

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

*Lesson 20 – Study Questions*

*John 21:1-25*

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**DAY ONE**

1. What thoughts from the Spiritual Reflection or commentary from Lesson 19, Chapter 20 remained with you this week?

**Read John 21:1-3**

2a. At the end of last week's lesson Jesus, had been raised from the dead and appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem. As today's lesson begins, Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee (verse 1). Name one or two interesting things that happened on or about the Sea of Galilee during Jesus' ministry.

**NOTE: The Romans renamed the Sea of Galilee for the Emperor Tiberius who ruled from 13 to 37 AD. His mother Livia Drusilla, who had divorced his father to marry Caesar Augustus, schemed to make Tiberius emperor. Tiberius was forced to divorce his pregnant wife Vipsania, to marry Augustus' daughter, Julia, whom he loathed. Later Tiberius put his mother under house arrest and did not attend her funeral.**

b. Record Matthew 28:10, which explains why the disciples returned to Galilee from Jerusalem.

3a. Seven of Jesus' disciples were gathered together by the sea including two who were unnamed. List the disciples who were named (verse 3).

b. Which disciples were unnamed and/or not present?

4a. Perhaps Simon Peter was tired of waiting for Jesus; in any case, he told the other disciples, "I am going fishing." How did they respond (verse 3)?

5. In the Sea of Tiberius, fish are known even to this day to come up to the surface at night. How was the fishing that particular night (verse 3)?

6. CONNECTION: Waiting was difficult, especially for the disciples, who did not know what to expect. Knowing of Jesus' death on the cross, but having encountered the risen Jesus, Peter must have been overwhelmed and afraid, perhaps even hopeful. Waiting for Jesus to arrive in Galilee, Peter finally decided to do something and so returned to that with which he was most familiar... fishing. What are you waiting for? Name some ways that you can transform your "waiting times" this week into grace-filled opportunities.

Read and record James 5:7. Let that thought lead you into prayer during your "waiting times" this week.

## **DAY TWO**

**Read John 21:4-8**

7. After the disciples had fished through the night, dawn came. According to verse 4, who stood on the beach?

8. The disciples did not realize that it was Jesus who stood on the shore. He asked them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" (verse 5). Why do you think He called them children?

9a. When the disciples told Jesus that they had not caught any fish, what did Jesus suggest according to the beginning of verse 6?

b. The disciples cast the net as Jesus had suggested. What happened next (end of verse 6)?

10a. We learned earlier that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" has been traditionally identified as John the evangelist. In verse 7, he said to Peter, "It is the Lord." What two things did Peter do in response?

b. This episode reminds us of another New Testament passage when Jesus also told the disciples where to cast their nets. Read Luke 5:4-11 and note who Jesus singled out as the leader of the disciples, and what greater plans He had in store for this person.

11. What additional information do we learn from verse 8?

12. CONNECTION: We tend to protect our sensitive and needy hearts with reserve and distance, but love of God or each other sometimes inspires us to break down these walls. Although we have been taught to act with decorum, some circumstances call for reckless enthusiasm. When Peter learned that it was the Lord on the beach, he could not wait another minute to be with Him. Give an example to your small group of a time when you have thrown decorum aside and “jumped into the sea” to reach another person.

Socrates said, “People build walls around their hearts not to keep people out but to see who cares enough to break them down.” Begin your prayer asking the Lord for the love to break down the walls between people.

### **DAY THREE**

**Read John 21:9-14**

13. As today’s lesson begins the disciples have climbed out of the boat onto the shore. According to verse 9, what did they see?

14a. Jesus told the disciples to bring some of the fish they had just caught (verse 10). Who dragged ashore the heavy net filled with 153 fish?

b. What additional information is given in this verse and what could this represent?

**NOTE: Scholars debate the meaning of the number 153. Some think it relates to a Greek mathematical formula. To solve for Pi, (the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter or 3.14), the Greeks used a diagram of 2 intersecting circles. The region where the circles intersect forms a fish shape, the symbol for Christianity. The ratio of the height of this fish symbol to its length is 153:265, with the number 153 set out most prominently in ancient formulas.**

15. Jesus invited the disciples to come have breakfast. None of the disciples dared to ask Him “who are you” because they realized it was the Lord. In many of Jesus’ appearances after the resurrection, He was not immediately recognized. What could have been different about Him?

16a. What did Jesus do with the bread and the fish in verse 13?

b. Read John 6:11. What parallels do you see in the two stories?

17. This was the third time that Jesus was revealed to His disciples after being raised from the dead (verse 14). Name the instances in which the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples according to this Gospel.

18. CONNECTION: “Come and have breakfast! ...” - a welcome invitation to those who have spent a night fishing. Imagine Jesus cooking breakfast on the shore. An abundance of fish, an abundance of love! Everyday He invites us to His banquet here on earth as well as the one He will furnish in heaven. He feeds us with His body and blood. Come celebrate life with Him! How does this image inspire you to share your life with Him and with those around you? Think of instances when you have shared a special meal with the Lord and friends or family. Describe the abundances the Lord provided.

Read Isaiah 25:6 and thank God for the feast you have enjoyed and hope to enjoy in heaven. End your meditation with the refrain from the hymn “Table of Plenty.”

