

# The Gospel of John

## Our Relationship with Christ

### John 20:30-21:14

#### INTRODUCTION:

We have finally come to the last chapter of the Gospel of John. We will be spending only a brief time in this chapter because it is a rather simple and straightforward narrative.

I am going to mention verses 30-31 only briefly because we have referred to them many times in the past.

#### **John 20:30-31 (NASB)**

<sup>30</sup> So then, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name.

John wrote about the miracles of Jesus so that we may believe that He was the prophesied Messiah. We are going to see one more miracle in our passage this morning. It is only by believing and obeying His commands that we can be saved.

#### **John 14:6 (NASB)**

...“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

This morning we are going to look at verses 1 to 14 of chapter 20. This answers the question: **What will be the Lord’s relationship to the disciples after the resurrection?** Prior to the resurrection, He was their everything and He provided all that they needed on every level. In the upper room the night before His death, He had promised them that He would continue to do that. He had promised them that whatever they asked He would provide, that all of heaven’s resources would be made available to them.

They were doubting whether that was a reality. They were afraid that when He left they would not know where He was or how to get to where He was going. They were very insecure about the relationship they would have with Him in the future. That was compounded by the fact that they could not grasp that the Messiah was actually going to die. But now He **has** died and risen from the dead. So what was to come?

The question still lingers: What can they expect from Him in the future? It cannot be like it was when He was there every day providing everything they ever needed. Well the answer to that question comes in these 14 verses.

We are going to look at the narrative in this chapter. But we will also look behind the scenes to capture the spiritual lesson that is also being taught. You do not have to dig

very deep to see the difference between what happens when you disobey the Lord and what happens when you obey Him. That is illustrated here.

## Stand and Read Scripture

### **John 21:1-14 (NASB)**

21 After these things Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed *Himself* in this way: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas who was called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter *said* to them, "I am going fishing." They *said* to him, "We are also coming with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> So Jesus *said* to them, "Children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you?" They answered Him, "No." <sup>6</sup> And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find *the fish*." So they cast *it*, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great quantity of fish. <sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved *said* to Peter, "It is the Lord!" So 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. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net *full* of fish.

<sup>9</sup> So when they got out on the land, they *saw* a charcoal fire *already* made and fish placed on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus *said* to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went up and hauled the net to land, full of large fish, 153; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

<sup>12</sup> Jesus *said* to them, "Come *and* have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to inquire of Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus *came* and *took* the bread and *gave it* to them, and the fish likewise. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

## Prayer

### **BODY:**

#### **I. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE.**

##### **John 21:1 (NASB)**

21 After these things Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed *Himself* in this way:

We do not know exactly when this event took place. It was sometime between the eighth day when Jesus appeared to the apostles the second time in the locked room and the fortieth day when He ascended into heaven. We know from verse 14 that it was His third appearance to the apostles.

##### **Acts 1:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period* of forty days and speaking of things regarding the kingdom of God.

They may have been waiting awhile for Him on the mountain before He finally He makes His appearance. We know then, that He did not teach the things concerning the kingdom throughout the entire forty day period to them.

This was a supernatural sudden appearance out of nowhere. It is the same way by which He appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to those on the road to Emmaus, and to the apostles in the upper room with the door shut and locked. He is now in His glorified resurrection form. It is a body for eternity, not a body for time.

It was a body that was not recognizable to them. Mary Magdalene thought that He was possibly the gardener. The disciples on the road to Emmaus had no idea who He was even after a long drawn out conversation with Him in the daylight, and then in the house and around the table.

Mary recognized Him by the way He spoke to her. The two men on the road to Emmaus finally recognized Him by the way He broke the bread in front of them. The disciples in the upper room first thought they were seeing a ghost but finally realized it was Jesus when he showed them His hands and His side.

Matthew tells us that the angels had appeared to the women at the tomb and told them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee.

### **Matthew 28:5-10 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> And the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. <sup>7</sup> And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

<sup>8</sup> And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to report to His disciples. <sup>9</sup> And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Rejoice!" And they came up and took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus \*said to them, "Do not be afraid; go, bring word to My brothers to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

They not only were told to go to Galilee, they were told to go to Galilee to a specific mountain.

### **Matthew 28:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated to them.

The problem is when this narrative opens they are not at the mountain, they are at the lake. So immediately they were confronted with their disobedience. They are not where He told them to be. They should not have been fishing in the sea.

All eleven of the disciples had made the trip. But Jesus appeared to just seven of the disciples. We do not know where the other four are. Maybe they were the non-fishermen of the group so they remained at the mountain in case Jesus appeared there while the seven were gone.

