

INTRODUCTION

As we begin the last chapter of the Gospel According to John, we see Jesus serving breakfast to seven of the disciples. You've heard of the Last Supper. This is the Last Breakfast. As Christians, we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Today we're going to be sharing the Lord's breakfast.

Americans eat all kinds of breakfasts, but you only have to walk down an aisle at Brookshire's to know that cold breakfast cereal is popular. I've been on a Raisin Bran breakfast run for quite a while. Last year, Americans spent over \$11 billion on cereal, and that number is projected to increase as more Americans have been eating breakfast at home. On average, Americans will eat 3.5 pounds of cold cereal every year. The most popular cereal in Cheerios. Speaking of breakfast, here are some actual cereal brands that failed to capture the market.

- (1) There was Sir Grapefellow, grape-flavored cereal with tiny grape-flavored marshmallows; thankfully it crash-landed.
- (2) How about Slimer and the Real Ghostbusters as opposed to the fake Ghostbusters you think? Notice it was made by Ralston Purina; maybe they should stick to dog food.
- (3) Then there was Kellogg's Bigg Mixx, It was just what it sounds like. The ad said "We swept the floor of the factory and picked up all the bits together to make this cereal." The mascot was mixed up too. He had the head of a rooster, moose antlers, a pig's snout, and the fur of a wolf. Sounds like a creature who should have been sucked up by the real Ghostbusters.
- (4) Mr. Wonderfull's Surprise offered a surprise in every bite. Each puff had a soft chocolate center. The only problem is that between the factory and the shelf, the chocolate melted into the bottom of the box and when consumers opened it, all they got was a bunch of crushed puffs—so I guess they really were surprised.
- (5) Finally, there was Kellogg's Mud and Bugs. It had bug-shaped marshmallows. Some kids reported that some the marshmallows actually crunched, so it wasn't hakuna matata—problem free—for long.

I'll stick with Raisin Bran. We don't have to wonder about the menu for Jesus' breakfast. It was fish and bread—and they are still serving that for breakfast in Israel.

John 21:1-14: After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called "Twin"), Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples were together.

"I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them. "We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. "Friends," Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you?" "No," they answered. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," he told them, "and you'll find

some." So they did, and they were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish. The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea. Since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards away), the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus told them. So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish—153 of them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Bible scholars have pinpointed where this took place on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, the fresh water lake we call the Sea of Galilee.

I've taken groups to this place dozens of times and told this story. There's a beautiful chapel there called Mensa Christi, which is Latin for the table of Christ. Forty days passed between the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul wrote that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to many people, including a group of 500 people at one time. In this message and next week, we're going to focus on this appearance of Jesus at the lakeshore. There are three important life lessons we can learn from it.

1. A LESSON ABOUT FAILURE: Success begins when we admit our failure.

Seven of the disciples had been fishing all night, but had caught nothing. These were professional fishermen, so that was unusual. Night was a good time to fish, because it was cooler, and the fishermen would use torches so the light would attract the fish to the net. Even today when I stay on the lakeshore I can look out and see fishermen using electric lights to attract the fish.

Do you have any idea why they didn't catch fish? Oh, it could have just been a night of bad luck. Or perhaps Jesus had a part in that. It would have been simple for Jesus to have sent a thought into those fish-brains saying, "Stay away from the net." And later when they tossed it on the other side, Jesus could have said, "Swim into the net, now!"

God has always demonstrated His love and care of animals and throughout the Bible we see his control of animals also. All the way from the Dove that Noah sent out, to Balaam's talking donkey, to the fish God prepared to swallow Jonah, God has complete authority over the animals of the earth.

Early in the morning, just as the sun was rising, Jesus stood on the shore and called out to them: "Friends," Jesus called to them, "You don't have any fish, do you?" (John 21:5 CSB)

Jesus looked across the water and he knew they didn't have any fish, not because he could see the empty net, He knew because Jesus knows all things. So why did He ask them? He wanted them to admit their failure. I love their one word answer, "No!" They didn't try to make excuses that the water temperature wasn't right, or that the wind was blowing too much. They just said, "No." They admitted they had failed.

Sometimes God may ask you a question, and He already knows the answer. In the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve had sinned, they did two things. They realized they were naked and experienced shame for the first time, so they took leaves to create clothing to cover themselves. And the second thing they did was hide from God. God came walking in the garden and expressed the very first question in all the Bible. He asked, "Adam, where are you?" Now, God knew exactly where Adam was—He wanted Adam to admit where he was—hiding from God.

