

John (So That You Might Believe) (Week 11/12) Fish for People Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *What gives you confidence about the resurrection? What is one way the resurrection and the certain hope to resurrection transforms your day-to-day life?*

Warm-Up

1. If you met a friend who had just been raised from the dead, what would you do next?

Read John 21:1-3

2. What do the disciples go out to do? Who suggests the idea? Why would it have been appealing?
3. Why were they in Galilee? (Hint: Matthew 28:10; Mark 16:7)
4. What is the most surprising thing about their fishing expedition?

Read John 21:4-14

5. What does Jesus tell the disciples to do? What happens? Who made the difference?
6. Can you think of another significant encounter with Jesus on this same shore? What did Jesus call the disciples *from* and what did he call them *now to do*? (Hint: read Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 4:18-22)
7. How does 'fishing for people' relate to the mission Jesus sends the disciples on? How is it relevant for us today?
8. What difference does Jesus make to *this* fishing trip? Why is mission pointless without Jesus?
9. When are you tempted to rely on your own experience, insights, and skills when living for God? What are the signs you are no longer relying on the power of Jesus?
10. What should it look like for you to remain in Jesus, and depend on his power?
11. What details are we given about the *amount* of fish caught? What is the significance of 153 fish?
12. Which interactions between Jesus and the disciples bookend the haul of fish? What does this tell us about the focus of commissioning the disciples for mission?
13. What is Jesus sending out the disciples and us to do? (c.f. John 20:21)
14. How vast is the scope of mission? Who are five people on your frontlines who don't yet know Jesus? When could you pray for them each day? Pair it with something you are already doing daily.
15. In addition to telling the disciples about where to fish, what is Jesus' other invitation? How does Jesus provide for them - physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
16. What does this tell us about how Jesus cares for us? How have you seen Jesus' care recently?
17. How is Jesus with us, in the mission he has sent us on? Why is this comforting and reassuring?

Apply *Identify five people on your frontlines who don't yet know Jesus. Plan a time to pray for them each day.*

Pray *Gracious God, thank you for your desire to see many people come to have life in Jesus. Please help us see the role we have in being witnesses. Please help us to see with fresh eyes the people you've sent us to and grow our desire for them to be saved. May we depend on Jesus' work & the Spirit's power to bring them to belief. Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

John (So That You Might Believe) (Week 11/12) Fish for People

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

Who are 5 people on your frontline who don't yet know Jesus? Commit to praying for them each day.



For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen:* “Breakfast on the beach” by Pete Wilkinson:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/breakfast-on-the-beach/#sermons>
- *Listen:* “It is the Lord” by Dan Wells:
https://www.allsouls.org/Groups/274103/C207_Easter_Faith.aspx
- *Listen:* “Come ... and have breakfast” by Rico Tice:
https://www.allsouls.org/Groups/327052/E076_Invitations_of_Jesus.aspx
- *Listen:* “A famous breakfast” by Dick Lucas:
<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/589/>

Series Resources

- *Read:* “John: An Expository Commentary” by R C Sproul.
- *Read:* “The Gospel According to John” by Don Carson.
- *Read:* “The Message of John” by Bruce Milne. 
- *Read:* “John for Everyone: Part 1” by Tom Wright. 
- *Read:* “Can We Trust the Gospels?” by Peter Williams. 
- *Watch:* “John” by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-john/>
- *Previous Series* from St Bart’s (including Children’s Resources):
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/jesus-is>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/i-am>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/truth-glory>

 Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)

Week 11/12 “Fish for People”

by Amy Norman (12/04/2026)

사람 낚는 어부 | Rēēc ēē kē dē Kōc | 得人如得鱼 | மக்களுக்கான மீன்

Bible Passage: John 21:1-14

*Gracious Father, by the power of your Spirit,
help us to see the scope of mission you have sent us on,
and your presence with us as we go.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

- Here we come to the *third* time Jesus appeared to his disciples, after being raised from the dead.
- We might have expected that after meeting Jesus that the disciples would be tearing through Jerusalem telling everyone Jesus who was crucified is alive, but instead we find just seven of the disciples on a boat, back in Galilee, fishing.
- The disciples have believed in Jesus, that he has been raised from the dead, but reality is setting in of what they are to do now.
- On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, we're reminded of the start of the disciples journey of following Jesus, as they are prepared now by Jesus to launch a *new* chapter of his mission.
- In the locked room the risen Jesus had given them a clear commission. He told the disciples he was *sending them*, and *gave them* the Holy Spirit. But it seems that the disciples still have *more to learn*. They have *more to learn* about the mission Jesus is sending them on.
- Through a failed fishing trip, a miraculous catch, and breakfast with Jesus, he is teaching them about:
Power of Mission, Scope of Mission and their Companion in Mission.

POWER OF MISSION | VERSES 1-6

사명의 능력 | Riel dë Tuöc | 使命的力量 | இறைபணியின் வல்லமை

First, *Jesus is the power of mission.* Verse 1 ...

