

“Had A Bad Day!”

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Jesus’ disciples had just gone through a rough few weeks. They followed Jesus to Jerusalem, had a Last Supper with Him, watched Him be arrested, tried, convicted, and crucified. Then on top of all that women came and told them Jesus had risen! Some of the disciples had actually gone to the tomb to see for themselves and came back and confirmed, the tomb was empty! They really didn’t know what to think!

But on that first Easter evening, Jesus appeared to them while they were locked in a room because of fear. The next week He appeared to them for the second time and said believing needs to be based on faith not sight! So, seven of the disciples decided they needed to get away and think!

Turn to John 21. These disciples decided to return home to Galilee. Since this was their home area, they decided to do what they felt most comfortable doing: fishing! They always fished in the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a fresh water lake 13 miles long north to south and 8 miles wide east to west. It has short mountains on three sides. This can make the water rather choppy when the wind picks up.

I just saw a news story this week that they’ve discovered a giant stone structure under the water of the Sea. It’s cone-shaped and is about 32 feet high and has a diameter of 230 ft. It’s made up of boulders stacked on one another. It definitely was human-made and probably built on land, but was covered by the Sea of Galilee as the water rose. One Israeli researcher believes it could date back more than 4,000 years! Jesus was now going to appear for the third time.

Like any good fishermen, the disciples went out to fish at night. Let’s go to the story looking at verses 3-5, *“Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.”* They really were having a bad day!

This was a group of hungry, tired, and discouraged disciples. They’d fished all night and had nothing to show for it. Many of us experience exactly what they were feeling. Many times we feel discouraged, depressed, exhausted.

When Jesus asked them if they had any fish, He already knew the answer, but He wanted them to share their need with Him. Scripture tells us Jesus knows our needs even before we ask Him. He knows how things are going in our lives, but He wants us to tell Him about them. Listen to Matthew 6:7-8, *“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”*

But look and see how Jesus quickly changes this terribly bad day into something wonderful! Look at verses 6-8, *“He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.”*

Jesus was standing on the shore about to perform a miracle that would remind the disciples of Who He was and what He could do! John’s reaction to this miracle was to realize it was Jesus on the shore and He was their Lord and Savior! This story reminds us Jesus works miracles in our lives when we share our needs with Him. He stands ready to fill us with His power and grace as we open our hearts to Him.

What kind of needs do you have this morning? Do you need strength or deliverance? Do you need encouragement or joy? Please know Jesus is the only one who can take care of your needs. Listen to Philippians 4:19, *“My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* If you have a need, God has an answer! Bring your needs to Him in faith and He’ll provide for you!

The size of the miracle was huge! Look at verses 10-11, *“Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.”* This was an impressive catch! It was so impressive that the disciples took the time to count how many there were! There were 153!

Did you notice at the beginning of the Gospel the first two disciples mentioned here? Simon Peter, the denier, and Thomas, the doubter. Their presence reminds us of how much the disciples, just like us, truly needed the love and forgiveness of their risen Lord and Savior. These weren’t perfect disciples with perfect faith whom Jesus was now rewarding with a perfect catch of fish, but were sinners like you and me! We have no way of saving ourselves or making up for all the ways in which we’ve offended, denied, or doubted God.

Everything Jesus did for them and does for us flows entirely and purely from His grace, and His undeserved love for undeserving sinners. He comes to you and blesses you as He washes away all your sins in His blood. Every wrong you’ve done is gone! Because of what He’s done, eternal life is yours!

But there’s one more lesson worth learning here, and that’s that Christ does miracles in our lives! The greatest miracle is salvation through Him alone! One of the ways the disciples knew it was Jesus standing on the shore was the way in which this miracle happened. It was almost identical to one Jesus did at the beginning of His ministry right before He called them to be “Fishers of Men.” This miracle strengthened them, in faith and determination, as they got closer to the time when they would go out, on their own, into the world to catch men for Christ.

That’s the same mission He’s given us! We’re to take the message of His love and forgiveness to the world around us. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to build us up and strengthen us. The Holy Spirit is always there. We’re not doing it alone!

God doesn’t have a *“only one miracle per person per lifetime”* limit! There’s no limits! If God’s blessed you once, and He has, abundantly, He will bless you again and again. You can count on it!

Take your bad days to Him! Confess your sins and receive His forgiveness! Turn your heart to Him and serve Him with everything you’ve been given! Be His ambassador to the world around you! As you rely on His presence, love, and grace, remember to say, *“My God will supply every need of mine according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*