

# Are You Going Fishing?

by Daniel Kenaston

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*The sermon explores the theme of returning to comfort zones and the challenges of discipleship through Peter's fishing experience after Jesus' resurrection.*

**Duration:** 1:36:08

**Scripture:** John 21

**Topics:** "Forsaking Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the topic of backsliding and uses the analogy of fishing to convey his message. He focuses on the story of Simon Peter and how Jesus watched him and the other disciples struggle with empty nets. The speaker emphasizes Jesus' concern for his disciples and his desire for them to fulfill their calling. He concludes by urging the audience to be willing to engage in the spiritual battle and be a part of the victory.

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## Transcript

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The strife will not be long. This day the noise of battle and tomorrow the victory song. Lord, we want to be a part of that victory song.

We want to be willing for the battle. We want to be willing for the noise and the stress and strain of the battle. And we want to be found true and faithful in Your victory when it comes tomorrow.

Father, thank You for this Sunday morning. I pray, Lord, that You will speak to our hearts this morning. I pray, God, that You will minister individually to us.

You are our corporate Father, but You are also our individual Father. And Father, we know that You want to speak to our hearts this morning. We open our hearts to hear from You.

Put an anointing on my lips, Lord. I'm trusting You. In Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. Well, I give you greetings this morning in Jesus' name.

I'm grateful to be here. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to share with you the charity church, as Abigail calls it. Grandpa's Church.

Are we going to Grandpa's Church or the Fountain Church this morning? That's what the children ask. And I'm glad to be here at home with all of you and have the opportunity to share God's Word from this pulpit. Let's turn to John chapter 21.

Over the last couple of years, I've had a number of young people serving under me there in Ghana. And sometimes on Sunday mornings, depending on our preaching schedule and which villages we're in, Sunday mornings, if we're at home, we'll gather in what we call the big round room. We have six round huts in our compound there in Bumbon.

And one of them is what we call the big round room because it's the largest of our round rooms. A dirt or mud wall with a grass roof. But that is our living room.

That's where I have meetings during the week. That's where we gather for, maybe if we have guests, if I have a leaders meeting, or if we're just going to have church as missionaries there in Bumbon, we'll gather in the round room. Somehow this morning, I wish that I could bring all of you into that round room.

Partially because I'd like you to come to Ghana. But because of what I'd like to share with you this morning, the burden that the Lord has laid on my heart is a bit more devotional in nature. And I don't mean that it's a 15 minutes devotion, at least I hope it won't be.

But I more mean the tenor or tone of what the Lord has laid on my heart is more devotional. And I wish that we could all sit in that round room. A round room means that we're all facing each other all the time, and somehow that gives a very sweet, close feel.

But we can't, and I just like to, I'm giving you that as a background because that's my heart this morning as I speak to you. I wish that I could look into your eyes from only 15 feet instead of 50 feet, or 100 feet, or however far it is if you're sitting back there in the back. John chapter 21.

To give a title to the words that are on my heart this morning, if I was to give a title to it, I would say this. Are you going fishing? Are you going fishing? I think that the fishing season opened here just a couple of weeks ago in Pennsylvania. At least I've seen a lot of activity along our creeks and streams and rivers.

And I'd like to talk to us this morning about a different type of fishing. Are you going fishing? John chapter 21 is the last chapter of the book of John. In this chapter we have John's account of the third encounter that the disciples have with Jesus after His resurrection.

Basically the entire chapter is given over to this third encounter. John says this is the third time that Jesus is showing Himself to His disciples. And there's a number of lessons that I think God would have us draw from this account this morning.

All centering around the theme of fishing, but not in a physical sense. Let's read this chapter together. John chapter 21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.

And on this wise showed He Himself. There were together Simon Peter and Thomas Caldidimus and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee and the sons of Zebedee and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.

And they say unto him, we also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately. And that night they caught nothing.

So when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore. But the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? And they answered Him, No.

And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat upon him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits, dragging the net with fishes. And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes, and hundred, and fifty, and three. And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? Knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? And he saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, Follow me. I think we'll stop reading there.

