

***Sermon Title: "What to Do When You Come Up Empty"***

Sermon Series: Ordinary Solutions, Extraordinary Results

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Scripture: John 21:1-14

**Passage**

**21** After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. **2** Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. **3** Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. **4** Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5** Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." **6** He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. **7** That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. **8** But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. **9** When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. **10** Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." **11** So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. **14** This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

**Summary**

Have you ever given something your all but you didn't get back what you gave? Sometimes we don't try because of our fear of failure and/or to protect our own egos. It's one thing to fall short when you didn't invest that much, but what happens when you give it all you've got and still come up empty? The disciples worked at catching fish all night long and they gave their full effort, but their nets were empty; their lives felt empty. That's when Jesus shows up. The disciples do not see Jesus when He asks them what they have to show for their efforts: "Do you have any fish?" However, they recognized His voice although they did not see Jesus.

We can be busy and empty. We should ask ourselves: am I productive; are my actions meaningful, do I have joy? Instead of our plans, we should trust in God's purpose for our lives. When we give our lives and our plans over to God's purpose, we will find the life we've been struggling to find. It is God's good pleasure to give to us the kingdom (Luke 12:32). However, we must respond to God's voice – even when we cannot see God moving.

Jesus tells the disciples what to do: to cast their net on the other side of the boat. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. When we

are stuck in the same, empty place in our lives, we should look to Jesus for instructions on how to change our behavior for a different result. When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes and jumped into the sea to meet Him. Likewise, we should hasten toward Jesus. We don't have to dress up or have nice clothes to wear to come to church or to meet Jesus; God does not care what we have on. God wants us to make our way to the house of the Lord – where God dwells. When we walk toward Jesus, He will walk toward us. Let us hasten to meet Him.

Peter jumps out of the boat and hastens to the shore where Jesus is. Jesus invites them to come and have breakfast. If we are to be full and fortified and faithful, we need to hook up with a fellowship. Peter was out in the water swimming by himself. He makes his way to the shore where Jesus and the other disciples are gathered – waiting for him with warmth and food. If you have been out in the metaphorical waters swimming by yourself, you need a fellowship. That's what church is all about. Peter is a liar and had denied Jesus; James and John were overly ambitious; Thomas consistently doubted Jesus; none of them are perfect but all of them are there.

Jesus invites them to come and have breakfast. Breakfast is the most important meal. We do ourselves a disservice when we don't eat breakfast. When we skip breakfast, we get so hungry that we may eat things we should not eat. We must eat our spiritual breakfast. "Early in the morning shall I seek God..." (Psalm 63). We should start our mornings with the Word of God and prayer. We should start our weeks with the Sunday Worship service. We should start our months with 1st Sunday Communion. Come have breakfast.

### **Sermon Points**

1. Hear His Voice
2. Heed His Command
3. Hasten To Meet Him
4. Hook Up With Others Who Know Him

### **Reflection Questions**

1. When have you given your all but you came up empty?
2. When has your fear of failure prevented you from giving your all to something?
3. Are your plans productive? Are your actions meaningful? Are your jobs joyous?
4. Have you ever trusted what God was instructing you to do even when you did not see God moving in your life? Tell us about it.
5. What areas of your life do you desire to improve or change? Are you repeating the same, unsuccessful actions? Are you walking toward Jesus?
6. What practical solutions can you implement to make sure you are eating your spiritual breakfast?