

# The Lesson of the Redemptive Breakfast

## The Larger Story—part 8

John 21

May 30, 2021

### DAY 1: Seeing grace in action and attitude (a visual demonstration of grace)

1. Seven of the remaining eleven disciples go fishing. This is Jesus' third post-resurrection appearance to them.

*John 21:1 Afterward Jesus **appeared** again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> "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.*

*<sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"*

*"No," they answered.*

*<sup>6</sup> 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.*

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*John 21:7 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. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.*

2. How would you describe the attitude of Jesus toward the disciples in this passage?

3. How would you describe the attitude of the disciples toward Jesus?

4. What's striking about this episode to me is that the disciples had utterly, colossally failed their Lord, and yet:

a. The disciples can't wait to be in His presence, on shore, and

b. You would never know any of them had failed Him by His demeanor and the blessing of so many fish.

5. This says something really important about living by grace, especially after failure. How does this speak to you about your response to Jesus after failure?

## DAY 2: “Come and have breakfast.”

*John 21:9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.*

1. There are several things “missing” from this episode with Jesus.

a. The imagined “eye roll.”

Are you familiar with the imagined “eye roll of Jesus?” It’s what goes on in our imagination when we sin again, and again, and again. We imagine that Jesus rolls His eyes at us and slowly shakes His head sadly. We utter what feels like our perfunctory confession of sin, and then mope around for days until our shame has somewhat dissipated. Do you relate to this?

b. The imagined “lecture”

Again, we imagine He has started to lecture us. “Again? Don’t you know better? How many times have we been over this? How many times do you think I will forgive you?” Is this the way Jesus actually relates to us? If not, why do you think we “go there?”

2. How does Jesus actually relate to them?

a. He helped them catch a boatload of fish after fishing all night and coming up with nothing.

b. He prepared breakfast for them.

3. We toss around the word “grace” a lot in our evangelical churches, as we should. We have no problem associating grace with our salvation. But when it comes to our failures as a disciple, somehow grace becomes more of a theological concept that suddenly seems illusive.

4. Jesus didn’t give the disciples who failed so miserably an eye roll, a lecture, or some version of “Let’ go back and look at your failure and see where the train ran off the rails so *that* never happens again!”

5. Instead, an invitation to breakfast, where they will sense his enjoyment of their company, and they will enjoy His company.

6. What strikes you about Jesus’ portrayal of grace to these men?

### **DAY 3: The redemptive conversation about pride**

*John 21:15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”*

<sup>16</sup> *Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

<sup>17</sup> *The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.*

1. Peter’s failure was a public sin, both against Jesus and against the other disciples. Peter’s confession is as wide as the scope of his sin—in front of the disciples. And, Peter’s reinstatement to ministry was also done publicly, in front of the other disciples.

2. This must have been a tremendously embarrassing question to Peter, especially in front of all the others. Yet, that is essentially the boast Peter made. “Even if all these turn away, I will not.”

3. His boast was something that must be confronted, and in front of the men with whom he uttered it. Pride is bad enough, for it hardens the soul to our real need of God. Jesus confronts Peter with both his pride and his comparison and contempt toward the other disciples.

4. Pride is not just a solo sin. It inevitably affects those around you. The drive to be higher than someone else is a killer to a movement. James and John had sought for high positions in the age to come. This kind of drive splits teams, and sabotages trust of one another. People are always looking over their shoulder to avoid being taken down a peg so that you may jump up a peg.

*2 Corinthians 10:12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

5. Jot down three observations about comparison from this 2 Cor. 10:12.

*James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

6. What effects occur when someone is envious of others and their position?

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

#### DAY 4: The redemptive conversation about love and ministry

1. In this interchange between Jesus and Peter the men use two different words for “love.” The first is “agape” which means sacrificial love, a God-kind of selfless love. The second word is “phileo” which means brotherly love. In the verses below **agape** will be highlighted in green while **phileo** will be highlighted in yellow.

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2. Jesus’ threefold questions likely refer to Peter’s threefold denial of Jesus. This causes Peter to examine the real state of his heart.

3. Peter had claimed to have unwavering love and devotion for Jesus, even to the point of death. Though the *sentiment* for that kind of love was alive in Peter the *reality* of the that kind of love was clearly not there.

4. And now Peter sees this huge disconnect and responds more realistically with the word “phileo.” Peter apparently and actually doesn’t love Jesus as much as he thought he did. It is a humbling statement of recognition. The deeper reality of Peter’s heart is exposed to him at this moment. He sees himself as more of the mess that he actually is.

5. And then comes what must have been most startling to Peter: the call to minister! We like to assume that the call to ministry is due because we have achieved something. We went to seminary, we were successful in a ministry assignment, a mission trip, teaching the bible, or a volunteer leadership role. Others noticed and some type of affirmation occurred.

6. Jesus turns this upside down. The humble and broken acknowledgment of failure prepares the shepherd for true ministry with people. People don’t need “the expert,” “the bible answer man,” the one who gives off an aura of having it all together spiritually. They may respect some of that but they won’t be impacted by that because they can’t relate to that. People are given hope that they can grow when they see and sense someone else who struggles with the same sins they do but continues on with Jesus anyway.

7. What is more important to Jesus? (1) You, having it all together, spiritually? Or, (2) An ever-growing humble acknowledgement of our need for mercy and grace?

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## DAY 5: Following Jesus

*John 21:18 "Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." <sup>19</sup> Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

1. The call to discipleship began with "Follow Me" (Matt. 4:19).
2. And now, just before Jesus is to depart to heaven, the continuation in discipleship is the same, "Follow Me." It is extraordinary that the call to discipleship is to follow Jesus by taking up one's cross and dying to self.

*Luke 9:23 Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and **follow me**.*

3. "Taking up our cross daily" means to say "no" to sin, and to say "yes" to God. The cross is an instrument of death. When we take up our cross we are putting self on the cross in the moment of temptation.

4. For Peter, the call to take up your cross will also be a literal, physical experience. Martyrdom. In the centuries since, many followers of Christ have been martyrs, following Jesus in death.

*John 21:20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") <sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, "**Lord, what about him?**"*

5. Peter had just been corrected on the sin of comparison, but "just like that," it pops up again!

*John 21:22 Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."*

6. What strikes you about Jesus' answer to Peter's comparison complaint?
7. John 21 gives us several real-life pictures of what grace looks like and feels like. Let's review.
  - a. No eye rolls
  - b. No lectures
  - c. Cast your net on the other side.
  - d. "Come have breakfast."
  - e. The reinstatement to ministry.
8. What pictures strike you most about grace?