

# Jesus Cooks Breakfast

Devotional Reading: [Psalm 30](#)

Background Scripture: [John 21:1-14](#)

## John 21:1-14

<sup>1</sup> Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

<sup>6</sup> He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. <sup>9</sup> When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals

there with fish on it, and some bread.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

## Key Text

*Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.*

—[John 21:12](#)

# Jesus Calls Us

## Unit 2: Experiencing the Resurrection

### Lessons 5–8

## Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List key points of the disciples’ third encounter with the resurrected Christ.
2. Provide reasons as to why the disciples did or did not recognize

Jesus.

3. Write a prayer asking for eyes that recognize Jesus at work this week.

## Lesson Outline

### Introduction

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B. Lesson Context

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#### II. “It Is the Lord” (John 21:7–14)

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*So Happy to See You!*

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*A Soul Well Fed*

D. Jesus' Third Appearance (v. 14)

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A. An Acted-Out Parable

B. Prayer

C. Thought to Remember

## How to Say It

Antipas    *An-tih-pus.*

Cana    *Kay-nuh.*

Didymus *Did-uh-mus.*

Emmaus *Em-may-us.*

Tiberias *Tie-beer-ee-us.*

Zebedee *Zeb-eh-dee.*

## Introduction

### A. The Post-Wedding Brunch

For couples who want to spend more time celebrating with their guests on the wedding weekend, the post-wedding brunch is a popular option. Because it ordinarily happens the day after the wedding, it can be relatively low-key. For those guests who can linger, this meal offers time to offer final well wishes and say a proper goodbye, to laugh and chat in a more casual environment. And the brunch offers guests who need to leave quickly for a flight a grab-and-go meal they don't have to find for themselves. They get the satisfaction of having as much time with the bride and groom as possible—the whole reason those guests traveled in the first place!

The events leading to the meal in today's lesson are like that wedding brunch: another opportunity to spend time with dear friends and celebrate the bond between them.

### B. Lesson Context

Some scholars have suggested that [John 21](#) was not originally a part of John's Gospel. The evidence for this can be summarized as being based on (1) the fact that [John 20:30–31](#) contains a natural conclusion to the Gospel; (2) perceived differences in language, style, and content

compared to the rest of the Gospel; and (3) a supposed divergence from the story John told before chapter 21. Despite these observations, those who don't think [John 21](#) is original generally argue that it was added by close associates of John very shortly after the Gospel was completed. The thinking, in part, is that [John 21:20–23](#) seemed to suggest John would not die. When he did die, however, the death may have caused distress and shaken the faith of some in the community, which the epilogue was meant to alleviate.

Against the idea that [John 21](#) is not original is the fact that the earliest manuscripts we have all include the epilogue. There is no reason to believe that the Gospel ever circulated without it. And such epilogues can be found in other ancient writings, showing that this is not a particularly remarkable literary characteristic. Arguments about supposed differences in language and style can be explained by differences in the material that make up the story. The epilogue also ties up loose ends of the Gospel, particularly Peter's redemption after his denial of Jesus, and adds further evidence of John's faithful witnessing of Jesus' life and teaching. Further, the epilogue fulfills Jesus' promise that he would meet the disciples in Galilee ([Matthew 26:31–35](#); [28:5–10](#)).

## I. Gone Fishin' ([John 21:1–6](#))

### A. The Disciples Fail (vv. 1–3)

**1. Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way:**

John used the Greek verb translated *appeared* at various points when God or his glory was revealed (examples where the same Greek word is

translated with a form of *reveal or display*: [John 2:11](#); [9:3](#); [17:6](#)). This post-resurrection appearance certainly fits with that pattern.

In the *KJV*, the *Sea of Galilee* is here called “the sea of Tiberias.” The city of Tiberias was constructed by Herod Antipas in honor of Emperor Tiberius about AD 20. It became Herod Antipas’s capital city, strategically placed on the western coast of the sea with major roads leading north, west, and south from it. The coastline offered good natural protection from attack as well as sweeping views of Galilee. Though the city was of strategic importance for Herod Antipas, Tiberias is named in the New Testament only once ([John 6:23](#)).

### What Do You Think?

When have you been part of a group to whom it seemed that the Lord was present in a special way?

