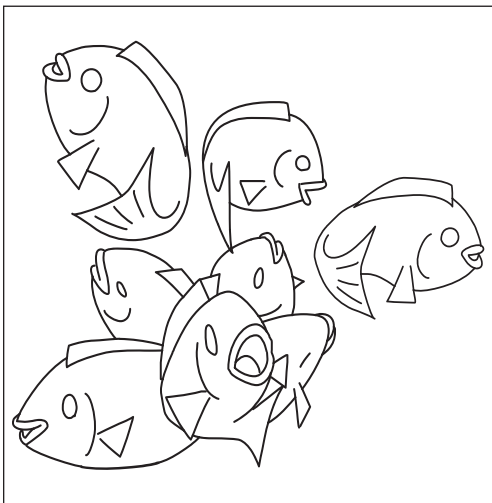


AT LAKE GALILEE



Colour me!



John 21:1-14

Jesus later appeared to his disciples along the shore of Lake Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the brothers James and John, were there, together with two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!"

The others said, "We will go with you." They went out in their boat. But they didn't catch a thing that night. Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?" "No!" they answered. So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish." They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat.

Jesus' favourite disciple told Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon heard that it was the Lord, he put on the clothes that he had taken off while he was working. Then he jumped into the water. The boat was only about a hundred metres from shore. So the other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were one hundred fifty-three large fish, but still the net did not rip.

Jesus said, "Come and eat!" But none of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the Lord. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave some of it to his disciples. He did the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from death.

Commentary

Jesus kept appearing and disappearing again in the weeks after the first Easter Day, and each time he took the disciples by surprise. He was no longer limited to one time and one place as before, and this was preparing them for what it would be like in the future. He was available to all, as long as they opened their eyes to look.

The disciples had returned to Galilee after the Passover. They'd been told by Jesus to go there and wait. Unsure of what to do next, they returned to their occupation as fishermen. It was something they could do—or, at least, they thought it was. Unfortunately, they had an unsuccessful night of fishing and it took the advice of a stranger on the shore to direct them to where the fish were. Suddenly John (Jesus' favourite disciple) recognized the man.

In great excitement, Peter was first ashore, and the friends gathered around the fire where Jesus had a meal ready for them. It must have stirred their memories of when he broke bread and shared fish for the 5000 at the picnic. It was also like another 'last supper', but this time it was on the victory side of Easter. Jesus was providing for them, as he always would. They were going to be 'fishers of people' just as he had told them once, and soon thousands would be coming into the net of the kingdom of God.

Bible text taken from Contemporary English Version. Anglicised edition copyright © British and Foreign Bible Society 1997, 2012. Reproduced with permission from The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF). Taken from The Barnabas Family Bible © Martyn Payne and Jane Butcher 2014.

Questions

- ▶ What do you think the seven disciples were thinking about as they set out in the boat to fish that night?
- ▶ Why was it John who recognized Jesus first?
- ▶ Why were they all so nervous about asking Jesus who he was? Did Jesus look a little different?
- ▶ How did this event encourage the disciples for the future?



Visual aid

Arrange to have some pieces of fish and bread to eat alongside this story. Notice how Jesus, even with his new resurrection body, can still eat fish.



Activity idea

Try a fishing game with magnets on string and fish with magnets attached in a 'pool' on the floor. How many fish can each member of the family catch in a given time? You can buy strips of small magnets in most craft stores.



Prayer idea

Many people have tried to work out some special meaning in the fact that there were 153 fish. Perhaps it simply means that there were a lot—and they were big fish, too. The number could represent the huge harvest of people coming home to God when the disciples started doing the work that Jesus gave them to do. Focus your prayers on those who are busy telling people about Jesus for the first time. Pray for a big harvest of people to come to know God's love.

Key verse

[Jesus] told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish" (John 21:6).

New Testament story link

Psalm 67: This psalm celebrates the great blessings that God will bring right around the world.



Colour me!

