60-62) It is very likely that Peter has had no peace of mind since that moment until now. The Lord was fully aware of Peter's misery and even in the first moments of His resurrection, He sent word to comfort poor Peter. The Angel of the Tomb said: *"Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."* (Mark 16:6-7) You will note that the great Angel distinctly pointed out Peter to be notified based on the great anguish of soul Peter was experiencing.

Peter has always been the impulsive one. There is a certain virtue, though there can also be calamity, in the nature of impulse. One who acts on impulse does not calculate the political fall-out. *"There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing."* The Lord is no longer visibly at their side. They are at a loss for what action to take. Of course, the Lord knows precisely where they are and how to find them. After fishing all night, the little band had caught NOTHING. It must be admitted that the Lord may empty, as well as fill, our nets for His purpose. He often deprives us of a good catch for a time that He may reward us later with an abundance of fish after we have demonstrated faith in His Word.

"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." You will recall that chilly night into which Peter fled and wept bitterly? True is the Psalmist's words: *". . . weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."* (Psalms 30:5) Now the fishermen have fished all night to no avail. Now comes the morning! The disciples did not recognize Jesus walking on the sea those years ago, and they do not now recognize Him standing on the shore. How often do we also fail to recognize the Lord of Love, in our moments of greatest despair, extending those nail-scarred hands to us?

In His glorified body, Jesus shares a meal with us. To those who labor in the fields for the white harvest, He will provide a literal "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" at the close of time. *"Then Jesus saith unto them, **Children, have ye any meat?**"* The question was rhetorical just as it is often with us in testing our faith. He has meat of which we know not, and our meat is not the common fair of the world either.

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the ship, and ye shall find." Not recognizing Jesus, it seems incredible that these men, who have fished futilely all night, would so easily take the seeming illogical advice of a stranger on the shore - but often, that stranger on the shore is the Lord. If we follow the Lord in perfect obedience - even when we cannot fathom the logic - He will see that we are rewarded with a handsome result for our efforts.

"They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." It was a great profit to catch so many fine fish, but the Lord was teaching them that they would catch untold numbers of men in the net of the Holy Ghost in time to come. The abundance of the Lord is always more than we can measure in human terms. "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." It is interesting that none of the disciples recognized Jesus except for that disciple whom Jesus especially loved - John. Jesus had a special love for John, and John for Jesus. Love will inform where intellect of the mind may fail us.

"Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea." Peter is overjoyed at the prospect of reconciliation with his Lord since the night of his denial. Impulsive, but honest, Peter can wait no longer. He will swim to shore rather than taking the more commodious means of the ship. He once before, during the storm at sea, asked to be invited by Christ to come to Him on the sea; but he now cannot abide formalities. He JUMPS IN!

"And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." You will note that Jesus already had prepared His own fish and bread for the disciples. Though the Lord will provide for our shortcomings and necessities, He expects us to come to Him bearing what fish we have caught as well. *"Jesus saith unto them, **Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.**"* It is a sorrowful fact to acknowledge, but in the Day of Judgment, many fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters will come to the Lord empty handed with no fish of their own to show for the great grace and mercy extended to them. Where are you sons and daughters, or husband or wife, He will ask. What will you answer Him?

There has been much speculation about the number (153) of fish that were caught, but the scriptures do not reveal that meaning to us with our present understanding. Be it enough to say that these were such a great number of fish to be extraordinary and unexpected. At the first episode of a great draught of fish, there was a singular difference in the phenomenal catch described here. What was it? In the first catch (Luke 5:1-11), Jesus was physically present in the ship. In this present case, He is not in the ship, but directing from the shore. As we struggle upon the sea of life, Jesus is directing those who will hear His Voice from the shore of Heaven. His physical Presence is with the Father, but His spiritual Presence is with us always. If our lives are directed by the Master of the Seas, then it shall be well with our souls. God owns all things, but He desires that we share our 'catch' (resources) as earnest of our faith.

There is another difference that is distinctive. At the first catch of Luke 5, Peter and the others were fishermen of the fish of the sea. Now, Jesus will place His seal on them as He promised early in the dawn of His ministry, when He found them by the waters of Galilee: *"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**"* (Matt 4:18-

19) On the occasion given in Luke 5, you will remember that the fish were so many that the **net broke**, but not now. Why not? *"Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."* We are specifically told that the net was not broken on this occasion. The great number and size of the fish symbolize the souls of men and women saved in the Net of Salvation. The Eternal Security of a soul who truly comes to Christ is demonstrated in the fact that God will not lose them by a broken vessel. In the first instance, the net broke because by the power of man, souls cannot be held in security of salvation; but in the Resurrection Christ, no soul that comes to Him shall He cast out. The finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ has assured a security that the world cannot give - *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."* (John 10:28-30)

"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." This invitation is made to all who surrender their old Free Wills of sin and accept the Will of God for their lives. We wrongly call that old will 'free' for it was in bondage to sin and the devil. Now, in Christ, we are subject to that perfect Law of Liberty that our Lord offers all who come to Him. Our wills are never 'free' until that will has been supplanted by the "putting on of Christ." The disciples had seen the physical bread by the fire - but they also recognized the Bread of Heaven in Jesus Christ. Just as the Person of Christ is revealed to us symbolically in the Communion of Bread and Wine, so is His spiritual presence with us most forcefully revealed to us when we are in close communion with Him. They KNEW Him by the fires at Galilee.

"Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." Many fish come by our obedience to the Lord and our hard labors in His Vineyard; but He will add a bonus of His own fish to those we have taken in the Sea of Life. These are those for whom we have not labored but whom Jesus brings by the power of His Holy Spirit. They are drawn as if by a hook to come to His Table. This meal is the last physical meal of Christ with His beloved disciples while His physical Presence was with them; yet, we enjoy a continual meal of that Bread of Heaven which comes with the ease of the Morning Manna upon our hearts. Do we love Him as did John? If so, we shall know Him at every beckoning call. His voice whispers on the winds of the desert and the mists of the mountain: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* (Matt 11:28-30) We truly bear no burdens for the Lord - it is He that bears them FOR us!