A Fishing Story

Read: John 21:3-12

**Introduction:** Doesn’t this story cause you to wonder a little bit? It seems like these seasoned fishermen would know how to fish. It seems ridiculous that all the fish would hang out on one side of the ship and, not one, would stray to the other side at all. It would seem to me that these men would be wise enough to realize that this guy, on the shore, knew little to nothing about fishing and they would be wise to ignore his unsolicited advice.

**I. Unseen fish:** It is amazing that there were enough fish to overwhelm the fishermen, on one side of the boat, and yet they could fish all night and catch nothing. Perhaps there were conversations about why they couldn’t find any fish. Other boats seemed to be catching fish so why were they unsuccessful? I have often wondered why we are so small as a church. Why are others growing while we are not? Is it possible that we are casting our net in the wrong place? Is there something that we are missing?

**II. Unsolicited advice:** First there was a question: “Children, have ye any meat?” When they respond with a “NO” He then offers them some unsolicited advice: “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.” To these seasoned fishermen this had to sound ignorant. Anyone who has experience fishing knows that fish don’t all hang out only on the right side of the ship. In reality it is apparent that much of what we do as believers is not working. If Jesus was to tell us to do something different, even if it seems crazy, what is any crazier than continuing to do what is not working?

Has anyone ever had a crazy idea that made them a millionaire? How about bottling water and selling it for more than the price of a soda?

**III. Unrecognized Lord:** This event occurs at the end of Jesus ministry. These disciples/fishermen had spent nearly every day for the past three years with Jesus and yet they were so focused on their little fishing problem that they failed to recognize who was speaking to them. It is not so unusual for you and I to, likewise, focus on our trials and situations and fail to see Christ who is watching over us. After they have trouble pulling in the net; John suddenly realizes who is on the shore: “It is the Lord.” he tells Peter.

**IV. Unclothed disciple:** Doesn’t it seem odd that in the middle of this story John includes the fact that Peter is naked? Why is that signifi-cant? It is significant because since the first couple sinned in the Garden of Eden the lack of clothing is associated with disobedience. Peter had led the disciples to return to their old occupation, that they had, before they were called by Christ. When a Christian backslides it is usually apparent in the way that they dress and the places that they go. When a preacher like me points out immodesty then people call me a clothesline preacher but you need to know that backsliding is always followed by undressing to look like the world. Backsliding is always accompanied by attendance at functions that harm the testimony that you once had. Notice that the first thing that Peter did when he knew that Jesus was present is that he put on some clothes. After the naked lunatic had an encounter with Jesus we find him: “clothed and in his right mind.” It stands to reason, then, that a Christ encounter, on our part, ought to have similar results.

**V. Unbroken but full nets:** When the disciples returned to the place where Jesus was; they came with nets so full that they couldn’t get them into their boat. They literally had to drag their nets behind the boat to get their catch to land. There is a spiritual truth here that we dare not miss: *When God brings the fish you will have plenty and His church will not be damaged*. D.L. Moody was returning to his hotel one night when he encountered a drunk who told him: “I am one of your converts.” As he arrived at his room the brother who was escorting him asked him about the encounter. Moody replied: “Of course he was one of my converts. If he had been one of The Lords converts he would have been sober.”

**Conclude:** The final message of this encounter is to come and dine. There is really no other reason to fish if not for the eating. God’s plan is that we enjoy what He brings into our nets.