

It is the Lord

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back then to the first reading, John 21. John 21.

And we'll look at the section we read, particularly verses 1 to 14. But I want to focus simply on the words in verse 7, John's words.

That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord. And that's the title, it is the Lord. It is the Lord.

One of the curious things about language is you can place the emphasis, interestingly, within a sentence, or such as this is.

And what we're doing here is we're looking at something that was a wonderful experience in the life of these disciples of Jesus.

[1 : 11] You remember that the risen Jesus had appeared to his disciples, at least we can say twice, to the disciple band before this appearance in Galilee.

And the reality of his resurrection was slowly dawning on them. And it's difficult in a way to stand where they stood.

But there was a certain feeling of bewilderment. They hadn't anticipated that Jesus was actually going to rise from the dead.

And even when they had seen him alive in Jerusalem, they were still trying to come to terms with the reality of his resurrection.

And you know very well yourselves, the experience of the men going down on the road to Emmaus. Their eyes were held, were told.

[2 : 13] But what he was saying was burning in their hearts. They were full of the things of Jesus, though they didn't recognize the stranger. And there's a similarity to this appearance of him beside the sea.

They had gone to Galilee because he had told them to go to Galilee and to wait for him there. And that's what they did.

They went, for some of them it was home. They went home. And Jesus said to them that he would appear, he would come, he would meet with them.

And in the case that we're looking at, he would show forth his glory to them. So it was that two weeks after the resurrection, the disciple band arrived in Galilee, as far as we can judge, together.

And no doubt, as Peter was an inhabitant of Capernaum, they used Peter's home as base camp to wait for Jesus.

[3 : 20] They wanted to see him again. But they knew that seeing him again would be in his time. He would appear, he would show himself when he was ready.

And so once they waited, Peter decided that he would go fishing. Now it's important to remember, as we're looking at this, that Peter was unrestored.

Peter, like we were saying last night, was a disciple gone astray. And at this point, he was still unrestored.

You know the beautiful passage that follows this, where we have his restoration. So you've got to cast Peter in the mould of Peter unrestored.

And so Peter is there. He's there because they were told to be there, to wait for Jesus. But Peter is unrestored. But Peter is unrestored. And I guess it's not difficult to understand that he thought, I'll go back to what I know.

[4 : 29] I'll do what I know I can do. And that's what he did. He said, I'm going fishing. Don't know about you, but I'm going fishing. And we're told that they went with him.

They were willing to go with him as we read. Now, again, another thing to cast this incident in, is that it was a time of uncertainty.

They simply didn't know what the future held for them. They knew where they were. They were home. Probably all seven of them, they were home.

The others, we haven't a reference to, but they were doubtless there too, were on their way. But things went in a state almost of limbo for them.

Jesus was alive. But what did that mean? What was going to happen? Where were they going from where they were at now? And they had to wait and wait and wait upon the Lord.

[5 : 34] And see, this is our relevance to us, hasn't it? This is our business to wait upon him. In the words we were singing, that comes through. Run not before him.

Take time to be holy. Let him be thy guide. And run not before him, whatever be kind. See that?

And that's what this is about. That's what this wonderful experience that we're just about to have impact then. It was about. They were to wait upon.

And so I think we can understand why they went to their favorite haunts. Where they were sure to catch something. And they would be doing something useful as they waited for Jesus.

And what the Lord does is he leaves them to it. He lets them do what they do best. And then he harnesses that to teach them.

[6 : 39] And we're just going to look at these three things. We're going to look at Jesus provides the fish. And then we're going to look at the disciples' reaction or response to the miracle.

And then Jesus' instruction of the disciples. He leaves them to do what they do best. And he uses the results of that expedition to teach them that they need him.

First of all then, the Lord provides fish. They went out as fishermen do with all the confidence that attached to their experience.

Their expertise. They were at home on a gallery. They had grown up with it as boys. As many sons of fishermen did.

And I suppose still do. They loved to get out in the boat with Dad and the crew. And they loved to fish. And they learned things. I spent a bit of time at it myself.

[7 : 49] I got around the old man to take me on as an engineer. Which I was of course. But I loved to see. I grew up with it. Knew it. And see.

To this day. I can see in my mind's eye. The local. What they call the local shots. The places where you went.

The different holes as they called them. The corners. Where they knew they would get fish. You can still see. If I put my mind to it. These in my mind's eye. And see.