I've been meditating on this chapter for a number of months, and the Lord just continues to open beautiful little insights in a dozen different directions that I would like to share with you this morning. I said that if I was to give a title, I would give it as this. Are you going fishing? But the lessons that I think we can draw

from this chapter have to do with, we could say the science or the experience of backsliding.

The experience of backsliding. We have Simon Peter as the main mover and shaker through this whole chapter. He's the one who speaks.

He's the one who acts. He's the one who Jesus asks questions of, and he's the one who answers the questions. There were, I believe, seven of the disciples together who are involved in this story.

But as usual, Peter is the one talking and doing most of the things in the story. So he is the main character that we'll be looking at this morning. Peter is the one who makes the suggestion in verse 3, I go a fishing.

But before we start talking about Peter and this fishing expedition, I think we should just mentally run through what has happened in chapter 18, 19, and 20. Because that is the background which gives meaning to Peter's phrase, I go a fishing. We all know that Peter was a fisherman by trade.

That was the work that Peter had done. Probably his father, from what we know, his father was a fisherman. And Peter grew up having seaman's legs.

He grew up on a boat. A boat was almost his home. He spent many days and many nights on the Sea of Galilee in a little fishing boat.

Rowing, adjusting the sails, throwing the nets, sorting the fish. Peter was, until he met Jesus, a fisherman. That was his trade.

That was his personality. That was who Peter was. Then he met Jesus about three years before John chapter 21 here.

And when he met Jesus, Jesus called him away from his fishing nets, called him away from who he had always been, and called him to become a fisher of men. He called him away from what was comfortable to Peter into a life of following Jesus. And Peter followed Jesus.

He bumbled, he made some mistakes, but he believed in who Jesus was. And he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. And those things affected Peter's life for three years.

He followed Jesus more strongly than most. Yes, when he made mistakes, they were stronger than other people's mistakes, but Peter believed Jesus. And I think all of us can identify with Peter's faith and his bumbblings.

So Peter followed Jesus along with the other disciples for these three or three and a half years. And the disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah. And as the Messiah, they viewed him not just as a spiritual king, but as a physical king.

And they were waiting for Jesus to set up his throne in Jerusalem. We all know that history and the perspective that they had as they followed Jesus. And then chapters 18, 19, and 20 come.

And we know what happens. Jesus goes to Jerusalem bound in his spirit, knowing that it was his time. He goes up for the Passover.

He's arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples are so shattered by that experience that they can hardly hold themselves together. Most of them run away.

A couple try to defend Jesus. Some slink along in the background. And we don't need to identify who Peter may or may not have been in the stories.

But this was a shattering experience. Everything that the disciples had believed about Jesus fell apart in chapters 18, 19, and 20. Suddenly their king, the one who they were following, was held by the Jewish people.

They went to Caiaphas. They went to see Pilate. And Jesus is condemned to die by the Jewish mob.

And then Jesus goes to the cross. And the disciples watched all of these things in horror. Their hero is crucified.

And in a matter of just one 24 or 36 hour period, Jesus goes from being, in their minds, being the Messiah, to death. And not just a normal death, but one of the most disgraceful deaths that they knew in their society. There follows a couple of days of probably indescribable agony for the disciples.

Enough so that in their agony and in their doubts, they forgot Jesus' words that He would rise again. Yes, Jesus had said He would rise again, but when He said that, they were still waiting for Him to set up His throne. And they probably didn't really understand what that meant.

And now Jesus was dead. And their whole lives were turned upside down. And they spent a couple of days in agony there.

And then the resurrection occurs. Suddenly the commitment that the disciples have made to Jesus is taking them miles and miles further than they ever anticipated. It was not easy to follow Jesus physically for three years.

There were some easy times, but there were some difficult times. When everyone else left Him. And here were these twelve disciples following Jesus.

It was not easy to follow Jesus through His three years on this earth. But it was infinitely more difficult to walk with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane. To walk with Jesus to the palace of the High Priest and to... before Pilate.

To watch Him be condemned to die. To follow Him up to the Mount Calvary and watch Him be crucified. Still expecting Him to do some miracle at the last moment.

But He doesn't. He dies. And He's buried.

It was so difficult for the disciples to walk through this with Jesus. As you can imagine it would be. Three days later there's the resurrection.

