

Man Overboard
August 19, 2018

Pastor Justin
John 21:1-14

I hope you had a good summer. My summer has been really busy. But fortunately, I had an opportunity to take my kids fishing earlier in June, and it was really fantastic. We went to Lacombe Park Pond, which was great because it is wheelchair friendly, and the kids could fish from the edge. I think for me, I have a real special place in my heart for fishing because I remember fishing with my dad so much, and him teaching me about fishing and taking me to different lakes and streams. And also my Dad, my Grandpa would come and drive from Calgary and pick me up in Creston and we would drive another 45 minutes up the lake, in his little brown truck listening to his really old country music from his brown leather briefcase that had all the cassettes in. And we would drive to his favorite fishing spots and leave get out and he would teach me how to tie fishing hooks and Bobbers and he would ask me to go catch some Grasshoppers and I would if you would show me how to thread a grasshopper onto the hook and we cast the lines into the water and he would build little piles of rocks and stick the fishing rods in the rocks and put a little bell in the end so that we would be able to hear if we cut a fish and then he would lie down put his hat over his face and have a nap while I played trying to catch minnows or more grasshoppers or playing with rocks and sticks. Sometimes he would come and drive all that way and he wouldn't even end up throwing his own Rod into the water and he would just relax.

And so I suppose for me, fishing with my kids was really meaningful thing because of the memories that I had. All those memories just flooding back as I showed my kids tying the bobber and hook, and casting into the water, and we wait and wait and we don't catch anything. And the kids are kind of bored. While I think they enjoyed their day, I don't think they enjoyed the fishing so much, as just as much as being outside. It was hard for me as a dad to see my kids not just fall in love with this past time that I love. And I remember as a kid being like that with my dad. I remember one time he came into the living room where I was playing video games and asked if I wanted to come help him wash the truck. I was like "What? Why?" and he said "Well, we can watch the truck and I can teach you how to do an oil change". My dad was just trying to teach me how to take care of cars and he wanted to teach me some things and have a moment of bonding with me as we washed the truck. I remember saying "Do I have to?" and him saying "No I guess not" and leaving me to play video games. As an adult now I can look back at that and have some regret that I didn't spend more time with my dad in that regard. Not just because now I don't know anything about cars, but because you don't know what you have until you lose it and my dad is moved, he's in Victoria and we just don't see him, we don't have the money to fly out there. So I rarely see him now. It's a lesson in not taking these things for granted.

As a dad wanting to teach his kids things that you're passionate about or that you're excited about and you want them to pick it up to and then they're like not interested in it – it kinda stings. But that's not unlike our God, where God wants us to be passionate followers of him and he wants us to desire of the things that he desires and follow the things that he loves, He wants to prepare us for what's next, and we're kind of like **"Do we have to? I'm kind of busy. I'd rather do something else."**

The reality is, when we desire what God desires - God will provide for us. God will fill us. And we will live out our purpose. The difference between a father and his children and God and his children is that God knows exactly what we are created for. He knows exactly how we were built and knows what we should be spending our time doing and where our passion should be focused. He wants what's best for us. He wants to prepare us for what's next. He wants us to be passionate followers of him because, being passionate for God **fills us with deep joy** – joy that will withstand trials. He wants our satisfaction to be complete in him and in him alone - and that brings God glory. The chief end of man is to bring God glory. Everything that we do is to honor him and to bring him glory. If we can just take this torch and take the passion of following Christ, the gospel, around to our city and ignite people for Christ - ignite people with passion for serving and loving their God and being satisfied in him - they will ultimately fulfill their purpose in life which is to bring God glory. And they will spread that same deep burning desire to their neighbors. So in everything that we do as a church, it's to help the world bring Glory to God. So when we are passionately following after God with everything that we are, God will provide for us, and our satisfaction will be in him our joy will be complete and we will bring God glory with our whole lives.