They were brought up to that too. They were in their own right. They were experts on Galilee. They knew it. Through and through. And that night we're told.

They caught nothing. And clearly this was a shock to them. They expected to catch something. And those seven disciples toiled all night long for zero.

[8 : 52] For nothing. And it's hard to imagine that people who knew where they could get fish. Even in the dark. In this place or that. Ended up with nothing at all.

Oh it happens. If anybody has been at sea. They'll know it. Well. It can happen. You can spend hours and hours and hours.

And you draw a blank. You get nothing. And this was a discouraging thing to them. It was a wearisome thing. A burden to them.

Fruitless venture it was. And so as the sun was rising in the east. As Marcus Lone says. It was sending its pre-appearance rays up over the land.

They headed inshore. They were only a hundred yards off. But see. You know yourselves. When you're filled with disappointment.

[9 : 58] For one reason or another. And it's depressing your spirit. A short walk feels a long way. Thanks for that response.

It does. It feels a long way. They had only a hundred yards to go to the shore. But that would have been a long haul.

In there. For them. The thing they thought they could do best. Produced no fruit. And as they near the shore.

We're told. John was breaking. And there was a stranger there. On the shore. And he remained a stranger to them.

Until he was good and ready. To make known it was him. They knew not. We're told in verse 4. They did not know.

[10 : 55] That it was Jesus. And that's very helpful to us. To understand in this passage. Whether their eyes were withheld from recognizing him.

Or perhaps a combination of weariness. Of discouragement. And. Of not expecting to see him there at that hour. Let me just say this to you.

By way of background. But I think it's useful. The sun rises. In the east. In that area. You'll see it at half past five in the morning.

And. You could. Argue. Jesus wasn't going to. Be bothered to come around. At half past five in the morning. But he was there.

And so. As the dawn was breaking. They saw the stranger on the shore. I. And my own view is that. They just were not expecting to see him.

[11 : 57] And therefore. They didn't. Really. Register. That it was Jesus. You know it's true. Moving aside for a moment. Sometimes you see what we want to see.

And sometimes you hear what we want to hear. You know that. These are true things. And to me. You put the whole thing together. And they did not know. That it was Jesus.

Jesus. And so he calls out to them. Lads. Have you any food? And they reply. No. Isn't that revealing.

Just that one word. No. Children. And young people. You know. When you ask mum. Or dad. Parents are smiling.

You want this. You're pleading. Oh please. Please. No. No. And it's that kind of. No. Have you any. Have you any fish? No.

[12 : 53] They're discouraged. They're being beaten. At what they knew best. And that's the same. Glasgow. That's an A blessing. And see.

They are frustrated. And they have to say. Simply. No. No. And then Jesus tells them. As only Jesus would. Cast the net.

On the right side. And at his instruction. They did it. I imagine them. And I hope.

Pretty much close to the. The truth on it. I imagine them. Okay. We'll do it. Half heartedly. We'll do it. Okay. We'll do it.

And then all of a sudden. They're into fish. Surprise. Of surprises. They couldn't hold the net. And.

[13 : 51] There and then. Whatever else. They could say about that stranger. What was in the net. Was marvelous. And it was the Lord's doing.

The Lord provided. And see. Experts at the job. Were humble. By this wonder. And my dear friends.

We ought always. To be challenged. At what the Lord. Can do. And we ought always. To be looking for him. To do. What to us.

Is unexpected. I think there's a hymn. Goes. Sometimes. A light surprises. A Christian. In the way. And it's true. Sometimes.

He breaks in. Upon our situation. And surprises us. And we ought to be. Looking for him. To do these things. He is the Lord.

[14 : 46] Who provides. And there's a wisdom. In this. To be looking to him. He is the same. Yesterday.

Today. And forever. The old saying. Was Jehovah Jireh. The Lord. Will. See to it. In the Hebrew. It is. Jireh. Will. See to it.

And that's lovely. And. It's true for you. It's true for me. Perhaps it's true for you. In ways. That you can apply. He will provide.

He will. See to your needs. And that leads us into. The second thing. The disciples react. To Jesus. Miracle.

Though the stranger. Is a stranger. Still. Though he is still. And recognized. Right up until. Suddenly. They're into that.

[15 : 41] That bag full of big fish. Suddenly. Things change. And it would seem to me.