And in some ways the resurrection probably just thrilled them to no end. But still, there's no throne. Still, Jesus doesn't seem like He's gathering an army, setting up advisors, taking over territory.

The disciples have seen Jesus twice. The fear that came over the disciples. Hiding for the fear of the Jews.

Hiding, wondering, will they take us next? We were His disciples. We were the twelve who were always with Him. Will they take us next? And then the resurrection.

A wonderful thing. But at the same time, a frightful thing. Jesus resurrects from the dead and now He shows up in their presence through closed doors, through the roof.

He just shows up in their presence. It's wonderful, but if you look at it through the eyes of the disciples, it's frightening. Peter and John and all of them, they are so far removed from all that they once were.

They are so far removed from their comfort zone. We shouldn't be too hard on them. We look back in retrospect at all that Jesus did and we know the plan of the cross and we know the resurrection and we know Christ's desire for the world to be one to Him and we look back at all of that and sometimes it's hard for us to have faith.

But they were walking through it and their lives were so uprooted and turned over and twisted and mottled, they were confused. They were frightened. That is the background to chapter 21 of John.

Jesus has shown up twice in their midst. Just appears. He's a spirit.

But they're trying to understand, is this Jesus? He shows up in our midst. Just walks in through a closed door. But then when we give Him food, He eats it.

They are miles outside of all that they've ever known. All of their mental understandings, their boxes that they've built, the way that they have viewed the world is being totally shattered. This commitment that they have made to Christ is suddenly costing them infinitely more than they ever dreamed it could.

And these are not untried disciples. Peter has already walked with Jesus through some incredibly difficult things. They've already trekked all over Israel with nothing but the shoes on their feet.

They've been with Jesus when the thousands were there and they thought He was going to become king at any moment. They've been with Jesus when everyone left. These are not untried disciples.

These are not people who have no commitment to Christ. The disciples love the Lord. Peter loved the Lord.

And yet, looking at all that had happened in these last three chapters, the disciples were frightened. Seven or eight of the disciples are together here in the first couple verses of chapter 21. And over against that background, Simon Peter saith to them, I go a fishing.

And they say unto him, we also go with thee. I don't think that Peter had fished for three years. He'd been around boats.

He'd been in boats. They'd crossed the Sea of Galilee. I don't believe that Peter had been fishing.

I may be wrong there if there's a verse that talks about them fishing, but I don't recollect it. I don't believe Peter's been fishing for three years. But here on these troubled days between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension, these days of wonder, but at the same time doubt, these days that just turned their world upside down, Peter said, I go a fishing.

And when Peter said those words, I think you and I know immediately that for Peter, it wasn't so much, I need to go get in a boat. But it was for Peter, I'm stepping back to what I know. I'm stepping back to what is comfortable to me.

I am going back to my comfort zone. This is too difficult for me. I don't understand what I'm supposed to do.

I don't understand what Jesus is doing. I don't understand this death, this totally disgraceful death. And then a few days later, He resurrects.

If He was going to resurrect, why did He have to die? And all these confusing thoughts had to be going through the minds of the disciples. And in the midst of that, Peter says, I'm going fishing. I'm going to go get back in a boat.

I'm going to go back to what I have known. I know that you and I can identify with Peter. That's what I would like us to do throughout this entire chapter.

I would like us to identify with Peter. I would like us to identify in our own lives where we are and when we have been like Peter was in these verses. You know, we love the Lord.

We want to follow Him. We want to obey Him. We're willing to be His disciples.

But that willingness to be His disciple does not mean that we will never face a temptation to backsliding. The fact that we have followed Jesus as Peter did does not mean that we will never come to a time in our life where we will be tempted to take a step back. I think you know in your heart that there have been numerous times in your life and I know there have been in mine when I walk up to something that the realization that this is what God is asking me to do.

Following Christ is going to cost me this. And I didn't know it was going to cost me this. But now I see clearly that following Christ is not going to happen according to my expectations.

I'm going to be asked to give up or lay down or yield yet another thing. And faced with that life-uprooting realization, we step back. And it's not fishing for most of us.

I don't have any problem with throwing a line in with your sons. Fishing is not our comfort zone. I don't know of any of us that grew up fishing.