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. *John 6:1-3*

- The disciples have gone through a lot in the past few days, from the heights of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to the horror of his arrest and crucifixion, to hiding from the religious officials and seeing Jesus twice. It is no wonder some of them decide to go fishing.
- After the strange and tumultuous time in Jerusalem, being back in their home town and back on the water would have probably been a familiar and comforting rhythm.
- In a sea of uncertainty, this was something that seemed finally within their control.
- Maybe you know that feeling? When you’re in the middle of grief and uncertainty, doing things or going to places that feel familiar and known can be comforting.

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- So, it is not surprising the disciples are out fishing. It is not surprising they are no longer in Jerusalem either, for the gospel accounts of Mark and Matthew tell us the disciples were told to go to Galilee.
 - What *is surprising* is how their fish expedition goes. Peter and the sons of Zebedee were presumably good at fishing! It had been their livelihood. But this night they catch nothing. After all their years fishing in *these* waters, they don’t even catch one fish!
 - But everything changes when Jesus appears. Verse 4 ...
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Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. *verses 4-6*

- At first the disciples don’t seem to recognise Jesus is on the shore. Fisherman would probably not normally take advice given from a random man, but maybe out of desperation they obey, and soon after recognise the man: ‘It is the Lord!’
- Jesus and the disciples had spent a lot of time on this lake together. They had criss-crossed it for Jesus teach and heal, to feed the thousands,

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and they'd even seen him walk on water here.

- But maybe the *most* significant moment in this place, that changed the trajectory of their lives, was when Jesus *first* met the disciples. John doesn't record the encounter, maybe because it is so well known. But Mark and Matthew record when Jesus first met Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee (James and John).
- While in their boats and mending their nets, Jesus called to them "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people." It's hard for us not to think back to this meeting. And at some point on this trip, it must have occurred to the disciples too.
- So much has happened since that day, but the call of Jesus *to them* has not changed. "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people." They were no longer fisherman, but called by Jesus as witnesses to his life, death, and resurrection, and their mission was to *fish for people*, to bring the good news to others that they too would have life in Jesus' name. >

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- But, like a lived out parable, they're going to see the difference between when they are doing things on their own, and when Jesus is calling the shots.
- They are going to go from nothing — to an abundant catch.
- They might have clocked up all the hours, have first hand experience, been specially set apart, but they need to learn that they need to keep looking to him and relying on him.
- Jesus had implored them the night before he died to remain in him:

"If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." *John 15:5*

- Without Jesus they will not be fruitful in mission.
- Without Jesus we can't be fruitful in mission, either.
- They were just on a fishing trip, but they're about to be sent *into the world to fish for people*.
- *They need to rely on Jesus.*
They have no power on their own.
But they do have power from the one who was raised from the dead,
and who gives them his Spirit.

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- And the same is true for us — we need to rely on him, too! It’s his mission.
- We can be so quick to forget.
- One of the tell-tale signs we’ve stopped *depending* on Jesus, is when we stop asking for his wisdom and direction and just push on with our own plans, when we don’t ask for his power to be at work, or when we don’t continue to come to him in prayer, pleading for his will to be done.
- It seems a bit ridiculous that we could *even attempt* to not depend on Jesus for his mission, a bit like attempting to go on a road trip without any fuel or any direction. So don’t make that mistake, depend on Jesus. /
- This miraculous catch is a reminder that Jesus who can command the fish *is the Lord of all*. He has supreme authority over all things.
- And it is by his invitation we partake in his mission. He is the Redeemer, he is the Saviour, He is the Lord of all creation. He is the one who commissions us to go and make disciples.
- We will only bear fruit as we go, when we *rely on Jesus*.

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SCOPE OF MISSION | VERSES 7-11

사명의 확장 | Yiic Thiëk de Tuöc | 使命的范围 | இறைபணிக்கான வரம்பு

Second, the disciples’ huge catch points to the **scope of mission**. Verse 8...

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. vv. 7-11

- At Jesus’ instruction, the fruitless night out has turned into a *massive catch*. Notice just how often the *size* of the catch is mentioned:
verse 6: the disciples were *unable to haul the net in*,
verse 8: they were *towing the net full of fish*
verse 11: Peter dragged the net ashore *full of large fish*,
even with *so many fish the net was not torn*.
- And if we are in any doubt how big this catch is - there are 153 fish!
- There have been plenty of theories about *what* the number 153 might mean. Jerome, a theologian in the 4th century, thought there were only 153 species of fish,

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so the catch represented all nations in the world.

Others have translated letters to numbers.

- But at the end of the day
we don't know if 153 means something significant for John doesn't tell us.
What we do know is that there are a lot of fish!
However, like this haul, the scope of the mission field before the disciples is also vast.
- The mission Jesus is sending them on to make disciples has an enormous scope.
Just before Jesus is ascended he will tell them that he is sending them to be his witnesses
in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- For the disciples, this might have seemed overwhelming!
But from our vantage point, we can see how the Good News has kept travelling.
That *it has* extended far beyond Jerusalem and Galilee,
reaching people across cultures and places,
that even in Toowoomba and Brisbane, people have heard and believed in Jesus. /
- The scope of mission is not just significant for the first disciples,
but as we are tasked with the same mission,
to be witnesses of Jesus and make disciples, *we too have an enormous scope of mission.*
- Sometimes we might find this hard to believe. >

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That God doesn't have anyone in my life, who is remotely open to him.