Pretty obvious. From what we read here. That. John the apostle. Was first to speak. That disciple. Whom Jesus loved. Therefore.

Said to Peter. It is the Lord. This is the explanation. For the fish in the net. That's why.

We were reminding ourselves. Of the. Of the record. At the very beginning. Of their. Of their entry. Upon their discipleship. Luke 5. 1 to 4. When two boats.

Were filled to the gunnels. With fish. So they could hardly. Get to the shore. Some people. I've heard say. Um. No.

[16 : 34] I don't think a boat. Could be that full. Well. I hope you know. It could be that full. I've seen them that full. I've seen. Fishermen. Glad to get in. Because the boat.

Was sinking. We wait a fish. I remember. I remember. In my young days. The salmon fishers. In Helmstil. They would get a bag. Of salmon. And the boat. Would be. Actually.

Just bordering. On lapping water. It can happen. And it happened here. As it were. Back there. In Luke 5.

1 to 4. At the very outset. Of. Of their. Following Jesus. He was showing them. What he would do with them. And then all this time afterwards.

He uses. An incident. On Galilee. To refocus that. And.

- [17 : 32] John. Is the one. Who says. It is. It is. The Lord. It is. The Lord. John. We know. Was very. Switched on. To listening. To Jesus. Carefully. Get a. Spiritual. Sensitivity. And a. Perception. And. If you like.
- John's gospel. You'll know. That. The more you get into. What's there. The deeper it goes. Your minister will tell you. That. Of the. Greek.
- New Testament. John's. Writing. The language. The vocabulary. Is. Easy. But then you begin. To look at it. And to see.
- What it's saying. And he takes you. Into the deeps. And John. It was fitting. To me. It was fitting. That John. In his peculiar.
- [18 : 26] Closeness. To Jesus. Mary. Was like that. Too. Wasn't she. They. They. They listened to him. They sat at his feet. They learned from him. With an intensity.
- That perhaps the others lacked. And so it was John. Who. Reacted. Like this. I like to think of John.
- In this one. When he exclaims. It is the Lord. I. Think about. Psalm 45. The great messianic. Psalm. The psalm about. King Messiah.
- How does the writer begin. My heart. Is. Bubbling over. With a good thing. My words. Concern.
- The king. The Hebrew is very succinct. There. My words. Concern. The king. And. Jesus. Is king. And Jesus. Is lord. And John.
- [19 : 18] Is saying. It is the lord. These words. Of wonder. Were words. Of worship. Too. These words. Of amazement.
- Were words. Of devotion. Of adoration. It is the lord. And I like to think. Too. Of this. In the literal sense.
- And in the spiritual sense. As well. There they were. Practically. Weeping. All night. But joy. Came. In the morning.
- Remember. Psalm 30. Weeping. May endure. For the night. But joy. Comes. In the morning. And Jesus. Brought that joy. To them. He did.
- What they couldn't. Do. He brought them. To see. That they were. Dependent. Upon him. That they. Needed him.
- [20 : 12] To progress. Them. In his work. And. Peter. Of course. When he heard. It's the lord. Peter was. On with his.
- Outer garment. And into the water. Like a shot. And heading. For the shore. But see. Let's just pause. Before we move on.
- To look at the last point. Of this. It is the lord. It is the lord. Who commands. And it is done. It is the lord.
- Whom the fish. Respond to. And go. When he wants. It to go. We were singing. That in the psalm. All that. Passed. Through the seas. He.
- Is the lord. Over them. And he is the lord. Of life. And death. He is the lord. Of. The harvest.
- [21 : 09] As well. And Jesus. You see. Is. Is. Is bringing them. To. Learn. From him. What he wants.
- Them to learn. That he commands. And it's done. Those of you. Who know. The paraphrase. On. Hosea.
- Six. Will remember. The words. His voice. Commands. The tempest. For. And stills. The stormy wave. And. Though his arm. Is strong.

To smite. Tis. Also. Strong. To save. And. And he's. Teaching them. Through this. Means. That their capacity.

To do. For him. Is. Absolutely. Reliant. Upon him. As the lord. And so this.

[22 : 03] Leads us into the last thing. We want to look at. And. And that is. Jesus instructs. His disciples. Now consider.

For a moment. This. This. Takes us now. To the shoreline. Consider. That there is. Jesus. Early in the morning. Half five ish. Dawn's just breaking.