But it was for Peter. And you and I have our comfort zones. We have those things in which we are most comfortable.

The fishing was not sin. It was just that it was a step back from the life that Jesus was calling Peter to live. He stepped back.

In that crucial moment when the realization began to dawn on him of what Jesus was really asking, Peter stepped back and said, I'm going fishing. I need to feel a boat rocking under my feet. I need to feel a breeze on my face.

I need to feel a net in my hands. Take me back to what I know. I go fishing.

Just a few words. We've all been there. You know what your fishing is.

You know what your comfort zone is. I know what mine are. And we've all faced the temptation.

And we've all succumbed to the temptation at times of stepping back in that crucial moment. Peter says, I go fishing. And they say unto him, we also go with thee.

Several of these men were fishermen. Not only Peter. The sons of Zebedee were also fishermen.

You have a group of fishermen here saying, it's been a long time since we've been in a fishing boat. I don't know what's going on. Let's go back to what we know.

Let's go back to the fishing boat. We also go with thee. And they went forth.

And entered into a ship immediately. I promise you, when you come to those crucial moments in your life, where you see what Christ is asking of you, you see what you need to give up, you see what you need to submit to, you see where you need to give in, you see an area of your life that needs to die. When at that crucial moment, you and I decide to go fishing, I promise you, the devil will have a boat ready.

And they entered into a boat immediately. They didn't need to take a week to rent one. They didn't need to wander around Tiberias looking for a ship.

There was one right there. It was convenient to take a step back. And it will be in your life.

It will be in my life. When we see what Christ is asking of us, and we decide in that crucial moment, that's too much. I can't do that.

In that moment, a boat will appear. And they got into a ship immediately. That's the devil.

Let's have a boat right there. Let's make this backsliding, let's make this backstepping process as easy as possible. You know, the devil likes comfort zones, even spiritual comfort zones.

Anything to keep us from taking those critical steps that the knowledge of Christ in us is asking for. Even a spiritual comfort zone. Get them back in a boat, the devil said.

Let's just get Peter back in a ship. If we can see him, if he can get himself back in a boat and feel that net in his hands, and feel the breeze on his face, Peter will say, yes, this is what I am. I'm a fisherman.

I've been a fisherman all my life. These three years, yeah, I've been following Jesus. That's a strange, but just a very short period in my life.

For all my life, I've been a fisherman. Back to my comfort zone. And immediately, they entered into a ship.

But oh, thank God for His mercy. And that night, they caught nothing. You can be sure that while the devil arranges ships to be ready for our every weak moment, the Lord also controls the fish.

The Lord also controls the circumstances of our lives. And it says that night, they caught nothing. Fishing at night is not unusual.

I don't know about here in America for sport. But in the places of the world where they fish for a life, you know, when they fish for their work, when that's what they're doing, commercial fishing, fishing at night is very common. It's just six words.

It says that night, they caught nothing. But don't let the brevity of those words underestimate in your minds the amount, or cause you to underestimate the amount of work involved in those six words. Commercial fishing is work.

And I've had the opportunity to help pull nets in years ago when I lived on the coast there in Ghana, around Cape Coast, pulling nets out of the Atlantic Ocean. It is work. You know, we kind of picture fishing, throw the line, reel it in, throw the line, reel it in.

This is net fishing. A long net and a boat. You go out, you throw the net on this side, and then you loop it around, sometimes a quarter mile, sometimes a block.

You loop it around, you put the two ends together, and then you start pulling, pulling, pulling. And that night, they caught nothing. That means they threw that net into the water and went through that entire process.

Put the net down, roll yourself around, catch the other end of the net and start pulling, pulling. That process could have taken 30 minutes or two hours for each setting of the net. And the fact that there was nothing in the net does not mean that the pulling was easy.

I remember helping to pull a net in Cape Coast and thinking, you know, here we are, about 15 men, all shouting and pulling together like some kind of a military drill. And we could just gain about 12 inches at a time with 15 men doing tug of war. And I'm thinking, there's got to be a whale inside this net.

And I remember pulling it in and just walking down there to where the end of the net was. And here's a few shrimp, you know, and a couple crabs. Wow, that's a lot of work.