### **John 21:2-3 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas who was called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

We know how impulsive Peter was. He was not a man of patience. He was a man of action. He was loaded with self-doubt because of all his failures during the trial of Jesus. He was the one who kept denying that he was a follower of Jesus. It was to him that Jesus said, “**Get behind Me, Satan.**”

### **John 21:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They \*said to him, “We are also coming with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

It appears that they had been on the mountain for awhile. We do not know how long. So Peter tells the rest of them “**I am going fishing.**” In the Greek language, it was as if this was a final statement: “I am tired of waiting. I am going back to my old career. I am going fishing.” So he disobeys, and since he was the leader, they all line up behind him like rubber ducks: “**We are also coming with you.**”

So they leave the mountain and got into “**the**” boat. Probably Peter's own boat. I think he went back to his own boat and his own nets saying something like this: “I do not know about this commission to fish for men. I do not know about this commission to go preach the gospel. But one thing I can do, **I can catch fish.**” And they all said, “We can too, we are going with you.” And that night they caught nothing. So much for self-confidence.

So here is the picture. If you step away from the calling that God has placed on your life and go in the opposite direction; if you go the path of self-will and self-effort; you may think you can accomplish a lot, but you will most likely end up in failure. Disobedience leads to failure. The Lord does not reward disobedience.

### **John 21:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Peter has been trying to prove that he could catch fish all night, but their nets were completely empty. Then Jesus appears on the beach. Although the disciples had seen His glorified body, they did not know that it was Jesus.

### **John 21:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> So Jesus \*said to them, “Children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you?” They answered Him, “No.”

So Jesus rubs it in and says “**You do not have any fish to eat, do you?**” They answered Him, “No.”

Before the Lord provides for our needs, He will often make us conscious of our failures and cause us to acknowledge them. He wants to hear them say, “No, we have failed.” This is where our impatience, our self-doubt, and our disobedience has led us. It has led us to failure, and we acknowledge it. It is a pretty simple question, “You don’t have any fish?”

Each of us have been given opportunities to serve Him. But instead of obediently doing what the Lord has laid before you to do, you turn away from it and you go back to other things that have no eternal value. The Lord is not going to bless that. There is going to be a measure of failure on your part and you are going to lose that intimacy with Christ.

## II. THE FRINGE BENEFIT OF OBEDIENCE.

### **John 21:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find the fish.”

Normally your first reaction is going to be, “That is a really ridiculous command.” But I suspect that the disciples thought to themselves “We have heard this command once before.” And I imagine that there was not much hesitation to do exactly that!

The fish would not know the difference between the right and left side. But I am sure that the command was as compelling to the fish as it was to the disciples: “**Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find the fish.**” Only Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, would be able to make such a seemingly ridiculous suggestion while standing on the shore a hundred yards away and have it come true.

So they cast *it*, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great quantity of fish.

The command would seem irrational to them but this same event had happened three years earlier and they are compelled to obey the Lord. Except for Jesus, the normal outcome would have been **no fish**, but there is immediate success. And, again, I remind you that this is just a simple illustration of the fact that when you obey the Lord, the Lord empowers the success.

They got so many fish that it loaded their nets, so they knew who He was immediately.

### **John 21:7 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved \*said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” So 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.

John immediately declares, “It is the Lord!”

And good old impulsive Peter puts his outer garment on and jumped into the sea.” He leaves the other guys there in the boat with this load of fish and lets them figure out how to get them to shore.

### **John 21:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net *full* of fish.

So they are trying to get the boat into the shore, and they are dragging this net full of fish. Peter is long gone. He could care less about their failure to catch fish while they were disobedient. He wanted to be with the Lord, ask for forgiveness, and assure Him that he loved Him.

### **John 21:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> So when they got out on the land, they \*saw a charcoal fire *already* made and fish placed on it, and bread.

Jesus had made breakfast. You know how Jesus makes breakfast? Clap hands. “Breakfast!”

That was a good breakfast, like the loaves and the fish in John 6.

### **John 21:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> Jesus \*said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.”

I know you are hungry and you are going to need more than is here. So you bring some of your fish and we will also make them a part of this breakfast.

And, again, this is how the Lord works, isn't it? There are things that He does, there are things that we do.

### **Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for *His* good pleasure.

It is through our obedience that God will work through us. Our salvation depends upon this desire to willingly have an active obedience. Faith without works leaves us **disobedient** and spiritually dead.

### **John 21:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went up and hauled the net to land, full of large fish, 153; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Peter must have been very strong. A large fish in the Sea of Galilee can weigh up to two pounds each. That would be 300 pounds of fish plus the weight of the net and floats. And Peter pulled them all to shore.

### **John 21:12-14 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> Jesus \*said to them, “Come *and* have breakfast.” None of the disciples ventured to inquire of Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus \*came and \*took the bread and \*gave it to them, and the fish likewise. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

You want to know what His relationship is going to be to His disciples in the future? He was their waiter. They are sitting down eating and He is waiting on them.

## **CONCLUSION:**

And what did they learn this time? Obey! When you obey, God provides, and you will have intimate fellowship with Him. Do you see that? That is the example here. When they obeyed, they were successful, and they communed with Christ in a personal way.

You can live your life either way: **through disobedience**, failure, and loss of fellowship or **through obedience**, success, and the richness of fellowship. Our Lord will meet all your real needs if you are faithful to obey His Word, and you will enjoy the fellowship with Him.

**He is Lord!**