And he's there. Cooking their breakfast. We're not going to speculate. On where the fish came from. Or. The bread.

But he's here. With a wee charcoal fire. And he's cooking their breakfast. For them. He doesn't. Need them. To provide fish. And this is the first thing.

That we can learn. From this. He didn't need them. He didn't need the fish. That caught. But see what he does there. We're told there. In the scripture.

[23 : 01] Verse nine. When they got out. On the land. They saw a charcoal fire. In place. And with fish laid out. On it. And bread. And then Jesus said.

Wonderful Jesus said this. Bring some of the fish. You have just caught. Isn't that lovely? He takes.

What they've managed to catch. Because of what he did for them. They got nothing. Until he said. Cast the net on the right side of the.

On the road. And then he takes. What they caught. And he uses it. He didn't have to. There's fish on the fire. And this is so.

Like our saviour. He. He comes down to us. And he helps us. To learn. From the things. We pass through. You know.

[23 : 58] It's true. That nothing. In our lives. Is wasted. Not even the bad things. That we wish. We wish. We could rewrite. The Lord.

Used them. And uses them. And. The thing is. We're not encouraged. To do bad things. That grace may abound. May be anoint of it. May it never be. No.

But what we're saying is. We learn. From the things. That. Our stumblings. Our mistakes. Don't agree with your ministers. Clap on the kitchen wall. There are no mistakes.

Only lessons. Actually. There are many mistakes. And. And some of us. Perhaps more than others. If we could rewrite. The script. Of our lives.

We would do that. Now. Be honest. With yourself. If you could rewrite. Some of the things. You've done. Some of the things. You've said. Some of the things.

[24 : 56] You've thought. You would. Rewrite. The script. That's not to question. God's providence. Not at all. It's just in.

Real. And honest. About ourselves. And these were men. You see. From boyhood. To adulthood. Who knew.

Galilee. And who knew. Where to go. At night. To get fish. And they failed. All their. Skills.

And tricks. All the nooks. And crannies. They could go to. Produce nothing. And Jesus. Taught them. What he taught. There. In.

In. Upper room. Jerusalem. On the night. Of his betrayal. John 15. Verse. 5. It is. Without me. You can.

[25 : 51] Do. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. To advance. The cause. That is mine. Says Jesus. Nothing. To advance. Your own. Spiritual life.

Without me. You can't. Do anything. In these. Ways. And here. They had to learn. Or relearn.

That it was the Lord. Who prospers. Or who hinders. Who gives. Or withholds. And here too. They had to learn. What Jesus.

Told them. Way back. At the beginning. Of. Of their entry. Upon discipleship. I. Will make you.

To catch. Men. I will allow you. To bring people. Into the kingdom. And. Actually. That's quite wonderful. Because it's an encouragement. You see. You may feel.

[26 : 45] I can't really. I can't really. Speak like. Some folk. I can't share. The truth. Like.

Some folk do. But. But that's because. You think. You can. One of the best. Ways. To share the gospel. Let me tell you. Perhaps your minister.

Has already told you. But one of the best. Ways. To learn. To share the gospel. And to depend on Jesus. When you're doing it. To share it.

Among friends. There's a. There's a place. For testimony. I know you have a. Testimony meeting. I haven't been told about it. Sunday evening yet. But.

But. There's a. Place for testimony. And. And you young folk. Are. Are. Are. In the faith. There's nothing better.

[27 : 39] Than to tell your story. You older folk. That are in the faith. And perhaps you're quiet. And retiring. Tell. Your story. To friends.

Because. Then you'll be able to tell. It to your neighbour. That you wish. And you could say something to. And you've prayed for. For years. Jesus. Will empower you.

But you need. To become acquainted. With what you're going to say. And what you're not going to say. Do you know. That some of the great preachers. When they started. What they were.

When I say all they were doing. I don't mean to demean it. I mean all they were doing. To start with. Is they were telling. The story. Of how the Lord. Came into their lives. And changed them.

And there's something. In that for us. And. The disciples. Were taught. That he would make them. To catch people. For the kingdom.

[28 : 36] Of heaven. He gives us gifts. And arguably. I know. Some people. Are more gifted. In communication. Than others. But. I still say to you.

And communion time. Is a good time. To do this. Tell your story. To others. Can't mind. To your minister. I said it.

But. There was a lady. In my congregation. In Boner. She was a nurse. And she had been. Negligent. As regards. To things of God.

