

Last Sunday, we saw the occasion when Jesus called the disciples. Peter and the others had worked hard all night and had caught **nothing**. Jesus then asked for Peter's boat. Peter was a blessing and Jesus blessed Peter in return. Peter met the **Master of Provision**—Jesus—in the flesh. He met God incarnate, the Son of God, the Savior of the world—Immanuel—in the flesh. **And Peter learned that Jesus provides**. This is *how* and *why* Peter and the others with him could leave everything behind to follow Jesus.

Jesus would then minister for just over 3 years before giving His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the entire world, for my sins and your sins. He preached God's Word. He taught people to love God and to love others. He had compassion and mercy upon people. He walked in GRACE. In fact, He is GRACE. He healed the sick. He delivered people. He freed people from demonic possession. He even raised the dead. Jesus showed people that He truly is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. And then, the Roman authorities, the government authorities and the Jewish religious leaders put Jesus to death.

No doubt, for the men who had chosen to follow Jesus, this was a **setback**, a **disappointment**, to them a **failure of epic proportions**. Again and again, Jesus had told the disciples that He would lay His life down; yet, they didn't understand until after Jesus had done just that and had been raised from the dead.

In John 21, the disciples are discouraged. Jesus has died. In John 20, many of the disciples—Mary, Thomas, and others—had seen the resurrected Christ or the empty tomb; yet, it's evident some did not really believe, some did not really have FAITH that Jesus had been raised from the dead. How do we know? **BY WHAT THEY CHOSE TO DO IN JOHN 21**. During the 3 years of Jesus' ministry, they had been with Jesus every step of the way. If they had a question, they could have asked Jesus. If they didn't understand something, they could have asked Jesus for an explanation. If they needed provision or a healing etc., they could simply ask Jesus to provide. After all, He was right there with them. But again and again in the Gospels, they struggled with **walking by faith**, and Jesus was constantly trying to teach His disciples *how* to **walk by faith**. And as Christians, as followers of Jesus, that's precisely how we're to live: **BY FAITH**.

Even Thomas—who had doubted—but had stuck his hand in Jesus' side and had felt the scars in Jesus' hands in John 20, even Thomas still struggled. In John 21, he's with the rest of the men out fishing. Some also didn't get that now that Jesus had given His life, had been raised from the dead, had shown Himself to them, and had breathed the Holy Spirit upon them, that they were now to go out into all the world **preaching the Good News** (Jn. 20:21-23). Jesus had fulfilled His assignment, and now they were to fulfill their assignment. But they didn't get it! How do we know they didn't get it? **BY WHAT THEY CHOSE TO DO IN JOHN 21**.

Yet, in John 20, Jesus had told them in **verse 21**: **“Stop doubting and believe.”**

Friends, today on October 6th, it's time to lay your **fears** aside. It's time to lay your **doubts** aside. It's time to believe God!

John 21:1-14: Afterward Jesus appeared *again* to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), 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. (Jesus appears to them with His resurrected body; see Jn. 20:17, 19-20, 26-27) 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** (when they did what? When they did what Jesus said do; when they **obeyed Jesus**), they were unable to haul the net in because of **the large number of fish**. ⁷ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved (John) 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 Simon Peter climbed aboard 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.

What is the **challenge of FAITH**? The challenge of faith is to continue believing God, to continue following Jesus, to stay in FAITH even when you face disappointments, setbacks, and failures.

For us, disappointments or failures, are things like: a financial setback, maybe losing a job, a home, or bankruptcy; a situation that doesn’t go the way we thought it would; a sickness or illness; a person—maybe even a husband or wife—letting us down; the death of a loved one.

For Peter and the others, their disappointment was that Jesus had been put to death and they didn’t really believe that He was risen. They weren’t really confident in what they were supposed to be doing. They weren’t confident in walking by faith for themselves without having Jesus their with them—**physically present**—every step of the way. How do we know? **By what they did.** They went right back to their boats and nets.

For 3 years, 12 grown, married men had traveled with Jesus in ministry, and Jesus had provided for them every step of the way. Yet, now that they thought He was gone, they were having a hard time believing God to provide. They were struggling with **walking by FAITH.**

And once again, the **Master of Provision** shows up.