But all night they caught nothing. Not a mackerel, not a fingerling, not a little fish, nothing. And time and time again they pulled those nets in with nothing.

Remember that Peter and the disciples are taking a step backwards into their comfort zone. And God in His mercy is not allowing them and He does not allow us the fulfillment that we desire when we step back. You know, what if there had been a lot of fish? The course of the rest of the New Testament could have been very, very different.

If there had been a lot of fish that night. Wow! Pulling in the fish. Good price the next morning.

Peter's heart could have gone. He takes a step back from what Christ is asking of him. And he goes fishing.

And yes, there's a boat ready. But there's no fish. None.

Twelve o'clock. One o'clock in the morning. Let's go over here.

Let's go over to the other shore. Throw out the net. Do it again.

Not a fish. Let's row over to the other side. Let's throw out the net.

Pull, pull, pull. Not a fish. That's pretty discouraging.

Two, three o'clock in the morning. Soaked. Cold.

Hands all ripped up from the ropes. Pulling nets in. And there is nothing there.

I know that you and I can identify with that. I know that there are times in my life where I step back. Sometimes for an hour.

Sometimes for a week. In my heart or your heart. We step back from what God is asking of us.

We step back from the surrender that Christ is demanding for our lives. And we go back into our comfort zone. And we go fishing so to speak.

And we find no fish. None. No fish.

Can you imagine the emptiness of the effort after hours of pulling in nets and throwing down nets and rowing to the other side and there's not a fish to show for it. These men who are looking for something comforting. These men who are looking for an old fulfillment from their past.

They're finding nothing. Maybe that's what you can identify with this morning. Maybe you stepped back and you found that a boat was immediately waiting for you.

And it was so easy so convenient to step back from the sacrifice that Christ was asking of you. Or maybe you find yourself in the middle of the night pulling in the net looking for that comfort that something familiar should be bringing to your life. Looking for the comfort that should be in the comfort zone.

And yet, empty nets. Thank God for those empty nets. Thank God that He directs those fish.

Because how many times would you and I have made a backstep, a permanent backsliding in our lives if it wasn't for the fact that there's really no fulfillment outside of Christ. Thank God the fish were not filling the nets that night. Thank God that those disciples did not find fulfillment in stepping back to their old life and filling a good old boat with fish.

All night long. 3 o'clock in the morning. 4 o'clock.

The first colorings of dawn. Disciples saying to each other, I can't believe we haven't even caught a single fish. They're getting hungry.

It's 5 o'clock in the morning. What are we going to have for breakfast, guys? At least you would have thought we would have a half dozen fish that we could fry for breakfast. We have fished all night for absolutely nothing.

This has been an exercise in futility. Even if it had not been the first time in three years that they were fishing, it would have felt empty and futile. But for men who have been fishing for years, this is very discouraging.

I just wanted to fish. You can just hear Peter saying it. I just want to go fishing.

Just one night. And there's no fish. Not one.

Verse 4 says, But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Think about Jesus there in the early light of dawn, watching the disciples pull in empty nets. Think about Christ watching your life and my life when we backslide, when we step back.

Think about Him watching our futile floundering efforts with empty nets. Think about the loving heart of Jesus. Loving His disciples, but at the same time, yearning that they would fulfill what He called them to do.

You have to know that in the heart of Jesus, there was concern. He knows that He's only a few days away from ascending to His Father back in Heaven. And here's about 75% of His disciples in a boat fishing.

These are 7 or 8 of the men that He is counting on to turn the world upside down. And they're fishing. And He knows the battle that's going on in their hearts.

And as the light of dawn slowly begins to spread across the Sea of Galilee, the disciples become conscious of a man standing on the shore. But they didn't know that it was Jesus. But they just saw a man standing there.

And you can be sure that Jesus was watching them. He probably watched them all night in His spiritual body. All night watching their futility.

Have you ever pulled in an empty net? Have you ever pulled in 10 of them in your life? Looking for fulfillment somewhere other than following the direction that Christ is putting into your life and my life. You know that feeling? Of pulling in an empty net. Looking for fulfillment in the fish when Christ hasn't told you to fish.

Empty nets. Futility. Emptiness.