She had been brought up. In the gospel. That she was a nurse. And nurses. And policemen. Sorry. If you're. A nurse. A policeman. That you know. Their time is consumed. In shifts.

And it's not. Always easy. To get. To the worship. And she was like that. And when she returned. She made up her mind. She was going to. Commit.

[29 : 31] To church. Going to church. And seeking the Lord. Lord. And she did. And one helped her. On the way. Under God's hand. Why am I telling you this? Because it's about testimony.

It's learning from Jesus. To use. The things that he has put in your way. To help others. To come to know Jesus. Anyway. When it came time.

For her to. Come to the Lord's table. She had asked. She had asked me about it. I talked to her in her home. Her story was wonderful. It was.

It was so. So clear. And humbling. To listen to. So. Anyway. We got to the. Session. And. The senior elder.

No reflection. From the senior elder. Wherever he is. But the senior elder. Said to me. I said to the men. Now. Betty. Would. Would be. Willing.

[30 : 28] To answer any questions. And. She would. She would be happy to. For you to ask. Oh no. No. No. Mr. Cowie. Said to the senior elder.

There'll be no need for that. We know Betty's background. We know the people she's come from. She's come from. Good. Free church stock. All of a sudden.

Betty pipes up. Mr. McLeod. I'm surprised at you. What has it to do. With the stock I've come from.

It's about Jesus. Of course. I was. In there. Pumping the fists. As the young ones say. Yoo hoo. I was delighted for it.

That she had the courage. In her. At her time in life. And. In the way she was brought up. The background. That was a bold thing to do. But see.

[31 : 27] She just wanted. To tell her story. About what the Lord. Did for her. It was the Lord's doing. And she wanted.

To tell. The session. And others too. It is the Lord. And my dear friends. He gives us.

Power. And grace. To share our story. You believe it. Don't let the enemy. Tell you differently. A testimony.

Born to. The love. And the grace. From the mercy of God. His words. Such a lot. And. One last thing. On this subject.

Above all. They had to submit to him. They had to. Revere him. As their Lord. Not. As. The God of. Judaism. Or Islam. A way out there.

[32 : 23] Who doesn't really care. But one who is. Near. And here. With us. And wonderfully. In us. By his spirit. This is the Lord. And they were to submit themselves.

To him. And of course. When. When. When. When Pentecost came. That great Pentecostal. Outpouring. Of the spirit. They would be allowed.

Of the Lord. To gather a harvest. From Jews. And Gentiles. In all the known world. You know that. As ministers know it too.

We've often pondered. Peter's sermon. And as far as sermons. In the modern. Sense. Sermons. It wasn't.

A great sermon. It didn't have. Four points. Or three points. Or five points. It didn't have subdivisions. But it had.

[33 : 23] The Lord. In it. And it had. The power of the spirit. In it. And it. Brought. Three thousand. Out of darkness. Into light. And thousands.

And thousands. Of more. People came. And that's. What they learned. You see. As they went on. The doing. Is the Lord's doing. And it is marvelous. In our eyes.

And see. That Lord. Is still the same. We don't see it. But. He stands with us. We. We. We toil. If you like. The troubled seas.

The restless seas. Of time. And he blesses. What we do. For him. It is the Lord. Who. Makes the difference. And here we are.

Drawing this. To a close. And we can. Apply. The word. To. Where we're at. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To. To.

[34 : 21] The Lord. Provided. The. Fish. The experts. Made. Nothing. Of. It. Trust him.

Believe. That he is able. To. To. Do it. He's still the same. He's still. Jehovah. The Lord. Who sees. To it. And don't. Let anything.

Deflect you. From. Believing that. And. Acting. Upon. in your witness personally testify to what he has done for you and as we leave this beautiful incident now let us focus our minds on the preciseness and the rightness of his timing it's always the best time he advances us in his time and in his way they couldn't do anything without his perfect timing and his perfect and precise empowering of them and see as you gear up now to think about the Lord's day and the feast of remembrance take to heart that what you need he will provide perhaps if it's only one person it's worth saying if you're there swithering in your mind

I should do it but I've left this too late to come to the session to tell them don't believe it take the minister at his word we'll be glad if you feel the Lord is touching you now is the time this is the right time you've been brought to it trust him to provide the strength you need to come and declare yourself on his side it is the Lord it is the Lord let that be our cry Amen