

“The Center of Our Lives”
John 21:1-14; Revelation 5:11-14

- 1** Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way:
- 2** Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.
- 3** “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.
- 4** Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.
- 5** He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.
- 6** 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.
- 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.
- 8** The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.
- 9** When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.
- 10** Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”
- 11** 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.
- 12** Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.
- 13** Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.
- 14** This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Introduction

When will enough ever be “enough?” Some of us struggle with work demands. Parents wonder how tight or loose they should be with their children’s behavior. I’m asking that question about retirement funds. Will enough be enough?

Comedian Jim Carrey announced the nominees for Best Motion Picture in Comedy at this year’s Golden Globes. To Hollywood’s elite he said, “I am two-time Golden Globe Winner, Jim Carrey. You know, when I go to sleep at night, I’m not just a guy going to sleep. I’m two-time Golden Globe winner, Jim Carrey. And when I dream, I don’t just dream any old dream. No sir. I dream about being three-time Golden Globe winning actor, Jim Carrey. Because then I would be enough. I could stop this terrible search for what I know ultimately won’t fulfill me.

The crowd dressed in designer gowns and tuxedos, doubled over in laughter. But as the camera panned their faces, it seemed that his words rang truer than they (or we) are comfortable admitting. If two Golden Globes (or three) will not satisfy us, what *will*?

John and the Disciples See and Hear the Risen Lord Jesus (John 21)

In the Scripture readings this morning from John, Jesus shows us where anyone can find the fulfillment in life that does satisfy.

Look at what Jesus said in this passage from John 21.

Four phrases: “Friends, haven’t you any fish?
 Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some...
 Bring some of the fish you have just caught...
 and, “Come and have breakfast.”

The Risen Lord Jesus spoke in normal, down to earth conversation. He didn’t present the four spiritual laws, just four very human remarks. And yet, something wonderful is happening here for these disciples and for us as well.

First of all, fishermen generally don’t like the question, especially in the negative. “Didn’t you catch anything?” You can hear the grunt in their annoyed answer, “No...”

Jesus would ask us, “What is it that you’re not catching in this life?” Enough success? Enough money? Enough happiness? Enough time? Enough relaxation? Enough... enough... enough... He is really asking, “How is it going? How are you doing? What are you facing?” This is how you and I can start conversations that lead to faith issues. Pretty simple, isn’t it? Just “How are you doing... really.” Jesus is interested. You and I can show the same interest in others.

Then the Lord says, “Hey, I have an idea! Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” Who is this guy on the shoreline about 100 yards away yelling to us? “Try the other side of the boat and you’ll see.” Well, something must have clicked. They did it. New Testament scholar Dale Bruner sees it this way: “The miracle within the miracle is that the disciples follow the advice of this slightly impertinent stranger. For it was work to move a heavily lead-weighted net from one side of a boat to the other.

Again, Jesus would ask us, “What is it that you’re not catching in life?” Our Lord Jesus has suggestions. Are you listening to his voice? Reading his Word? Getting direction for life? There are countless verses in the Bible to hear and respond to God’s miracle-producing advice.

I love Jesus’ third statement. Did you get its twist? “Bring some of the fish you have just caught...” Not “some of the fish I just caught for you.” Jesus here is genuinely interested in what they did. These disciples hauled in the very full net. They all had a part in it. I wonder when they remembered the same experience about three years earlier.

Jesus wants to see and to use your work and mine... to “catch fish,” that is, to “fish for people.” So have you learned how do you use your expertise or abilities in life to draw others to faith in Jesus? Fisherman, school teacher, business exec, artist? Are you in sales, marketing, high tech, insurance, design? Whatever it is, God wants us to use our knowledge and experience to cross over into sharing faith. Figure it out.



J. Garner



the real Christy



Kylie R.



the real Anna

Jennifer Garner stars as Christy, the mom in the recent movie *Miracles from Heaven*. She finds her ten year-old girl suffering with a rare, incurable disorder: pseudo-obstruction motility. Pain management is all they could do for Anna. The film is still in theaters in and around Salt Lake. Go and see *Miracles from Heaven*.

Anna survives a 30 foot, headlong tumble into the rotted-out trunk of a cottonwood tree. It took several hours for a rescue crew to harness Anna to safety. To everyone’s astonishment, she had been healed from her disorder and tells her amazing story of a visit to heaven. After this little girl had this near-death experience, Anna was “supernaturally” cured.

The more interesting story involves the cast, especially Jennifer Garner. “What I loved about this movie,” Garner said, “is that it’s a normal, wonderful family who leaned on their faith to guide them through the hardest thing in their lives. It’s not a movie that is telling you to have faith. It’s just lifting up people of faith. It made me look at my town of Los Angeles and realize we don’t talk about faith. It’s not a conversation we have between takes on set. During this movie it was.”

Talking about the film with her three kids, they said, “Mom, you don’t take us to church.” The next Sunday she made the move to go to church and they continue to go to this Methodist church. It reminds us that those working in Hollywood need to hear the good news of Jesus too. When actors, actresses, producers, script writers, cinematographers, editors and others work on faith-based films, it gives them unique opportunities to form relationships with co-workers who are Christians and can have lasting impact. Some “fish” were caught.

In his 20's Dale Bruner came to faith at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. Now almost 84 and retired, he teaches his "Good News" class there every Sunday morning at 9:30.

Finally, Jesus says, "Come have some breakfast." Let's have a meal together. What could be simpler than that? For some mysterious reason, people freely talk and get to know each other when sitting at a table and eating together. Imagine that conversation with Jesus. Imagine what the Lord will do through your engaging in conversation with others. Invite someone for a meal.

Conclusion

In her book *The Longing in Me*, Sheila Walsh writes this: Yes, "there's a place inside each one of us that longs for more. We try to give it a name... if only I was married, if I could just have a child, if I could lose weight, if I could get that job..." (if only I would be three-time Golden Globe winner Jim Carrey). "I'm learning that this longing will never be filled by anything on this earth... it's a longing for another Kingdom. I'm also learning not to despise it. It's a sacred ache; it's a holy place; it tells us, we're not home yet."

Will Jim Carrey ever stop "this terrible search for what I know ultimately won't fulfill me." I hope so. I hope someone has or will introduce him to Jesus Christ and that the Lord will become the center of his life. Will the real Anna continue to grow up in her faith and trust in Jesus? Will Jennifer Garner continue to find fulfillment of faith and life with her kids in the church and in her career?

Dale Bruner summed up John 21 this way: "Jesus' fourfold conversation with his disciples, while profoundly miraculous and spiritual in its depths is, at the same time, wonderfully human."

1) How are things going? 2) Try this. 3) May I see what you're doing? and 4) Let's have a meal together.

Let us pray these things with and for one another.

Revelation 5:11-14

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.