So our passage today is not one of my favorites just because it's a fishing story, but because it's a glimpse at seeing someone who is just passionately seeking after Jesus and I want to be more like that. This passage is about preparing the disciples for what's next – and that's not unlike us here at Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church. God is preparing us for what's next and there are some things that we have to realize as we prepare to move ahead. We're looking into John chapter 21 the first 14 verses so go ahead and turn there now. John chapter 21.

So a bit of context on this passage. This takes place after Jesus's resurrection and after he has appeared to the disciples in two different instances, but before he has ascended into heaven. Jesus appeared in the upper room in Jerusalem where Thomas who doubted was able to touch the wounds on Jesus's hands and feet. But now the Passover is done in the disciples not knowing what exactly to do next decide to go back to Galilee. We read in Matthew that all 11 disciples went back, but in this passage there seven of them that are together. And they're in this place where they don't know really what to do next and they're just kind of unsure and so they go back to kind of what they know which is fishing.

John 21:1—14

“After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. ²Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. ³Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.”⁶He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he

put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. ⁸The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards^[a] off.

⁹When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead."

So as they're sitting there and they don't know what to do they don't know what to do next. And if you really think about it, for the disciples, everything that they know has been flipped upside down and then upside down again. They were following this Jesus they left everything they had to follow who they thought was the Messiah and then he was taken and put on a cross and they lost him, then their whole world flipped upside down. Then he rose from the dead and their world flipped around again. But he didn't stay with them, he just appeared to them a couple of times. Everything that they knew was completely messed up. They're trying to sort out what to do next so they return to Galilee, and after the whirlwind of the last three years, and now not having a clue what to do next, they go back to the familiar. Peter says I'm going to go fishing and everybody kind of feels that that's a good idea so they join Peter on the boat. This is what they know. They head out before dark, which makes sense because the best time to fish is after the Sun starts going down, at dusk, and that down when the sun is coming up. During the day, the water warms up, and the fish go lower in the lake to stay cool, and at night the water cools off and the fish come higher in the lake. This is better for fishing with nets. So it's very normal for them to be fishing at night, but what is unusual is that they didn't catch anything. These were professional fisherman, they knew what they were doing, they had the equipment, and yet pulled in nothing all night long. It was probably frustrating to them and probably little embarrassing.

Theologian D. A. Carson has a great line. He says that the disciples still have not learned the profound truth that **apart from Christ they can do nothing, so that night they caught nothing**. I like that. Apart from Christ we really can't do anything of much significance. We need to rely on Christ and we need to trust in him. The disciples were in that place, where they didn't know what to do next, and had to trust in what Jesus had already told them. When Jesus appears on the shore they don't recognize him; maybe because it was still dark, perhaps because he was too far away, but Jesus asks them if they have caught any fish. This is a very normal question for someone to ask a fisherman. If you've ever been fishing and another fisherman comes by with their rod, it's very normal to have someone ask you if you have had any luck. And the disciples have just brought in the net again with nothing in the net, so they say no, and then Jesus tells them to throw their Nets on the other side of the boat. We don't know why they listen to a stranger telling them to cast their nets to the other side of the boat (remember they don't realize this is Jesus) so maybe it was just out of desperation and frustration they listened to this guy. They throw their net on the other side. Has right away their net is full of fish. There is a huge school of fish, or a school of huge fish, or a huge school of huge fish. With a school of fish that large, they would