Peter loved Jesus. We know that. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Peter left everything behind to follow Jesus. He was one of Jesus’ most bold, loyal, and devoted followers. When the religious authorities arrested Jesus, Peter tried to stop it violently—he cut a servant’s ear off. Yet, Peter—like us—wasn’t perfect. When Jesus would ask him questions, he didn’t always have the right answers. When Jesus would teach, Peter didn’t always understand and get it.

And, at the most important and critical moment of Jesus' ministry, Peter betrayed Jesus. He denied Jesus three times.

No doubt, Peter was struggling with believing God. No doubt, Peter was struggling with walking by FAITH. **But I believe Peter also thought that he was no longer fit to serve God because of what he had done and so what does he do? He returns to His boats and nets.**

And what happens? Once again, the **Master of Provision** shows up.

The challenge of FAITH is to continue believing God, to continue following Jesus, to stay in FAITH even when you face disappointments, setbacks, and failures.

Maybe you didn't accomplish a goal when you thought you would. Maybe you lost a job. Maybe your marriage failed. Maybe a child disappointed you. Maybe you disappointed your family. Maybe you faced a sickness and you struggled with believing God for healing. Maybe you got back into an addiction you had been free from.

No matter what disappointment, setback, or failure you have faced, I want to ENCOURAGE you today to shake it off, to stop looking at the problem and to start looking to Jesus. Stop looking at the problem and look at the ONE who is the SOLUTION for whatever you are currently facing in life.

Jesus is the ANSWER.

John 21:3: **³"I'm going out to fish,"** Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."

Have you ever faced a disappointment and then your attitude was "Fine. I'm going back to what I did before" or "Fine. I'm quitting!"?

I know I've had that attitude before.

But this is the challenge of FAITH: to continue believing God, to continue following Jesus, to stay in FAITH even when you face disappointments, setbacks, and failures.

They go out fishing but guess what happened? NOTHING. They didn't catch any fish!

John 21:3 cont.: **So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.**

They went out fishing in their own strength and caught **nothing**. They went back to their former way of life and caught **nothing**. They did what they used to do, instead of what Jesus and told them to do, and they caught **nothing**.

Friends, when someone gives their life to God and then gets disappointed—for whatever reason—and chooses to go back to their former way of life or chooses to go back into sin or chooses to stop living for God, they are signing themselves up for disappointment.

You can go back but you'll catch nothing.

Once you give your life to God there is no turning back.

They caught **nothing**. Further, they caught **nothing** because they weren't supposed to be out doing that. As long as you are doing your own thing and living by your own bright ideas, you will not be as happy, successful, and fulfilled as you could be.

In Luke 5, Jesus called these men to be **fishers of men**, and here, they have gone back to being **fishers of fish**. When you do what Jesus has NOT called you to do you will be **unsuccessful**.

But praise God. God is good. God is loving. God is gracious. God is merciful. Our God is the God of second chances ... and third chances ... and fourth chances

They're out fishing, doing their own thing ... EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD ALREADY ENCOUNTERED THE RESURRECTED JESUS ... but praise God, God is loving, merciful, and forgiving....

Jesus, the **Master of Provision**, shows up!

John 21:4-5: ⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. (Jesus appears to them with His resurrected body.) ⁵He called out to them, **“Friends, haven't you any fish?” “No,” they answered.**

Jesus shows up. “Hey guys, I see you're doing your own thing. Hey guys, I see you've gone back to fishing for fish—and not fishing for people. How's that working out for you?”

I can see them being embarrassed and ashamed.

And then Jesus lowers the boom: **“Friends, haven't you any fish?”**

This is like when God asks us: “How's it working out for you doing your own thing?” “How's it working out for you not living by FAITH?” “How's it working out for you not obeying my Word?”

We know the answer. In our hearts, we know the answer.

John 21:5: ⁵He called out to them, **“Friends, haven't you any fish?” “No,” they answered.**

But there is a solution. There is a solution when you've faced a setback and have gotten out of faith and have gone back to doing your own thing... There is a solution...

The solution is to *once again* **hear** and **obey** God.

The solution is to *once again* **follow** Jesus.

