

Breakfast with Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let's have a word of prayer, and then we're going to open up our scriptures together. Holy Spirit of God, we ask that you would illuminate your scriptures for us, that as we look at the events that happened a long time ago, that it would become clear to us how they are relevant for today.

God, I ask that you would give me the words I need to speak, that they'd be your words, that they would be sanctified and holy, and that they would give you honor, and that they would encourage and give your people hope in a day when we need it.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen. If you have your Bibles, I encourage you to flip them open or turn them on. We are in the book of John chapter 21. Book of John chapter 21. It's in the New Testament.

It's the fourth gospel in the New Testament, and it's one of the collections of stories about this man that Christians call their Lord and Savior and friend, and Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

And if you know anything about the story of Jesus of Nazareth, and if you don't, that's okay. I'll catch you up. Jesus was born, and he had a bunch of, you know, interesting circumstances around his birth. We talk about that at Christmas.

[1 : 11] And then he lived, and he lived this remarkable life. And the thing that's amazing about his life is that he claimed that the way that he lived showed what God was like. And no surprise that when Jesus shows what God is like, and God turns out to love enemies and to push back against authority and empire and corruption, empire and authority and corruption put Jesus to death.

Put him on a cross, executed capital punishment upon him, and we killed God. Now, what happened next?

Well, that's what we're talking about in the book of John, chapter 21. So you can follow along with your Bible and your phone or with the words on the screen. I get to play preacher and PowerPoint keynote extraordinaire.

So sorry for the going back and forth. But here we go. Word should be on your screen. This is the book of John, chapter 21, verse 1.

Now, the word afterward is doing a lot of heavy lifting there.

[2 : 25] So catch you up. Jesus has died. He died on a Friday. And this was unexpected. No one thought that someone called Messiah, someone called Christ, that Jesus, who everyone expected to save the world, no one expected him to die.

They thought this was the end of the story, that this was the end of hope. But Jesus dies, and then he stays dead and stays dead and stays dead until Sunday.

Some women, some followers of Jesus, go to the tomb, and they expect to find a closed tomb with a body there, and it's an open tomb with no body. And they are shocked and afraid because this is not what bodies are supposed to do.

If you were a Greek or a Roman, you knew that you knew that you knew that people stay dead. If you were a Jew, you had the expectation of resurrection coming at the end of time, not in the middle of history.

You had the expectation of resurrection coming to all people, not just to one particular person. And so for Jesus to be alive was the biggest surprise of all time. No one would have made this up because it would have been foolishness to anyone who heard it.

[3 : 31] So Jesus is alive. He shows himself to his disciples. He shows himself to the women. They start talking about it, and they aren't sure what to do. They don't really know what to do with this new information.

But Jesus is alive, and he begins to show himself to his disciples. So Jesus appears again. This is another one of these appearance stories by the Sea of Galilee. Verse 2.

It happened this way. Simon Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus. Thomas, also known as Didymus, great, great rapper name Diddy right here. Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, who unfortunately don't get named, were together.

And I'm going fishing, Simon Peter tells them. And they said, we'll go with you. So they went out and got into the boat. And that night, they caught nothing. Now, I love the honesty of the story, because the disciples have just had the most mind-blowing, amazing, exciting, inexplicable thing happen to them.

That the person that they thought was dead is now alive and walking around. And they're like, so what? What are we supposed to do?

[4 : 40] So Simon, who used to be a fisherman and followed Jesus for three years, saw Jesus died. Now saw Jesus get resurrected. He's like, I guess I'm going back to fishing. And the other disciples are like, okay, fine, we'll come with you.

I love this honesty of the story, because after the miraculous, they go back to the mundane. And I think a lot of us can relate, because today's Easter, and for many of us, today's maybe an exciting day, or it was supposed to be before all of our plans got canceled.

Easter's supposed to be a time of celebration, that we celebrate the resurrection, the fact that Jesus is alive. It's this amazing, miraculous, astounding, unbelievably beautiful thing. And then Monday comes around, like it tends to.

And like, I don't know if you're like me, but it seems to be weeks full of Mondays. So you celebrate Easter, you celebrate the resurrection, and then the mundane returns.

And you are not that different than the disciples 2,000 years ago, where they saw the resurrection of Jesus. They saw it with their very own eyes. And even they went back to fishing.

