

## John 21:3-6

<sup>3</sup> Simon Peter \* said to them, "I am going fishing." They \* said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus therefore \* said to them, "**Children, you do not have any fish, do you?**" They answered Him, "No." <sup>6</sup> And He said to them, "**Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find a catch.**" They cast therefore, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

In this story, we learn that seven of the disciples have gone fishing, and after a night of having no success, a stranger that they later learn is Jesus, tells them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. For whatever strange reason, they choose to take His advice, and are shocked to discover that the catch was so large that they couldn't haul it in. Remember, these men are fishermen, and they know how to fish. They understand that success in net fishing has very little to do with which side of the boat that your net is cast. Perhaps they were annoyed and wanted to show this stranger, what they already knew. Often, actions speak much louder than words, but this is much more than a fishing story! The real story is that Jesus has been crucified. The Lord has already appeared to Mary Magdalene, He has appeared to the disciples when Thomas was absent, and He has appeared to the disciples with Thomas present. Now for the third time since the Lord's resurrection, He is appearing to His disciples; only this time they don't recognize Him. Many scholars believe that the reason they didn't recognize Jesus, was because they were in sin for returning to their old or common jobs; and that even their night of unsuccessful fishing was further validation that the Lord was not with them. But I don't believe that was the case at all; these men had already seen with their eyes that Jesus was not held captive by death. In fact Thomas had touched with his own hand where Jesus had been pierced in His side, and nailed through His hands and feet. These disciples were not struggling with their "calling"; they were simply doing what they knew to do, in order to eat. These men were no more sinning by fishing, than the Apostle Paul was when he was building tents. There are many pastors today who know full well, the reality of being called full-time to the ministry; yet are also holding down a secular job. There is no shame in this; it is simply part of what they need to do to pay their bills.

The one message that I endeavor to share to every believer that I meet, is simply to ask Jesus what He wants them to do, and then to obey. It is so easy to criticize what someone else is doing, consider the Pharisees with Jesus; they were constantly offended with Jesus, because He didn't meet their expectations. Was Jesus wrong then? Absolutely not! The success of a believer is not based on formulas or rules, it's built upon relationship. Jesus did not scold His disciples for fishing. In fact, He spoke life to them that they might have success, where before they had failed. This message is just as true for you and me today. Often we can get ahead of the Lord, but when we do, He is gracious enough to show us the way. Isn't that exactly what the Lord did after He had breakfast with these seven men that morning? Jesus told Peter three times to feed and tend His sheep. This wasn't a corrective reminder; it was a personal commissioning; because Peter needed to know that as great as his calling was, his end would be as well. The fact that the Lord was so faithful to point that out to Peter, speaks of the intimacy that He had with Peter.