#### **DAY FOUR**

**Read John 21:15-19**

19a. After the disciples finished breakfast around the charcoal fire, Jesus turned to Peter and asked him a question. What was it (verse 15)?

b. When Peter responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you,” what command did Jesus give him in return?

20a. A second time Jesus asked Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter then responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Record Jesus’ command from verse 16.

b. A third time Jesus repeats His question to Peter, “Do you love me?” According to verse 17, this time Peter was more passionate in his response. How did he respond to Jesus’ question and why do you imagine Peter was troubled by Jesus’ repeated questioning?

21a. Again Jesus gave Peter a command. What was it?

b. What are some reasons that Jesus might have asked Peter to take care of His sheep, and who were the sheep and lambs to which he referred?

22. Undaunted by Peter’s obvious reluctance, Jesus persisted in asking him three times to declare his love and fidelity to Him in the presence of the other disciples. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the same question three times? Wasn’t once enough? (Hint: Scan Matthew 26: 33-35).

23a. How did Jesus point out Peter’s independence as a young person (first part of verse 18)? What did Jesus say would happen to Peter when he grew old in the second part of verse 18?

b. What would this mean for Peter at the end of his life (verse 19)?

**NOTE: Tradition tells us that Peter did indeed die for Jesus and His Church. In Rome during the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero, around 65 AD, St. Peter was crucified upside down for proclaiming his faith in the Lord. It is told that he requested to be turned head down because he felt unworthy to die in the exact same way as His Lord. Verse 19 states that Peter’s death would glorify God.**

24a. What did Jesus say to Peter according to verse 19?

b. Do you find more than one meaning in the command “Follow me”? If so, share your thoughts.

25. CONNECTION: Jesus commissioned Peter to shepherd His Church, centering on the deep and mutual love that He and Peter shared. Jesus wanted Peter to put his disloyalty behind him and move forward. Hearing the love and forgiveness in the voice of his Master and then declaring his own love for Jesus three times, a healing balm of grace penetrated Peter's soul. Like Peter, Jesus wants us to repent, turn to Him and seek unity with Him because we love Him, not because we fear Him. Has your study of John's Gospel deepened your love for Jesus and made you aware of something in your life that needed to change? Share some details with your group.

Read and record 1 John 4:10. Begin your prayer basking in the transforming, healing and eternal love that is offered to you from the Father, through the Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **DAY FIVE**

**Read John 21:20-23**

26. In yesterday's lesson Jesus commissioned Peter to shepherd His Church, preparing him for the ultimate cost of his discipleship and asking Peter to follow Him. According to verse 20, who else was following Jesus and what three things do we read about him?

27a. In verse 21, what did Peter ask Jesus about "the disciple whom Jesus loved?"

b. Why do you think Peter asked that question and why do you think John recorded it?

28a. At the beginning of verse 22, Jesus responded to Peter's question with two additional questions. Record His questions.

b. Getting to the "bottom line" of their discussion, Jesus repeated His command to Peter to follow Him (end of verse 22). Describe the tone of voice you think Jesus may have used in this command and whether it differs from the command in verse 19.

29a. According to verse 23, what rumor spread throughout the community about “that disciple”?

b. Why was that rumor inaccurate and what had Jesus actually said?

30. John was the only one of Jesus’ apostles who was not martyred but died of natural causes after a long life. What did we gain as a benefit of John being spared?

31. CONNECTION: The cost of discipleship is high for the apostles of Jesus. According to tradition, all of the remaining apostles except John died a martyr’s death for their Lord. In A.D. 197, Tertullian challenged the “enemies of God” stating: “Crucify us, torture us, condemn us, destroy us! The more we are hewn down by you, the more numerous do we become. The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians!” And so it has been down through the ages. Each century has seen its holy martyrs sacrificing their lives for the faith, giving witness to the Gospel, up to and including our own 21<sup>st</sup> century. Name some martyrs from recent years whose witness is an encouragement to you.

Read Luke 9:23-25 and record one of the verses. Let that thought lead you into prayer.

#### **DAY SIX**

**Read John 21:24-25**

32. According to the NABRE the “disciple who testifies to these things” (verse 24) did not necessarily write the Gospel with his own hand, but perhaps had others write it down for him. Who do you think is saying that his testimony is true?

33. According to the first part of verse 25, is John’s Gospel a complete description of all of Jesus’ works? Why or why not?

34. After studying this Gospel, briefly describe how it amplifies or fits with your reading of the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke?

35. We have learned through our study of the Gospel according to John that in addition to the truths written in sacred scripture, many other things were told to the apostles. The Church and the Spirit continually deepen our understanding and its implications of what was revealed. For those with open hearts, the revelation of God to His children is never ending. The depth and breadth of “the Word of God” is infinite. Reread, record and memorize John 1:1-3.

36. CONNECTION: We have come to the end of the Gospel According to John but we are far from the end of God’s Love Story for His people. Go back over some of the passages of John’s Gospel. What were your favorite parts of this study? How did they relate to your life? How has this study changed your witness? Share some details with your small group.

Although our own names are not written in the Sacred Scriptures, they are indelibly written in the Heart of God. Reread John 17:20-21. As you read these verses realize that, even though they were written nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus had you in mind when He inspired these words. Write your final prayer for this study of the Gospel According to John.

Read Lesson 20 John 21:1-25 in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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