

Going Back to Go Forward

John 21.1-14

John 21 is an epilogue to his Gospel. His account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is complete. He now appends an appearance of Jesus to some of the disciples in Galilee. Why did Jesus orchestrate this meeting? What was His purpose? And why did John choose to include it in his Gospel?

It's *déjà vu* all over again! The disciples catch fish!

- Peter and other disciples fish all night and catch nothing
- Jesus (incognito) tells them to try the right side of the boat
- They catch many fish; Peter jumps in and swims to shore
- 153 fish in total, net not torn, Jesus feeds them breakfast

At the Hinge of History: Jesus and His Disciples*Jesus and the Disciples – Before and After the Resurrection**The training is over...the mission is about to begin!*Going Back to Go Forward!*Why did Jesus choreograph this encounter?*

Hint: It wasn't the number of fish, or the net

Why did John record this encounter?

Hint: It applies to us, just as it did to them



1. The first three appearances of Jesus to His disciples after rising from the dead are spread out. He first appeared on Resurrection Day, then again a week later. This third appearance to the disciples is at some later time, after they have travelled the 80-90 miles from Jerusalem to Galilee, which normally took three to six days. Before His death and resurrection, Jesus was with the disciples almost constantly, but after, only sporadically. Why do you think He did this? What do you think Jesus was doing? (There are no right or wrong answers here!)
2. John 21 is an 'epilogue' to John's Gospel – since he has provided a 'conclusion' of sorts in John 20.30-31). This chapter focuses mostly on Peter, who became the most important early church leader. What reflections of Peter's leadership and passion, which would be so vital to the life of the early church, do you see in John 21.1-14?
3. Read the account of Jesus calling Peter (and Andrew, James, and John) in Luke 5.1-11. How does that miracle differ from this one? How is it similar? According to the Gospels, they never fished again after Jesus called them, until now! This links the two events! What was the result of the first event? What would this second event bring to the disciples' minds? What did they need to be reminded of?
4. Theologians have had a heyday giving special significance to parts of this story – the number of fish (153), the fact that the nets did not break, Jesus preparing and serving them breakfast, etc.! While not discounting that God can choreograph events with special meaning, why do you think John recorded these details?
5. Imagine being a disciple after the resurrection. Jesus is gone a lot, and the kingdom hasn't come! It's hard to wait for God's time, to trust Him when life doesn't make sense. Do you remember the first time you heard God's call on your life? Jesus met His disciples on the shore of Galilee, where their relationship with Him began. He'll meet you where your relationship started, too. In fact, He's waiting there now! Going back is often the first step in going forward. Get back to basics, return to Jesus, and live the rest of your life for Him!