This is the point where God wants us to admit our failure, so He can begin to help us. But most of us are so stubborn we never want to admit that we are ever wrong. And there's a truth just below the surface here (no pun intended). Before Jesus can come to your rescue, you've got to be willing to admit that you have failed. When it comes to facing life's challenges, your attitude will either be, "I've got this." Or "Lord, I need you!"

Celebrate Recovery is a Christian 12-step program. We offer this ministry every Monday night at our Student Center. It's for people who struggle with hurts, habits, and hang-ups. I spoke there a few weeks ago, and I was glad to see so many people gathered—safely spaced, all wearing masks—there to receive help from the Lord and show love to others who are struggling.

The First Step of the 12 steps expresses what I'm talking about: We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable. Before Jesus can help you, you must admit that you are powerless to help yourself.

2. A LESSON ABOUT FULLNESS: Success is hearing and obeying God.

The disciples admitted their nets were empty. What they didn't realize was that success was just on the other side of the boat. And for you, success could be just around the corner, if you are willing to hear and obey God.

Try to imagine the scene, as the sun is rising, Jesus yells across the quiet calm water. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," he told them, "and you'll find some." So they did, and they were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish. The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:6-7 CSB)

Even though they were tired and sore from fishing all night, they didn't hesitate. They didn't argue, "Lord, we're the experts. If there aren't fish there, there can't be any right over there." Instead, they simply obeyed the Lord and their nets filled up with a huge catch of fish.

Do you want to know the secret of moving from failure to fullness? The world has a different definition of success. The world teaches us that success is attaining a certain level of wealth, prosperity, and fame. I have listened to and read Charles Stanley for decades. He gives us a good definition of success: "Success is defined by a continuing desire to be the person God called you to be and to achieve those goals that God helps you set."

That morning, success was measured by the capture of 153 fish. For you, success will be measured by the extent to which you hear from God and obey Him. God has given us His word to guide us into a life of abundant living. All we need to do is to hear from God and obey Him.

Early on in our marriage, I thought I was a pretty good handyman. Over the years, I've come to admit I'm not very handy, so now we just call a handyman. When our girls were little, I bought a swing set, and I unloaded the parts in our backyard to assemble it. I thought, "I can do this, no problem." So for the next two hours I proceeded to build the swing set. When I thought I was finished, I stepped back to admire my handiwork. Even though there were a few extra parts I hadn't used, I thought it looked pretty good. Cindy stepped out and I was waiting for her to lavish praise on me. But she said, "It looks like one side is higher than the other and it doesn't look very stable." Then she asked me, "Did you follow the assembly directions?" I said, "Well, no, it's just a simple swing set."

Her last words before she went back inside were: "Use the book!" So I had to admit my failure, and then I decided to follow the instructions and finished it again with no left-over parts. This time it was perfect.

That's a great lesson about life. When you find yourself facing personal problems, you can try a DIY approach. Or you can go straight to the instruction book and find the solution. The instruction book for life is the Bible. Someone pointed out that the five letters spelling BIBLE could stand for Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

If you like mysteries, there's one hidden in this passage. When they obeyed Jesus, they cast their net on the other side of the boat. The net result (no pun intended) was 153 large fish. Some people think that 153 is just a random number, but many scholars see a hidden message in there. The Jewish people practiced Gematria, which was the use of communicating a message through numbers. In other words, numbers carry meanings. In Jewish Gematria, letters of the Jewish alphabet are given numerical values. And when you add up the letters in the statement, "Ani Ha Elohim" it equals 153. That means, "I am the Lord." Perhaps Jesus was using the number of fish to emphasize who He really was. Your failure can turn to fullness when you hear and obey the Lord.

3. A LESSON ABOUT FELLOWSHIP: Jesus invites us to join Him for fellowship.

As the first rays of the sun were poking over the eastern hills, Jesus extended an invitation to the disciples. We find it in John 21:12: "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them. We're not beside that lake today. We're in East Texas. But I believe that the same Lord is inviting us to have fellowship with Him. There are two aspects of our fellowship with Jesus.

(1) Seek the Lord enthusiastically.

This is one of my favorite scenes in all of the Bible. Simon Peter was still stinging from how he had denied the Lord three times. He had failed Jesus. So early that morning, when someone said, "It's the Lord," he just couldn't wait to be reunited with the Him. The boat was too slow. Even though they were 100 yards from shore, Peter jumped in the water and began to swim furiously to reach to Jesus. It reminds me of that scene from the movie *Forrest Gump*. Forrest is steering his shrimp boat toward the dock when he looks up and sees that Lieutenant Dan is sitting in his wheelchair. Forrest waves and yells, "Lieutenant Dan!" Then he spontaneously dives off the moving boat to swim to the dock. He is so happy to see Lieutenant Dan. As he is shaking his hand, his shrimp boat crashes into a nearby dock and Forrest says, "That's my boat." I like that kind of enthusiasm.