### Digging Deeper

Should Christians seek out such experiences? Why or why not? Give scriptural evidence for your answer.

## 2a. Simon Peter,

The double name *Simon Peter* occurs more often in John than in any other Gospel ([John 1:40](#); [6:68](#); [20:2, 6](#); etc.). No explanation is given for this, but we could imagine it as a subtle way to remind readers both of Simon’s natural life and his calling from Jesus to be Peter ([Matthew 16:18](#)). Before Jesus’ death, Peter seemed to oscillate between two poles: first having great spiritual insight, then becoming blinded by his own expectations (examples: [16:13–16](#), [21–23](#)). Peter was probably named first because he was an unofficial leader among the disciples (see commentary on [John 21:3a](#), below; also [lesson 8](#)), even when his boldness in leadership failed him (example: [Matthew 14:25–31](#)).

Visual for [Lesson 7](#). Allow one minute for learners to reflect on and give thanks for meals that have had spiritual significance for them.

**2b. Thomas (also known as Didymus),**

Both *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) mean “twin,” though who that twin was remains unknown. While the other Gospels acknowledge Thomas was an apostle, only John provides any further information about the man. After Jesus received the news that his friend Lazarus had died, Thomas was the one who suggested the disciples go with Jesus to mourn, even if it meant their deaths ([John 11:8, 14–16](#)). After Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared to the others and remained skeptical about their experience until Jesus appeared to him

too (20:24–29).

### **2c. Nathanael from Cana in Galilee,**

The Gospel of John names *Nathanael* as a disciple, while the other Gospels do not. Where we might expect to find him in the list of apostles, instead there is “Bartholomew” (Matthew 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16; Acts 1:13). These two men could be one and the same, as the prefix *Bar-* (meaning “son of”) would not necessarily be the only name the “son of Tolmai/Talmi” was known by. But there is no evidence that requires this.

In any case, Nathanael was one of Jesus’ earliest followers (John 1:45). His hometown *Cana* was located *in Galilee*, a significant location in the Gospel of John. Here Jesus performed his first two miraculous signs (2:1–11; 4:46–54). Mentioning the town could be intended as a reminder of Jesus’ work in Cana, or it could simply differentiate this Nathanael from someone else who was known to believers.

### **2d. the sons of Zebedee,**

The *sons of Zebedee* were James and John (see Matthew 4:21). The Gospel of John names neither of them as such. But the other Gospels portray them, along with Peter, to be Jesus’ inner circle within the Twelve (17:1; Mark 5:37; 9:2; Luke 8:51). The omission of their names in John’s Gospel has contributed to the view that the beloved disciple (John 21:20) was James or John. He could not be James, however, since Herod killed him in about AD 44 (Acts 12:1–2)—before this Gospel was written. Thus we assume the beloved disciple was none other than John, who chose not to identify himself or his brother by first name in his own Gospel account (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20).

### **2e. and two other disciples were together.**

The *two other disciples* are commonly thought to be Andrew and



Philip ([Matthew 10:2–4](#)). Some disciples can be eliminated rather easily. For instance, Matthew’s work as a tax collector makes it unlikely he was out fishing with the others ([9:9](#); see commentary on [John 21:3a](#), below). Judas Iscariot can be dismissed outright, as he had committed suicide after betraying Jesus ([Matthew 27:3–5](#)). In their favor, both Andrew (Simon Peter’s brother) and Philip have strong associations with the region of Galilee ([John 1:40–45](#)).

**3a. “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.”**

*Simon Peter*, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen ([Mark 1:16–20](#)). Some have considered Peter’s plan to go fishing an abandonment of his discipleship. However, this is not a necessary conclusion, and several indicators suggest it was not the case. First, the disciples’ presence in Galilee itself demonstrates obedience to Jesus (see [Lesson Context](#)).

Second, it seems incongruous that Peter would be opting out of discipleship after the post-resurrection events he had been privy to. He was the first disciple to go inside the empty tomb ([John 20:6–7](#)). Later that evening, Jesus came to the disciples in a locked room; he did so again one week later ([20:19–20](#), [26–27](#)). Peter’s actions and presence during Jesus’ appearances point to renewed dedication.