I know the feeling. Then this man who's standing on the seashore says something to the disciples. Children, have ye any meat? Children, have ye any meat? This voice comes across the water a couple hundred feet across the water to the disciples in the boat.

Children, have ye any meat? It's a common thing to ask fishermen. Do you have any meat? Maybe six months ago or so, I was with my family. There's one lake in Ghana which is I think formed many, many years ago from an inactive volcano.

And we occasionally go there. It's close to Kumasi. We occasionally go there to rest for a couple of days.

It's green and moist and beautiful and it's a place where we can go to get away. It's a lake and there's dozens of fishermen sitting on pieces of log and paddling their way around this lake, fishing. But when a fisherman is coming back, we did this.

Fisherman's coming across the water. He's coming back to the shore and there we are along the shore. We thought, let's buy some fish.

We can't get it any fresher than this. We're camping right there along the side of the water. We'll cook them up.

Do you have any fish? And there's Jesus seeing His disciples. Children. Only Jesus can say that to Peter.

Children. It's likely that Peter was even older than Jesus. Children, have ye any meat? And they answered, no.

No. No meat. Yes, you see a boat.

Yes, you see seven or eight strapping men pulling in nets. It looks like a fishing fleet. It looks like a fishing operation.

But we don't have anything. Maybe that's where you're at this morning. I hope we can all be there this morning if we're not.

If we have, this week or this year, step back from what Christ is asking of us. I hope that we can be honest enough to answer our dear loving Father this morning. When He stands on the seashore of our life and says, children, do you have any meat? Are you finding a fulfillment that you're looking for? Do you have any meat? I hope that we can be honest as the disciples were and just say, no.

I don't have anything. That was confession. It was a one word confession.

But with that one word, they confessed to ten hours of futile fishing for eight men. Seven or eight men. In that single word, they said all of our efforts have come to nothing.

We found a boat. We threw the nets. We pulled the men.

All night long. But we have no meat. None.

Not a little bit. Not a small catch. None.

In my own life, when I compare the fulfillment of truly pouring my life out into God's purposes, and I compare that to the futility of seeking for fulfillment anywhere else. It's not a little bit of meat situation. It's a no meat situation.

No meat. No fulfillment. And the disciples were honest.

Shouted out across the water, no. We have no meat. We have nothing.

And He said unto them, cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find. You have a fishing operation here which is just about to be sanctified by the command of Jesus. You have all these men in a boat.

They've been working all night long throwing out the net and pulling it in. And now Jesus stands on the shore and gives them a command. And now instead of fishing under their own choice, now instead of making their own way to go out and go fishing, instead of their own choice, they are now going to fish under the command of Jesus.

It's very, very different. Living your life, me living my life under my own will, under my own power, under my own steam, so to speak, and living your and my life under the direction of Jesus Christ is so vastly different. It can hardly be compared.

And so it was for the disciples. All night for nothing. And then the command of Jesus.

Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find. They cast therefore. And now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

They cast therefore. And now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. This net is not capable of dealing with the fish.

And this human heart is not capable of dealing with the fulfillment and the joy that comes from living a life in obedience to Christ's commands. Isn't that right? Some of you live there all the time. But all of you have tasted some time in your life where your whole life top to bottom was totally submitted to Jesus Christ.

Wasn't it wonderful? Wasn't it fulfilling? And here's the net. Empty all night long through their human effort. But now at the command of Jesus so full that they can't even pull it in.

This net was not made to contain 153 fish. Not 153 great fish. And they can't pull it in.

Suddenly it dawned upon the disciples. It is the Lord. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loves saith unto Peter, John, the writer of this book, he always refers to himself in a hidden way.

He says to Peter, it's the Lord. It is the Lord, Peter. Other disciples.

That man standing there is not a man. That man who just told us to throw the net on the other side of the boat. That man whose command we obeyed.

That man whose command we obeyed who just revolutionized our lives through this catch of fish. That's not a man. That is the Lord.

John was perceptive and in that moment he knew. Never in the history of fishing has a group of fishermen ever gone from all night of nothing to more than your net can bear in five minutes. There are times where you find a school of fish and fill your net better here than you do over there.

