

Connecting Through Christ (CTC)
Small group ministry discussion questions

May 4-5, 2019

Sermon: John 21:1-14

1. God calls us to serve Him and others through all of our “vocations” or “callings” in life (i.e. your role in your family, in church, in society, etc.) What are some things that can make service to God and to others feel:

- Frustrating
- Exhausting

2. What are some things that might have made the disciples feel frustrated or exhausted in their vocations?

3. Why do you think that John names the exact number of fish that they caught?

We don't know for sure. However, the exact number seems to emphasize the historical accuracy of this account. Also, fishermen often delight in recalling exactly how many fish they caught (especially on a good day of fishing).

4. What does Jesus tell the disciples to do in order to catch some fish? What other time did Jesus give these men fishing tips? Read Luke 5:1-11.

5. What is ironic about Jesus fixing fish over a fire?

The last time Jesus and Peter were involved with an outdoor fire, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. (See John 18:18.) Now Jesus will officially reinstate Peter.

6. What details in this account show the miraculous power of Jesus? What details in this account show the marvelous heart of Jesus?

7. Jesus appears to his disciples when they are confused, exhausted, and perhaps still filled with guilt and fear. He desires to reinstate them and re-energize them for service to God and to each other. He desires to do the same for us, as well, as he comes to us in Word and sacrament. What are challenges that you encounter to spending time with Jesus? What practical tips, tools, or techniques have you found helpful to make sure you spend time with Jesus?

8. What part(s) of this story do you find most encouraging and empowering as you go about your service to God and to others this week?

Notes:

· **Sea of Galilee** It is 13 miles long and is six to eight miles wide, and is located in a basin 700 feet below sea level, making it one of the lowest points on earth. Mountains surround it, and at its southern end is a deep, cliff-lined valley. Most first-century fishermen stayed close to the shore of Capernaum or rowed around the lake close to shore. (Matt. 11:1-9; 14:13-15; Luke 8:22; John 6:1).

· **Throw your net.** Fisherman worked at night using nets to catch fish that were “schooling” or “bunched up.” They could then sell the fish early in the morning or dry them for commerce. In contrast, rod and reel or fly fishing is done in the morning when the fish are often moving and hungry. In Jesus’ time, fishing in the morning was not done and would be a bizarre act, but it showed their willingness to obey in the midst of confusion (Luke 5:1-11).

· **Large fish, 153.** Meaning such a large number for such a small boat. All of these fish were large, not of various sizes. This testifies to the power of the miracle and that Jesus meets our needs more adequately than we could even ask. It is not an esoteric or symbolic code; fisherman and people of commerce counted their wares.

· **Net was not torn.** A net was a large, open-mesh fabric, made from hemp or flax, woven into small diameter ropes which were knotted and laid in a looped crisscross pattern so that it intersected with itself, forming one- to two-inch rounds or squares. The net was held up and in place by buoys or floats that were pulled by men or dragged by larger ropes that skimmed the surface and a few feet below—just like today's fishing boats. The makeup of the mesh pattern allowed for holes for the water, as well as for fish that were too small to swim through it, so the proper size fish could be caught. The net could have been a few feet wide and several feet long so it could be dragged through the water while not being impeded by it.

· **Breakfast / dine.** Meaning “break your fast,” now the most important meal of the day as Jesus was the host! This would be about six o’ clock in the morning.

· **Took the bread and gave it to them.** The bread was like pancakes or pita bread, small and thin and usually made with barley, as it was healthier and cheaper. Fish and bread were the daily, essential food staples for that time and region (2 Kings 4:38-44; John 6:11).