notice immediately notice that it was in the net. As they're reacting and trying to bring in this huge load of fish, which is almost too much for them to handle, John the disciple whom Jesus loved, recognizes that it's the Lord – that it's Jesus. This is probably because a similar type of thing happened earlier with the disciples (in Luke chapter 5) but John leans over and tells Peter "it is the Lord". And then there's Peter... I love this image of Peter. Imagine he's on the boat, he's stripped right down so he puts on his Garment, his clothes. And then he hurls himself into the sea. The way Peter follows Jesus is just always so passionate, it's almost like he just doesn't think things through beyond his love for Jesus. I just love this image of him. Can you imagine what Peter was thinking? As soon as he puts on his clothes and just like leaps into the water. **I don't know what's funnier in my head** but I wonder if he thought that he was going to walk on the water, and he put on his clothes thinking that he wasn't going to get wet. I have this image in my head of Peter just getting dressed and stepping on the water like as if you know full of confidence as if he was going to walk on the water and get to Jesus. I don't know if that's funnier or this image of Peter scrambling to put his clothes on and just flails himself off the side of the boat, limbs all over as he leaps into the water to swim as quickly as he can to get to Jesus. But regardless of how Peter got in the water, we know that all he was really thinking was "I got to get to Jesus. I got to get to Jesus. I got to get to Jesus." Friends I know being responsible is good but I think we need more of that just excited passion to be near Jesus. This is kind of like one of those Mary and Martha moments, where Mary was sitting at Jesus feet and Martha was busy doing all the work and Jesus said Mary is doing what is better. Because, Peter realized that he may only have a moment to be with Jesus face to face. You don't realize what you have until it's gone. Sometimes I think we worry so much about all the responsibilities and our time with Jesus is lacking and we don't spend the time with God; we don't have the same single-minded Focus "I've got to be to Jesus. I've got to be with Jesus. I've got to be with Jesus". In those times where you are not sure **what's next**, you have to remember that apart from Christ you can do nothing. Therefore we have to pursue Jesus with everything that we have. Matthew 6:33 says "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you".

Now when Peter gets to the shore, Jesus has a fire going and some fish and some bread ready to meet their physical needs, to feed them breakfast. We have this beautiful image of the disciples having their needs met by Jesus, and Jesus serving, providing, and preparing them for what's ahead. As the disciples get closer to shore trying to haul in all the fish, Jesus tells Peter to go help them bring in the fish. And then Jesus uses some of what they've caught for breakfast. I find this interesting, because Jesus could most certainly have provided all the food, yet he chooses to use their efforts. I think this is much like doing ministry. God provides us with our skills, talents, and resources, and then chooses to use us, as we rely and depend on him. It would have been foolish for the disciples to say oh look at the fish we caught and worked hard to bring to shore. Yet we get caught up all the time, putting out own effort in and neglecting where everything comes from. Jesus through this miracle even provides for them financially because they able to sell those fish and take care of themselves. So when we find ourselves in a place where God is moving us into something new, and our uncertainty and doubt creep in and threaten to make us feel like we don't have all that we need, or that what we are doing is not enough, we have to passionately pursue Jesus. We must understand our own inadequacy and come by faith to his sufficiency, and God will provide with abundant supply what we need.

At SVBC, we are looking ahead to what is happening next. We are looking forward to what God wants to do through our little community of Believers and how he wants to use us in St. Albert. We know that God wants us to bring him glory. We know that he wants us to love him passionately and pursue him with everything that we are. And we know that he wants us to love our neighbors deeply, and to do that well we have to bring them the gospel we have to share fearlessly the love of Christ with our community. And that can seem intimidating when you think just our little church he's trying to bring spring salvation, the gospel, to the Saint Albert. He provides the power, but he wants to use you to carry the torch. But it's daunting. It's like taking a torch to a glacier. But look at what the disciples were doing here. They're commanded after this has to go out to all the world spreading the gospel, teaching people to obey Christ, and baptize them. This little group of 11 disciples must have felt even more overwhelmed then we would ever feel. At least we can look back and see God's faithfulness through the spread of the gospel over the years.

Peter was full of Joy because he was focused on Jesus. He was bring God glory with his passion and love for Christ. I don't know about you, but I want to be more and more passionate for Christ. I want God to use me to bring his love and grace to the world. I don't want to get caught up in the minutia, but instead use every talent, resource, and opportunity that I have to share this great love with anyone I can. Brothers and sisters, God is at work here. We can be a part of it. Imagine if we all spent time with Jesus, relied on his provision, and then were his hands and feet, carrying the message of salvation to St. Albert. Lives will be transformed. And God will be glorified.

Let's Pray.