Third, those who accuse Peter of jettisoning his apostleship must assert the same for the disciples who went fishing with him on this particular occasion. Yet no one seems inclined to make this assertion.

Fourth, multiple times Jesus had said that he was going to his Father (examples: [John 14:12](#), [28](#); [16:28](#)), but he had given little specific content about what the disciples’ post-resurrection role would be. But he *had* told them he would meet them in Galilee—whether because Jesus knew

they would naturally go home to fish, or as a sort of permission to visit home before receiving their commission.

Fifth and finally, Jesus had not told them exactly when he would appear. While home in Galilee, waiting on Jesus to come, there was no reason for Peter and the others to sit around idle. They did better to work as they waited—rather than to stare out a window, twiddling their thumbs.

**3b. So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.**

Fishermen typically worked at *night* on the Sea of Galilee (see [Luke 5:5](#)). Fish would come up to the surface to feed at night, then dive deeper as the sun warmed the surface of the water throughout the day. This rendered nets useless, as they did not sink far enough into the water to catch fish in the warm daylit water (see commentary on [John 21:6](#), below).

### **What Do You Think?**

Which spiritual practices help you to persist when your efforts seem to end in failure?

### **Digging Deeper**

What verses encourage you to depend on God when you have failed?

## **B. Jesus Provides (vv. 4–6)**

**4. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.**

Mary Magdalene at the tomb and, later, other disciples on the road to Emmaus did not immediately recognize *Jesus* ([Luke 24:13–16](#), [30–31](#);

[John 20:13–16](#)). How could all these people not recognize Jesus when faced with him? In the previous examples, it could be that something about Jesus’ resurrected appearance had shifted, making him less immediately identifiable by physical sight. Or perhaps because these people were not expecting to see Jesus after he had died, their eyes simply did not accept the clear evidence before them.

For *the disciples* here, the distance and quality of light could be contributing factors. *Early in the morning* does not necessarily mean that the sun had risen; it could be that the light was that of predawn, enough to see nearby but not in detail far off (see commentary on [John 21:8](#), below). Furthermore, the disciples were tired from their work night, a condition that does not facilitate clear sight.

**5. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.**

Jesus’ question assumed a negative answer. Greco-Roman literature often used *children* (a more literal translation of *friends*) in the context of education. It was a term of endearment from teacher to student that communicated affection deeper than mere collegiality (see also [1 John 2:18](#)). In choosing this word, Jesus positioned himself as a benevolent authority over the disciples and a caring mentor (see commentary on [John 21:6](#), below).

**6. He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.**

[Luke 5:1–11](#) recounts how Jesus met Simon Peter one morning after a similarly unsuccessful night of fishing. On that occasion, Jesus commanded Peter to go cast the nets for a catch, at which time Peter and the sons of Zebedee caught so many fish that the nets began to break. Why

the men obeyed now when the night was over (see commentary on [John 21:4](#), above)—whether they had an inkling this was Jesus, or they remembered that incident—is unclear. But the resulting *large number of fish* is the same.

## II. “It Is the Lord” ([John 21:7–14](#))

### A. First Responders (v. 7)

**7a.** Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

[John 21:20](#), [24](#) indicate that *the disciple whom Jesus loved* was the author of this Gospel. Early church tradition unanimously identified this as John. Moreover, multiple factors indicate this disciple as John, the son of Zebedee. Elsewhere John appears in tandem with Peter, as he does here ([Luke 22:8](#); [John 20:2](#); [Acts 3:1–4:23](#); [8:14](#)).

The Greek word translated *Lord* has a range of uses. It could be the polite address “sir” ([John 12:21](#)), but it could also designate the “lord” over a slave ([15:20](#)). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) utilized this Greek word to translate *Yahweh*, a use reflected in New Testament references to God ([6:68–69](#); [11:27](#); etc.). Who did that disciple think the man on the shore was? Simon Peter’s quick action makes clear both fishermen understood the man on shore to be Jesus (compare [20:3–9](#)).

**7b.** As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

Ancient art and literature depictions of those who fished with nets

indicate that they often worked naked, or at least lightly clad. In deeper waters, fishermen could utilize nets that required a diver to bring one end toward the other, trapping fish inside before funneling them into the seacraft. This would obviously be safer and easier without any garments to weigh a man down. Peter donned his *outer garment* before diving into the water. Appearing naked before Jesus would have been an act of disrespect (compare [Exodus 20:26](#)).

