

## **“Drawn into God’s Plan”**

Revelation 5:11-14 and John 21:15-19

John 21 is likely an addendum written by another, but the questions of its origin should not keep us from the richness of the images. In this narrative, similar to one in the Gospel of Luke (5: 1-11 which was a call story), Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Zebedee’s sons, and two other disciples were together fishing in the Sea of Galilee (John 21:2). They have returned to their previous vocation and head back to shore with empty nets after some time fishing.

They had toiled all night and done what they thought was the right thing but experience utter failure. The nets that had been empty when used under the disciples' own power are filled almost to bursting with a word from the risen Christ, who then prepares them a meal (verses. 3-13). Was it their desperation for a catch, a love of task, a desire for success, a sense of the specialness of the man calling them to return to their task, or something else? Whatever it was, they ventured back out and found huge success.

Jesus has taught this lesson before, for "never in the Gospels do the disciples catch a fish without Jesus' help" (Brown 1970:1071)! Jesus then put a question that expects a negative answer. “Friends haven't you any fish? (v. 5). This may be the common way of asking a hunter or fisherman whether they have had success (Brown 1970:1070). In this case the one asking already knows the answer.

Nothing spectacular, Jesus takes the initiative and invites to come and eat, and had an unusual conversation with Peter Just a simple task, yet one that would take all the love he had to give. The conversation between Jesus and Peter leaves no room for doubt about what Jesus had in mind. He asked Peter the same question three times, and each time he told Peter that if he loved him, Peter should show it by tending the flock. The disciples had followed Christ faithfully during the years of his public life. Now that he was no longer visibly with them, Jesus said to them once again, “Follow me,” confirming his constant presence alongside everyone, especially those who love him.

Caught up in listening to Christ and following him willingly, we find ourselves drawn into God’s plan where every person is known and loved. In this beach scene Peter’s life changed when he finally realised who Jesus was. His occupation changed from fisherman to evangelist; his identity changed from impetuous to “rock,” and his relationship to Jesus changed. He was forgiven, and he finally understood the significance of Jesus’ words about his death and resurrection.

The Lord Jesus calls each one of us, even in our weakness, sin, and failings, to love him above all else. Saint Augustine in his Confessions wrote: "Late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient and so new. Late have I loved you! ...You shone

your Self upon me to drive away my blindness. You breathed your fragrance upon me... and in astonishment I drew my breath...now I pant for you! I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me! - and I burn to live within your peace" (Confessions 10:27).

Revelation chapter 5 continues the glimpses into heaven begun in chapter 4. These passages bring messages (Luke 1:25-28): protect God's people (Daniel 6:22); offer encouragement (Genesis 16:7ff); give guidance (Exodus 14:19); bring judgment (2 Samuel 24:16), patrol the earth (Ezekiel 1:9-14); and fight the forces of evil (2 Kings 6:16-18; Revelation 20:1).

Easter is that "the risen Christ ... draws the whole of humanity out of the world of death" into the transformed world of new life. Special at today's worship are the inclusion of two children Tori-Lynn Marie Traverse and Cali Anna-Sandra Tysoski.

The capper comes when every last creature in the world, including those in the deepest oceans, likewise rise up to sing the doxology. You expect God's holy angels to sing a song to Jesus the Christ, but perhaps nothing so vividly shows the scope of our God's victory than the fact that eagles and dolphins, jaguars and hummingbirds, sand hill cranes and elephants will also give the Lamb honor and glory and praise forever and ever. May we be a part of the glorious host singing praises to the Lamb who is worthy. Amen.