Peter had the same kind of enthusiasm that dawn. He couldn't wait to see Jesus, even if he had to swim to get to him. I've always loved the word enthusiasm. It comes from two root words *en theos*. It literally means "in God." The more in God you are, the more enthusiastic you will be.

What are you most enthusiastic about these days? I remember back in 1994, there was a member of our church who invited me to the Tyler Rose Building to meet George W. Bush, who was running for Texas governor against incumbent Governor Ann Richards.

In the years that I had observed this man at our church, I always found him to be quiet and reserved. He was always calm and collected. But on that afternoon when he introduced candidate Bush, his entire personality changed. It was like he was a cheerleader. He yelled something like, "It's my honor to introduce to you the next Governor of the great state of Texas, George W. Bush!" I remember thinking, "Well, NOW I know something that this guy gets enthusiastic about."

What do you get most enthusiastic about? Is it seeking and serving the Lord? Right after the great promise found in Jeremiah 29:11, God says, "You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13 CSB)

Are you seeking the Lord with ALL your heart? Or is your worship and service only half-hearted? Will you decide to seek and serve the Lord enthusiastically?

(2) Spend time with the Lord regularly.

There are two forces at work in the Christian life, and you have to keep these two in perfect balance. There is union and communion. Union occurs when we first come to Christ and He moves into our life. That's union. We are in Christ and Christ is in us. It is a relationship that can never be severed. But there is also communion in which we staying close fellowship with Jesus.

In Philippians 3, Paul lists some of his positive human qualities. He wrote that if he wanted to, there were plenty of things he could brag about. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews who had kept all

the law. He went on and on, and then wrote, but all these things were like sewage, dung, compared to knowing Jesus. He described it this way: "More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of KNOWING Christ Jesus my Lord ... My goal is to KNOW him and the power of his resurrection." (Philippians 3:8,10 CSB)

Paul wrote that he had a passionate burning desire to know the Lord and to know Him more and more. Do you know why God created you? He wants to have a personal relationship with you. You can have a passionate intimate relationship with your Creator. You may think those words fit a chick flick or a love letter. But God wants to know you and love you. The Bible says that Jesus loves you the way a husband loves his wife.

In Revelation 2, Jesus said the only problem with the church in Ephesus was that they had lost their first love. Do you remember what it like when you first experienced romantic love? You got discombobulated and felt butterflies in your tummy. Faith Mills wrote a humorous poem about first love: "I climbed up the door and shut the stairs; I said my shoes and took off my prayers; I turned out the bed and climbed into my light; And all because he kissed me goodnight."

That's a great description of first romantic love. But do you remember when you first came to know the Lord? You were enthusiastic about serving Him and you couldn't wait to spend time with the Lord. Is Jesus still your first love?

When you first come to Christ, there's union. But how is your communion? Is your passion to know Christ growing and growing?

And the only way to improve your intimacy with God is by spending quality time with Him. That means you set aside a time of day to open His Word and pray. I developed the habit of doing this in the morning when I was in college. Jesus is inviting you to share intimacy with Him. Just as He invited those disciples to breakfast years ago, He wants to meet with you regularly.

CONCLUSION

Take a moment now and let your mind go back and share that breakfast with Jesus. We know the place where this happens and we know the time. It was at sunrise. I have been blessed to watch the sunrise over the Golan Heights and Sea of Galilee many times. It's a beautiful sight. And I always feel a special connection to the Lord. It's the same lake, and the same sun, and the same mountains. And He is the same Lord. This is what Jesus saw that morning in John 21.

You may be thinking, "I wish I could be there." Or "I'll never be able to go there." But I have some glorious truth to share with you. You don't have to travel to Israel and sit on the lakeshore to experience communion with Jesus. I have experienced the same intimacy with Him in times of worship here in Texas, just as I did on the lakeshore in Israel.

Jesus said, "Come and have breakfast with me." That's one of God's favorite words: Come. After Noah had built the ark, God said, "Come in and find safety." And the Bible says, "God sealed them in." You can find shelter and safety in God today. Jesus said, "Come unto me all you labor and are heavy laden, and you will find rest for your souls."

In the very last chapter of the Bible we read, "The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let him who hears, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."

Every day of your life, Jesus invites you to enjoy fellowship and communion with Him. Will you join Him?

OUTLINE

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



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