The solution is to once again **do what He has called you to do.**

The solution is to once again **follow the Master of Provision.**

John 21:6: ⁶He said, **“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”** When they **did** (when they did what? When they did what Jesus said do; when they **obeyed** Jesus), they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Once again, we see the KEY to receiving from God is to **hear** and **obey**. As Mary, Jesus’ mother, said when Jesus did His first miracle: **Just do whatever He says.**

Where is the right place to cast your nets? Where is the right place to go to work? What is the right thing to do? It’s whatever Jesus says do! **The secret of receiving from God is to hear and obey, to just do whatever He says do.**

God knows what you’re believing Him for. God knows the dreams and desires of your heart. And the answer, the solution is so SIMPLE. **Just hear and obey. Just do whatever God lays on your heart to do.**

John 21:6: ⁶He said, **“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”** When they **did** (when they did what? When they did what Jesus said do; when they **obeyed** Jesus), they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

The secret to receiving your miracle is to hear and obey.

The secret to receiving from God is to hear and obey.

The secret to walking by FAITH is to hear and obey.

**The secret to seeing your dreams and desires come to pass is to hear and obey.
AND LOOK AT THE RESULTS!!!**

they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Peter is THRILLED to see Jesus and he jumps in the water to swim to see Jesus. As Peter swims, we learn more about this incredible catch of fish.

John 21:8, 11:⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net **full of fish**, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. . . . ¹¹Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. **It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.**

Once again, the disciples went from **nothing** to **SOMETHING**. They went from **nothing** to **ABUNDANCE**. They went from **lack** to **PROVISION**. They went from **NOT ENOUGH** to **MORE THAN ENOUGH**. This is what happens when you partner your life together with God. This is what happens when you begin obeying God and His Word. This is what happens when you begin living a life of FAITH. This is what happens when you do *precisely, exactly* what Jesus says do. This is what happens when you **HEAR** and **OBEY**.

What is the **challenge of FAITH**? The challenge of faith is to continue believing God, to continue following Jesus, to stay in FAITH even when you face disappointments, setbacks, and failures.

Maybe you've faced a disappointment, setback, or failure. At one time or another, we all have. Shake it off. Pick yourself up. Dust yourself off. God wants to turn the ashes of your life into beauty, into what's beautiful, but before He can do that, you must give Him your ashes. You must give Him what is not working. You must give Him what you have messed up, whatever it is. You must give Him what is NOT ENOUGH in your life.

The **challenge of FAITH** is to continue believing God, to continue following Jesus, to stay in FAITH even when you face disappointments, setbacks, and failures.

Rise up today. Be who God has called you to be. Say what God's Word says about your life. Say that you are who God's Word says you are. Say you can do all things through Christ because Jesus gives you the strength.

This is the Bible (hold up your Bible). **It is God's Word and it is God's will for your life.** **You are who God's Word says you are.** You may not feel like it, but I'm telling you that **you are who God's Word says you are. You are the righteousness of God in Christ. You are where the Word says you are.** Where's that? As Christians, we aren't dead and in the grave. We're not defeated. Now, because He was risen, we are risen. Because He lives, we live. I'll tell you where you are! You may not feel like it, but this is where you are: **You are seated in the heavenly realms, in Christ Jesus, in the place of authority, dominion, and power.** What do you have? What do you have access to? What belongs to you as a Christ? You have **EVERYTHING**—every blessing, every reward, every promise—the Bible says belongs to you. **You have what the Word says you have. All the blessings of Abraham are yours and you can do what the Word says you can do. You can do ALL THINGS—that's EVERYTHING—through Christ Jesus who gives you the strength.** You may not feel like it, but I'm here to tell you: **Your mind is alert. Your spirit is receptive. Right here, at Faith Christian Center, your life is being changed for the better, and you'll never be the same again!!!**

You can do ALL THINGS. Why? How do I know that? Because the GREATER ONE lives in you! Jesus Christ has given you the strength to endure, to prevail, to win, to **MAKE A COMEBACK**. So what if you've failed. So what if you've disappointed loved ones. God loves you. God forgives you. Now it's time to rise up. Now it's time to be all that God has called you to be. Now it's time to do all that God has called you to do. It's time to **MAKE A COMEBACK**.

Tell your neighbor on the left: **"IT'S TIME TO MAKE A COMEBACK."**

Tell your neighbor on the right: **"IT'S TIME TO MAKE A COMEBACK."**

And you know what I believe? I believe you can do it. With all of my heart, I believe you can do it. I believe that **with God all things are possible**.

You are not alone. God is with you. God is for you. And that means all things are possible.

The secret is to **hear** and **obey**. And when you do that, you will see the **Master of Provision** provide **MORE THAN ENOUGH** in your life!