We can so easily adopt a scarcity mindset,

that there are so few interested, and others better equipped anyway.

But Jesus tells us the harvest *is plentiful.*

- *So take a moment to think about your frontlines.*
Where are the places you spend time during the week?
Where will you be this time tomorrow?
Maybe it's amongst your family, at work, at the shops, when you go to the gym,
the dog park, or in your book club.
In all these places who do you know there? *Do they know Jesus yet?*
- I expect there are many people, who you regularly interact with, who don't yet know Jesus.
Some of these people you might know really well and others not so much.
But these are the people Jesus is sending you out amongst to be fishers of people.
- Individually, the scope of mission is far bigger than we first think,
and it only gets bigger when we combine all our frontlines together across our church,
and in our local communities.
- And through prayer and financial support,
we are part of the Gospel being taken to local schools, out to Lightning Ridge,
across the world through the many projects of Anglican Overseas Aid.

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- Counting 153 fish would have been obvious that this catch was pretty big.
But do we see how vast the scope of mission is before us, in our normal, everyday lives?
- Here at St Bart's, in both Toowoomba and Brisbane, some of the people who have the *best* grasp of their frontlines and a deep concern for the people they know to hear about Jesus are children.
- Many are praying for their teachers, schoolmates, and friends to come to faith. They have been eager to bring their friends along to Sunday School or Kids Club, want them to hear about Jesus (no matter their upbringing), and are ready to tell them all about the Saviour they love.
- Some of our most effective evangelists are kids, for they can see the vast mission field in front of them, and are not too afraid to act.
- For all of us, we can take their enthusiasm and openness, to invite *our* friends and the people we see regularly to come and find out more about Jesus.

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COMPANION IN MISSION | VERSES 12-13

사명의 동역자 | Mëët nē Luōi de Tuōc | 使命伙伴 | இறைபணியில் துணைவன்

Finally, as we return to the haul of fish and breakfast on the beach with Jesus, we see our **companion in mission**. *Verse 9...*

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. *verses 9-13*

- Now that Jesus is *physically* raised from the dead, he seems to have an ability to appear in places the disciples don't expect. Jesus could have come to the disciples at any moment, but he chooses to meet them after a night of failed fishing and gives them breakfast.
- How this would have been a welcome sight: good food, a warm fire, and mostly importantly, their friend and Lord Jesus.
- Even though Jesus has orchestrated their catch of fish, he already has some fish on the coals, ready for their breakfast.

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- In a way the disciples are really familiar with,
Jesus still involves them, inviting them to bring some of the fish they've caught.
- There is a beautiful simplicity and intimacy of this scene.
Jesus is back with some of his beloved disciples,
in a way that is slightly different, eating and breaking bread with them again.
- Jesus generously provides for the disciples.
But what they need *more* than more fish and bread, is Jesus himself.
- On the night Jesus was arrested he told the disciples he wouldn't leave them as orphans.
That he would come back, and *here he is*.
Jesus also promised them he would give them the Holy Spirit,
to help and guide them, to be with them forever.
- Right now, Jesus is with the disciples on the beach,
and through his Spirit he will continue to be with them.
- Even if they felt lonely on the boat or lonely on the mission ahead,
this breakfast is a reminder that *they are not alone*.
Jesus is the power of their mission,
but he is also their companion in mission. >

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- Jesus is also with us too.
The same Jesus who is alive and ate with the disciples on the beach,
is with us today, by his Spirit.
- He is with us as we gather together, but also as we are sent out onto all our frontlines.
Jesus is with you as you go to work,
as you deal with a tantrum at home,
chat to your neighbour or the colleague who sits near you.
Jesus is with you as try to support your friend through a difficult situation,
and as you think through how you can point them to true and lasting hope.
- Jesus doesn't just leave us alone when it looks like we are entering "secular" spaces,
but he is interested in our whole lives,
and is at work in and through us in every place,
for *his mission* in the world.
- This is one of the most comforting parts of the great commission,
that Jesus is with us to the very end of the age.
Not in a way a boss might be checking on and evaluating your progress,
but in the way a beloved friend brings you a meal after a long and frustrating day,
and has the power to make a difference.

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CONCLUSION

- We might not have breakfast with Jesus to remind us of the mission he has sent us on, but we are given a meal by Jesus (the Lord's Supper), where he is truly present with us, as we are pointed back to all he has done, and ahead to all he will do.
- We also await the time *we will* eat with Jesus in New Creation, at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.
- There we will be surrounded by the vast numbers of people, from every tribe, tongue, and language who have called on the name of the Lord. By God's grace, some of the people there will be from your frontlines.
- While we wait that day Jesus' returns, continuing on with what he has entrusted to us, we are dependent on Jesus for his power, we are reminded of the scope of his mission, and we are encouraged that we are not alone.

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*Gracious Father, please grow our love and concern for those who don't yet know you.
Please help us to see who you've placed in our lives and by the power of your Spirit,
help us be faithful witnesses to the love and presence of Jesus.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

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