

Bible Workshop: John 21

Outline

- vv. 1-14 Jesus gives the disciples breakfast
- vv. 15-19 Peter is questioned by Jesus
- vv. 20-24 The disciple Jesus loved
- v. 25 Conclusion

Discussion points

- What was Jesus wanting to show his disciples in the incident of verses 1-14, which consists of a re-enactment (with variations) of a number of earlier Gospel incidents? Find them, and consider why similar things happen again. Is it a deliberate strategy on Jesus' part to take them back to their past?
- What is the significance as a metaphor of catching nothing when you go fishing? What is the significance of Jesus' intervention in the enterprise of fishing?
- Explain what is going on in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in verses 15-17. How many times does Jesus question Peter? Is this significant?
- What does this chapter add to our understanding of Peter? And John? How does it parallel with the previous chapter in this respect?
- How do verse 19 and verse 22 recall some earlier words of Jesus? What is Jesus getting at in verse 22? Does he mean 'Mind your own business!'
- Look at verses 18 and 19. What was Jesus telling Peter about his future, and why? Do you think it would be better to know your own future, or do you prefer it to be in the dark? What effect would Jesus' words have been likely to have had on Peter? What would you have felt had you been him?
- Why do you think the Gospel ends the way that it does? Consider the role or function of the last five verses or so in relation to all that has gone before.

Details

- v. 11. Do you think there is significance in the number 153, or is it just a big number?

Brother Harry Whittaker's book **Studies in the Gospels** lists some suggestions (page 830 of the second edition).

- v. 12. What is going on here with the disciples?
- v. 15. Look at the phrase "more than these". More than what or whom? Compare other translations.
- v. 21. Do you think Peter was jealous of John?
- v. 23. Consider this as a classic instance of human nature, misrepresentation, and gossip.

Tasks

- Make a list of other meals Jesus had or will have with his disciples. Are there any other commands/invitations made by the Lord for disciples to eat a meal?
- Look at a commentary which discusses the dialogue in verses 15-17 to understand a little more of the dynamics of the dialogue in the original language. (In the original, Jesus and Peter change some of the words they use in a deliberate way, although they appear to be the same words in English translations.)
- Make a list of the major events of John's Gospel. (One way of doing this would be to make a one-sentence summary of each chapter.) Can you put together a plan or diagram of the Gospel as a whole?

Take-home points

What are the main themes that you have found explored in John's Gospel? What take-home points do these lead you to for the Gospel as a whole?

How has the Gospel of John changed your life?

Mark and Anita Vincent

Comments are welcome and will be considered for publication. Please send them to the Publishing Editor, Brother Tony Benson, address inside front cover.