[5 : 46] But, I believe, that after the mundane, the miraculous can happen. That when, that Jesus will meet us in the mundane, and he will turn the mundane into the miraculous.

He will turn the Mondays into Sundays, or if you're not a fan of Sundays, Fridays, Saturday night, whatever your favorite day is. He will turn the mundane into the miraculous.

And that's what this story is about. So, wherever you're at tonight, if you're watching in the most mundane possible place, like a couch in your living room, me, I'm in my basement.

There's like a cockroach that's slowly dying over there. Like, we are in the middle of the most mundane possible circumstances, as the world deals with one of the most unmundane possible circumstances.

But Jesus meets us there, and he will make something miraculous come of him. So, let's keep going.

[6 : 44] Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. And he called out to them, Friends! One translation says, Lads! Laddies!

Haven't you any fish? I'd like to imagine Jesus as a Scottish fisherman. No, the disciples answered. And I can just, like, hear the frustration in their voice, like a very sullen, No.

Almost like a teenage, No, Jesus. But they don't know it's Jesus, which is kind of a common characteristic of the Jesus stories. After Jesus is resurrected, it looks like Jesus, but somehow it doesn't.

Like, he's got a body, he's got flesh and blood, flesh and blood and bones, and he eats food, and he does all these, like, typical body things, and yet there's something slightly unrecognizable about him, because story after story says they didn't recognize Jesus, and then Jesus, well, what's fun about Jesus' stories is that three times, the way that they recognize Jesus is because he eats something.

There's one story where Jesus is walking on the road with two disciples, and the disciples don't recognize him. Jesus starts teaching them the Bible like Jesus does. They invite him into their house, and Jesus takes bread and breaks it and gives it to the disciples, and the disciples are like, I know Jesus breaking bread when I see it.

[7 : 58] There's another story where Jesus goes into a room, it's locked, and the disciples are hiding because the Roman Empire just killed their Savior. They're expecting the Roman Empire to come to kill them too, so they're in a locked room.

Jesus shows up miraculously, like, teleport, beam me up Scotty into the room, and Jesus asks for some fish, and he eats the fish. You're like, I know Jesus eating fish when I see it.

Like, I think Jesus had a bit, he's a bit of a gourmand. Like, he was hanging out with the celebrity chefs. He was getting, like, people, seriously, in the Bible, in the New Testament, it says that people would claim that Jesus was a glutton.

Jesus loved food. So, Jesus shows up, they don't recognize him, and Jesus being Jesus, asks, hey, do you have any food, fishermen? And the fishermen are like, ugh, no, we've been fishing all night, and we haven't caught anything.

So, let's keep going. Jesus said, take your net, and throw it on the right side of the boat, and you'll find some fish. Now, to us, 21st century people, folk, who don't fish all that often, at least, I don't, this is kind of a throwaway verse, you skip right over it.

[9 : 11] But, if you're a first century fisherman, and you hear somebody shouting at the shore, did you catch any fish? No. Why don't you throw the net on the other side?

One, you're probably kind of insulted, because who's this stranger shouting at you? And two, the stranger is telling you to do something nonsensical. You don't throw your net on the right side of the boat, because that's where your oars would typically be.

You'd use your oars to steer on the right side, and that stirring up the water, hopefully would send the fish over to the other side of the boat, and that's where you'd use the net on the left side. So, the stranger comes, shouts, do you have any fish?

No, thanks for bringing up a sore point. Hey, why don't you do the opposite of what you're supposed to do? Into the disturbed water.

So, they do the nonsensical thing. And I think when Jesus asks us to do the nonsensical, we best listen, friends, because that's when something amazing is about to happen.

[10 : 14] If you have been following Jesus for any amount of time, I think it's a pretty good possibility that you have been asked to do nonsensical things. For my wife, Emily and I, we got out of college, and I knew I was called into ministry, wasn't finding a job, wasn't finding a job.

We got out of college in 2009, so right in the middle of the big economic crisis, and ended up moving to northwest Iowa, rural Iowa. Basically sight unseen, we didn't have any family, any connection at all.

It was the nonsensical thing to do, but we ended up living there for 10 years, loved it, made some of the best relationships of our life there. Now, 10 years later, we move to Washington, D.C., about the most opposite of rural Iowa, as you can think.

Like, it's totally left side of the boat net to the right side of the boat. By the way, in the middle of the, you know, weirdest possible time to move to a city. But when Jesus asks us to do nonsensical things, we best listen, because amazing things tend to happen.