But you never go from all night of nothing to a net overflowing with fish in five minutes. And certainly not from just moving it over six feet to the other side of the boat. If you're living right at that moment, wondering whether to obey the command of that man on the shore who is Jesus on your seashore and on my seashore.

It is Jesus. It is the Lord. If you're standing there wondering pull up the net from this side move it over to this side.

If you're wondering just do it. Do it! Because Christ can revolutionize your life in that moment of obedience. One moment of obedience can characterize your life forever.

Just like one moment of disobedience can characterize and influence and direct us forever if it's not repented of. And in that moment that exercise of fishing went from the will of Peter to the will of Jesus. From totally unfulfilled to totally overfilled.

From no fish in the net to more than the net can carry. From a night of futility to a morning of fulfillment. Just by taking the net out.

Sometimes I look into my own life and sometimes I look into your life my dear brothers and sisters and I just say, God, why is it that we are willing to live on the left side of the boat when there's just a small act of obedience that crosses us back over that line into obeying your commands. And on this side of the boat God knows that there's a huge school of fish. Big fish.

Great fish. Speaking with my brother-in-law Andrew who fished there in Guyana from his home. I think the largest fish he pulled in was a 220 pound, some type of a catfish.

Can you imagine how much meat you get off of a 200 pound catfish? He said he took steaks off that thick. That's fish. I'm not sure that the fish were that big.

They wouldn't have stayed in the net. But 153 great fish on this side of the boat. And emptiness and futility on this side of the boat.

And yet, how many years have I lived? And how many years have you lived? And how many moments are you yet going to continue to live on this side of the boat? So, when Christ commands, says, throw it on this side and you will find. And I say to you, obey what Christ is saying to your life and you will find. There's fish on the other side.

Young people, if you're standing on this side of the boat, it's only six feet to the other side of that canoe. But what a six feet it is. It's only six feet many times in our lives.

That crucial moment of obedience. It's only six feet between obedience and disobedience. It's only six feet between utter unfulfillment and total fulfillment.

Empty nets to overflowing nets. What an incredible comparison. Just across the canoe.

Oh, that Christ would minister that into our hearts this morning. Just across the canoe is a life of fulfillment and blessing. And brothers and sisters, if you live on this side of the canoe, no, it's only six feet backwards to the other life.

It's wonderful and terrible at the same time. From this side to that side, it's just six feet across the canoe. But if we're living in this wonderful life of fulfillment, don't think for a moment that you've gone too far that you could never backslide.

It's just six feet to living on this side of the canoe. Futility. An empty life.

No fulfillment. No blessing. A life lived according to my selfish will.

They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Can you imagine the shock of those disciples? Start to pull the net in. Whoa, I see a big one.

You can be sure they shouted. These are men who have fished all night. Don't forget that.

The first great fish that they saw. I'd like to picture them about that big. The first great fish that they saw in that net.

You know those men shouted. Another one. Another one.

And as the net closed, they could see this writhing mass of great fish. Wow. That's incredible.

These are men who have lived with disappointment all night long. And you know that that moment was very instructive and very teachable in their lives. Because they spent the whole night with nothing.

And now at this simple, almost crazy command of Jesus, their lives as fishermen have changed over to fulfillment and abundance. Don't think for a moment that the decisions of your life are made in bigger decisions than that. That's what our lives are made up of.

We make six-foot decisions that impact the entire course of our lives. That's how our lives are tracked. That's how we live out our lives.

That's the road of our life. We make little decisions to the left or right that impact us for eternity. And these disciples made a choice.

Though they had made the choice to go fishing, now they made the choice to move the net over to the other side and into fulfillment. Wonderful fulfillment. Verse 7, Therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loves saith unto Peter, it is the Lord.

And oh, to be the one who at that moment recognizes the voice and image and act of our Father, our Savior, and says, it is the Lord. This finger of God on my life, it is the Lord. These circumstances, these commands, it is the Lord.

That vague human figure standing on the shore of your life, speaking into your life, it is the Lord. Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked and he did cast himself into the sea. That's Peter.

I'm not going to stay in this boat. He may flip flop back and forth, but when he knows that it's the Lord, he just casts himself into the sea. I'm going to where the Lord is.