### **What Do You Think?**

How might your possessions be preventing you from seeking to close the distance between you and Jesus?

### **Digging Deeper**

What would it take for you to shed those things that prevent a closer relationship with Jesus?

## **So Happy to See You!**

It was late at night when I pulled my car into the space in front of our apartment building. I'd been gone for weeks. When I looked up to the third floor, I saw a light glowing in the window, indicating that my roommate and our dog were home. As I unpacked my car, I heard paws scrambling down the concrete steps toward me. I turned in time to see a black furry blur burst through the door to greet me.

Like my excited dog, Peter could not wait to see his Lord. Peter jumped into the water and swam to shore, too impatient to wait. Do you look forward to meeting Jesus one day? How does that excitement permeate into your daily walk with him? How *should* it?

—L. M. W.

## B. Second-Wave Disciples (vv. 8–9)

**8. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.**

The Greek indicates that *the boat* was small, in contrast to the number of *fish* the *disciples* caught (see commentary on [John 21:10–11](#), below). It is usually assumed that the six other disciples ([21:2](#)) arrived on shore after Peter, since he was likely a strong swimmer, and their haul of fish likely made the ship move slowly with drag in the water.

**9a. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there**

Peter had stood beside *a fire of burning coals* when he denied Jesus ([John 18:18](#)). It was here that Jesus would reaffirm Peter ([21:15–19](#); see [lesson 8](#)).

**9b. with fish on it, and some bread.**

The presence of *fish* and *bread* likely evoked memories among the disciples of when Jesus converted five loaves and two fish into a filling lunch for 5,000 ([John 6:1–13](#)). After all, they had no idea where he had procured them from this time! But there was Jesus, and there were the bread and fish. They needed no other explanation. Jesus' presence and power were sufficient.

## C. Jesus' Provision (vv. 10–13)

**10–11. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.**

In contrast to asking *Simon Peter* and his fellow fishermen to drop their nets and follow *Jesus* ([Matthew 4:18–20](#)), this seems to be an invita-

tion to finish the task before joining him. It could also be that eating some of *the fish* they had just *caught* was a way to celebrate the bounty Jesus had just provided.

Unsurprisingly, Simon Peter responded first. Though many have tried to find special significance in the number 153, it's more important as an indication that *so many* fish were caught, in contrast with the “nothing” caught earlier (see commentary on [John 21:3b](#), above). There is a sense of marvel that *the net* did not break (contrast [Luke 5:6–7](#)). This detail points not only to Jesus' power to give abundantly but also to provide in such a way that his followers benefit from the abundance. Nothing is lost, nothing is broken when Jesus gives greatly.

### What Do You Think?

When have you experienced Jesus' accepting what you bring to him, even though he has provided more than enough for you?

### Digging Deeper

What applications does Jesus' hospitality have in your own practice?

**12. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.**

Whenever *Jesus* ate with *the disciples*, they recognized him (example: [Luke 24:30–32, 40–43](#)). In [John 6:35](#), Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Both the miracle of the fish and Jesus' sitting down to dine with these fishermen confirmed Jesus' identity as *the Lord* (see commentary on [21:7a](#), above).

**13. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.**

Although this meal bears similarity to Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper ([Mark 14:12–26](#)), it is unlikely that John intended us to understand it in a similar way. The emphasis is on Jesus' presence and the sharing of life that is signified in the sharing of a meal ([John 6:26–40](#)). The resurrected *Jesus* would send the Spirit to be present with his disciples as they embarked on the mission he would give them ([15:26](#); [Acts 1:4–8](#); [2:1–4](#); etc.).

## A Soul Well Fed

I was stuck in the late-Soviet-era Moscow airport with a team of missionaries on our way to Ukraine. Being new to the country and unfamiliar with how things worked, we had only the food we had brought with us on the flight, which was very little.

It was late on our second night when our leader found us a hotel. And beyond beds, there was *food*. Needless to say, we ate ravenously. Two days with just crackers and cereal bars had left us hungry. Even the unfamiliar Russian foods looked and tasted better than anything I'd ever eaten before.