Let's keep reading. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. They were unable to haul in their net into the boat because there were too many darn fish.

[11 : 37] So, keep going. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved, which is kind of a code name in the book of John for probably the author of the book, the disciple whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, it is the Lord.

And as soon as Simon Peter heard him say, it's the Lord, he wrapped his outer garment around him, for he had taken it off, whereas one translation puts it very bluntly, he was naked, and Peter jumps into the water.

Or, actually, you like how the King James puts this verse. It says, now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he did cast himself into the sea. Honest to goodness, this scene makes me cry almost every time I read it because it's this beautiful story of Peter's devotion to Jesus.

Now, if you know anything about Peter, you know that Peter is this impetuous, acts and speaks without thinking, first to make extreme promises, first to break them, kind of do.

And, Peter is impetuous. He acts without thinking. He speaks without thinking. And he hears it's Jesus, and he leaps into the water. He casts himself into the sea.

[12 : 42] I actually have this kind of pet theory that Peter was one of the disciples who saw Jesus walking on water, one of those miracles of Jesus. And Jesus says, come on out. And Peter gets out of the boat and actually very briefly walks on water with Jesus before he begins to doubt and sink.

So, I like to believe that when Peter gets out of the boat in this story, that he actually thought maybe this would be the time. And he ends up splashing in and just swims anyway. But, that point aside, Peter casts himself into the sea.

Now, what Peter is showing us is a level of devotion and love for Jesus that we would all do well to follow. We can take heart in the fact that Peter, later on in this chapter, we're not talking about it today, but later on, basically tells Peter, you're going to be in charge of the church.

This grand human experiment where people are going to act on behalf of God, you're going to be the one in charge. Now, Peter is the one who abandoned his first rabbi.

He was a disciple of John the Baptist. Peter abandoned John to follow Jesus, which was, you know, probably a pretty good bet to make. But then, Peter was also the one that, after he declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the one who was going to come and become king of the world, tries to rebuke Jesus for having the wrong idea about how to go about it.

[14 : 08] Peter is the one who claimed that he would die for Jesus, and then, as soon as he's given the chance, denies he even knows the guy. Peter is the one who takes a sword to the Garden of Gethsemane and slices off somebody's ear, which one shows that Peter was probably a terrible soldier, better fisherman, even though it seems to struggle with that too, and that Peter had completely had the wrong idea about what it was to follow Jesus.

Peter is the one who Jesus says, on this rock I will build my church, on you, Peter, on this declaration of what you've said about me, Peter, I'm going to build my church.

And Peter does end up being one of the major figures of the first century church. If Jesus can call Peter to do that, I think Jesus can also call us similar levels of devotion to not merely get out of the boat.

Are we willing to throw ourselves out of the boat in order to get closer to Jesus? To not just tepidly step into the water, but to cast ourselves into the sea so that we can know Jesus better.

Are we willing to rearrange the fabric and the material and the building blocks of our life? What we watch and what we do and who we date and who we hang out with and what we read and what we wear.

[15 : 31] Are we willing to rearrange everything so that we can get closer to Jesus? Story continues. Now, the other disciples follow it in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

Now, this is the part of the story, one of the parts of the story that cracks me up, is that Peter casts himself into the sea and the other disciples are like, dude, there's a net full of fish and a boat that needs to get from here to there.

Thanks for nothing, Peter. Peter, like, when it's convenient, says like, I don't even know Jesus. And then when it's convenient, he's like, I'm going for a swim, guys. Anyway, Peter, one of my favorite guys.

So, story continues. When they landed, they saw a fire burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. Now, if you thought the story was weird before, it's getting weirder. Jesus shows up.

They don't recognize him because he's got that kind of Jesus new body resurrection thing going on. He calls up the disciples. Do you have any fish? No. Put your net on the other side. They get a bunch of fish. This seems to be a miracle on its own.

[16 : 34] Peter goes, swims to Jesus. They land, and then Jesus is there and he already has fish. How does this happen? And not only fish, but bread.

Jesus comes prepared. And I think what this shows us about Jesus and about the God that Jesus shows us is that Jesus provides what we require, but Jesus does not require our provision.

Jesus provides what we require, but Jesus does not require our provision. Yes, the church, people like you and me, are said to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

That we put flesh and blood and bone to the action of God on planet Earth. And that is absolutely 100% true. God does through us things that God will not or could not do on his own.

But, don't believe for a second that God needs us. Don't believe for a second that God requires our provision. God comes with provision.

[17 : 43] God is capable on his own. God is always only acting for the good of the universe. And he brings his own fish. Jesus provides and doesn't require our provision.

And this is both a gift and a release that God doesn't need us. the world doesn't depend on us. This is why Sabbath and rest exist.

It's our daily and our weekly reminder the world keeps spinning without us. The world spins because of God's grace and power. Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish that you have caught.

So Simon Peter climbs back into the boat and drags the net ashore. And it was full of large fish, 153 of them, but even with so many, the net was not torn.

I love the awkwardness of the scene. Peter's naked. He puts on some clothes, swims, which putting on clothes to swim is a pretty dumb idea. I really think he was expecting to walk on water.

[18 : 45] He gets to Jesus, probably gives Jesus a big wet hug. Jesus is like, hey, you know that fish? Could you go get it? Peter's like, oh yeah, right, fish, miracle. Sorry, Jesus.

Goes and runs back to the disciples who are probably like steaming at him because he left them to bring all the fish in the boat. Peter single-handedly probably pumped up on adrenaline and Holy Spirit Red Bull, like drags the entire net all by himself, which is a huge feat because the other five couldn't do it.

So I'm sure Peter's now boasting about that somewhere in heaven. Peter then brings it and brings the fish to Jesus. Now, I love this scene because what Jesus provides is meant to be shared.

Jesus provides the miracle, gives 153 fish, and then asks for it to be shared. Bring the fish here so we can have breakfast together. And if there's no big, huge significance with 153, I think it's eyewitness testimony.

If you know any fishermen, you know that they keep track of like how big and how many and all that kind of stuff. And I think it's the same thing here. Like, hey, you remember the day that Jesus gave us this big, massive haul of fish?

[19 : 57] It was 153 of them. Maybe it was like 15 and they exaggerated. I don't know, but there was eyewitness testimony, a whole bunch of fish. Anyway, point being that what Jesus provides is meant to be shared.

There is no hoarding in Jesus's economy. If there were 153 rolls of toilet paper, Jesus would say, give them away. Jesus provides and then we feast together.

Jesus said, come and have breakfast. And none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? Because they knew it was the Lord.

And again, it's that mystery thing of Jesus and the resurrection body. It's clearly Jesus. We don't recognize him, but now we do because of his actions. He's the same, but he's different. And this speaks to a whole different topic for a whole different day of what our resurrection bodies are going to be like.

But they knew it was Jesus. They didn't dare ask him just to make sure. And then Jesus came, he took the bread, and he gave it to them.

[21 : 03] And he did the same with the fish. What Jesus provides is meant to be shared. Now, remember, friends, who Jesus is feeding breakfast to, who he's invited to dine with him, who he's given his provision to.

This is the group of disciples that ran away. This is the group of disciples that came to the garden with Jesus. A group came to arrest Jesus for his crimes of loving people too much and of pushing back against authority and empire.

And these are the disciples who scattered. They were nowhere to be seen at the cross. Only the women stayed. These are the disciples that locked themselves in a room, scared, even after Jesus has showed himself to be the resurrected king of the world.

They decide, like, well, the only thing we know how to do is to go fishing, so we're going to do that. And even then, they're not going to do it that well. And if you were Jesus and you just had the biggest, I told you so, comeback story of all time, how would you act?

Would you not, if you were like me, go looking for vengeance? Would you not go and say, I told you so a thousand times to these folks? Would you not go and chide and correct and tell them all the ways that they failed you and how you need to change?

[22 : 23] No, Jesus does none of that. Jesus says, come. Come to the table. Let's eat, have breakfast together. Any pastor, parent, authority figure in your life who has told you that the best way to deal with misbehavior is to really lay down the law and correction hasn't followed the example of Jesus.

Jesus' example is, oh, you betrayed me? You ran away? You have failed in every possible way in the hours that mattered? Let's have breakfast. That's how Jesus deals with it.

He offers friendship and fellowship and reconciliation and forgiveness. So, let's review. I believe that Jesus wants to make the miraculous out of your mundane.

He wants to turn a week full of Mondays into a week full of Sundays, resurrection days of Easter's. We need to pay attention to how Jesus is doing that, though.