Hard work had whetted the disciples' appetites. But something else also fed them that morning. The time spent with Jesus fed their souls the way the fish fed their bodies. Take time to feed your soul today. Take time to feast with Jesus.

—L. M. W.

### D. Jesus' Third Appearance (v. 14)

**14. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.**



In tandem with [John 21:1](#) (above), this verse bookends the passage, emphasizing Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to eyewitnesses. John, of course, was counting based on the appearances he recorded, not what other Gospels also noted. We might quickly skip over the fact that all this happened *after he was raised from the dead*—but that was the whole point! The grave could not contain *Jesus*; he had risen just as he said. And with this meal, Jesus was preparing *his disciples* for the work he would leave for them.

## Conclusion

### A. An Acted-Out Parable

Jesus is not waiting for Sunday to spend time with his disciples today. While you're at work—whatever that looks like for you—Jesus still invites you to experience his abundance and spend time with him. How can you ensure that you don't miss these opportunities?

#### What Do You Think?

What groups are you a part of in which you all intentionally seek time with Jesus?

#### Digging Deeper

How do you experience Jesus differently in the presence of other believers than in your solitary devotion time?

### B. Prayer

Our Father, we marvel at the abundance of life we find in Jesus. And we thank you for sending him to us! We give thanks in Jesus' name.

Amen.

## C. Thought to Remember

Recognize the Lord and receive his abundance.

# Involvement Learning

*Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).*

## Into the Lesson

Provide breakfast food and drinks to enhance the opportunity for group fellowship. As you're enjoying the snack, gather around in a circle and brainstorm the distinctions and overlaps between "fellowship" and "friendship." Invite group members to share their perspectives on why it's important to differentiate between the two. Say, "Today's Bible study helps us understand how Jesus and his friends were in fellowship."

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the "Word for Word" exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners complete it individually in one minute or less before discussing in small groups. Transition to the Bible study by saying, "Today's lesson will show us how the concepts of trust, belief, faith, and obedience are interrelated."

## Into the Word

Write on the board *Trust / Belief / Faith / Obedience* as the headers of four columns. Ask learners to define each of these words. Jot responses under column headings as they are offered.

Read [John 21:1–14](#). Have the group discuss how the four words are interconnected in the Scripture passage as they consider the symbolic invitation of Jesus standing on the shore.

Distribute blank paper and pens for writing and drawing. Ask students to each divide the page into four equal parts. Read the passage a second time, pausing to give the following instructions for their indicated verses. Do not read the words in parentheses.

Verses [1–2](#)—In the first square, illustrate seven men in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee; Jesus had instructed them to meet him there. (*Obedience*)

Verses [3–6](#)—In the next square, illustrate the fishermen catching fish on the right side of the boat, trusting Jesus’ instructions. (*Trust*)

Verses [7–8](#)—In the third square, show Peter casting himself into the sea to greet the Lord, and the others following behind in a little boat. (*Belief*)

Verses [9–14](#)—In the final square, draw the disciples readily accepting Jesus’ invitation to “come and dine.” (*Faith*)

Remind learners of the headings on the board. Challenge the class to assign each of the four words as a label to their four drawings. Discuss their responses as a group. Allow learners to support their answers.

*Alternative.* Write these words on the board: *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How many?* Divide learners into pairs. Assign each pair one or more verses from the text, making sure all the verses are covered. Invite pairs to read their verses and, based on their reading, answer as many of the questions on the board as possible. After a few minutes, go

through the verses in order as the groups share their questions and answers.

Ask participants to think again about relationships as you reread verses 12–13. Invite the learners to brainstorm reasons that the disciples recognized Jesus.

## Into Life

Ask learners to share experiences in which they sensed that Jesus was at work. As a whole class, create a word cloud on the board with ways of recognizing Jesus at work. (A word cloud is a collection of words or phrases. The bigger and bolder a word or phrase is, the more times it is mentioned or is important.) Be sure to include everyday experiences.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “I See Jesus” exercise from the activity page. Have learners complete it as directed.

After either activity, invite learners to write a prayer for eyes to recognize Jesus at work. Encourage participants to refer to their prayer throughout the week.