It doesn't happen suddenly. It doesn't happen in an instant and it doesn't happen if we're not paying attention. It's going to take some time and some attention on our part to see the good that God is up to and to join him in it.

[23 : 46] Maybe Jesus is asking us to do the nonsensical thing. Maybe it's to move to rural Iowa or maybe it's to move to Washington, D.C. in the middle of a pandemic. I don't know.

And by do the nonsensical thing, I don't mean, like, go shake everyone's hands and take off your face mask. Like, no, you need to care for people correctly. But by doing the nonsensical thing, I mean, maybe it's rearranging our relationships.

Maybe it's rearranging our lives in a way to know this Jesus better. Maybe it's rearranging our lives in such a way so that we don't spread an infectious disease.

Maybe that's the nonsensical thing. Maybe Jesus is asking us to throw ourselves out of the boat, not just to step timidly into the water, but to dive head first, close on into the water so that we can get closer to this Jesus.

I don't know what that means for you. Maybe that means changing some relationships. Maybe that means, you know, actually starting to read our Bible or to listen to some different music. Maybe it means that we need to tell our friends and our family and our neighbors about this Jesus that we follow.

[24 : 57] I don't know what the nonsensical thing is. I don't know what it means for you to throw yourself out of the boat. But maybe you do. Maybe it's time to pay attention to what God has been whispering in your soul.

Maybe God is asking us to simply receive his provision. Maybe it's a spiritual, a soulish kind of provision to simply rest in his presence and to know that he is good and he is working for our good.

Maybe it's to recognize the provision that we have and to share it. to share it with our friends and our neighbors and our loved ones, our time and our talents and our resources and to let other people have the good thing that God has given us.

Maybe it's the gift of our words to give compliments instead of cynicism, to be purposefully naive instead of purposefully vague and terrible and throw shade. I don't know.

But maybe Jesus is calling us to do that. And maybe for some of us, Jesus is calling us to accept his forgiveness.

[26 : 03] That for whatever reason, we have put this big, thick wall between us and the divine, between us and God and we think that God doesn't want us or we've decided on our own that we want nothing to do with the God that's been explained to us.

And friends, I'm here to tell you that Jesus wants to have a meal with you. If we were all together in the same room, we would conclude this sermon by coming behind a table and taking some bread and saying, this represents the very body of God.

Take, eat, for this is God's gift to you that you might dine with the divine. What John Wesley called the soul of the universe.

And this soul of the universe wants to offer you forgiveness for whatever causes you shame, hurt, heartache, embarrassment, or pain. God wants to let you know it's forgiven.

In his eyes, it's gone. So what I'd love for us to do now is to take some time to respond to these six different prompts. If you've got the chat window up in front of you, I'd love for you to take the chance to maybe share which one or two of these really is resonating with you right now.

[27 : 20] We have our prayer room open. If you are someone who needs some prayer right now, you want to make a step towards Jesus. Maybe you've stepped away from this whole church thing, this whole Jesus thing, and you want to make a step towards Jesus.

Or maybe you want to cast yourself into the sea to get closer to him. I'd love it if you would open up that prayer window and talk with someone. Put it in the chat, whatever.

Or maybe it's just a moment between you and God and that's okay too. And you can share that with someone close to you. But I want you to know that this resurrection Jesus that we talk about, he's real.

It happened. And when we wake up tomorrow and it's Monday again, and we have a week full of Mondays to look forward to, I fully, truly believe that God is working for our good.

And what started at an empty tomb in Galilee in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago is slowly making its way through the cosmos to bring it all back to life again.

[28 : 30] Let me pray for us. And then we recorded some music before. We were no longer to gather together, no longer allowed to gather together. So we're going to continue in worship. We've got a beautiful benediction coming as well.

And then I'll be in the chat for a while after the service and I'd love to talk to you there. Father, Son, and Spirit, we thank you for the gift of your word and for the example of Jesus who meets us in the big, the miraculous, the powerful, as well as in the mundane, even like breakfast on a beach and teaching people how to fish.

Jesus, for all my friends out there who are with us tonight, I know we're in a variety of circumstances, excitement and pain with friends and loved ones and some of us alone.

God, I pray that you would meet us wherever we're at. Show us the truth of how good you are. Show us how much you love us. Show us how much you want to move us forward and change our lives.

We thank you for the gift of resurrection. May we have resurrection life starting today. today. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.