And he threw himself into the water. That's the Lord. He quick got himself dressed and threw himself into the water.

And the other disciples came in a little ship, for they were not far from land, but as it were 200 cubits, about 300 feet from the shore. And the other disciples came in a little ship dragging the net with fishes. And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there and fish.

Think about it. Fish. Those same disciples who fished all night and had nothing, walk up to the shore and here's Jesus with fish.

Not fish out of their net. Fish that were there cooking before Jesus even told them throw your net on the other side. You know, don't deceive yourself that Jesus needs your fish.

If he doesn't tell you to fish, if he doesn't tell you to do what you're doing, if he's not directing you to live the life that you're living, he doesn't need you to be living it. Because he can come up with the fish. They're out there futilely fishing.

Have you any meat? He already had the fish. As soon as they got there, they already saw the fish on the fire. Their needs were provided for.

Though they were futilely pulling in the net, first wanting profit and then towards the end of the night probably just wanting breakfast. Jesus already had the fish on the fire. Our loving, sweet Father has the fish on the fire.

He is already working to prepare fulfillment for your life. If only we make the decision to obey Him. They came to land.

They saw a fire of coals there. If you're backslidden this morning, and maybe not backslidden in the traditional sense of the word, you've thrown everything away. But maybe backslidden from the perspective of Peter here.

Just stepping back momentarily or for a day, stepping back from what God is asking of me. If you're backslidden this morning, the heart of God has already kindled a fire and put fish on for you. He knows you'll be back.

He knows there's no fulfillment in that empty life of fishing. It's not fulfilling for you anymore. You have been called to something greater.

You have tasted the fulfillment of obeying Jesus Christ. You won't be satisfied with a life of empty fishing. He knows there's no fish there anyway.

But He has already made a fire. And He's already put your food on to cook. He's waiting for you and I this morning.

Simon Peter went up. No, sorry, verse 10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring up the fish which ye have now caught.

Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes and hundred and fifty and three, and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Somehow, God did a miracle and made that net hold together to hold all that abundance that they had just harvested, yet the net was not broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.

And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art thou? Knowing that it was the Lord. You would know that it was the Lord, wouldn't you? You move the net from this side to that side. Suddenly it's jam-packed full of fish.

You would know that it was the Lord. You wouldn't dare ask either. Is that Jesus? Are you the Lord? Are you really the One? No one dared to ask.

No one dared to ask. Don't you ask either. Lord, help me not to ask either.

Help me to look at Your hand on my life. Look at Your hand of blessing on my life when I obey You and not ask. Just know that's the Lord.

Nobody does what He does. Nobody can make a life of emptiness go to a life of fullness in one command. Nobody dared to ask the obvious.

Nobody dared to open his mouth and say, Are you sure that's Jesus? They knew. They knew their empty night of toil had been transformed to a morning of fulfillment through the command, one single command, of a man on the shore. They knew that was not a man.

They knew that was Jesus. Nobody would venture to say, Are you sure? And if you have lived a life of true fulfillment in Christ, you will never ask, or you should never ask, Is that the Lord? You just know that's the Lord. That is the One whose commands I want to obey.

That is the One who can speak fulfillment over my life through my simple obedience to His one command. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. Verse 13, Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead. We want to move on in a couple of minutes here and look at Jesus' questioning of Simon Peter

about his love. But before we do that, I want each of us to just identify, as I asked you earlier, I'd like us to identify with Peter this morning.

I believe that every one of us can find ourselves in one or maybe several places in the life of Peter here. This one night and one morning of Peter's experience is what we call a microcosm, something tiny that represents something large. We can find ourselves in this tiny story of Peter.

We can find where we are. Maybe this morning you are backing away. You are shattered by what Christ is asking of you.

You see that obedience to what God is doing in your heart is going to mean some heavy sacrifice. And maybe you step back. Maybe your heart this morning to yourself and to your friends is, hey, I'm going fishing.

This is too much for me. This radical life in which Christ can command and demand my obedience in every area, that's too much. This is too shaky.

I don't feel comfortable here. I'm going back to my comfort zone. I'm going fishing.

Maybe that's where you are this morning. I know that feeling. I have been there.

I still go there often as Christ continues to unfold His will for me. I go there. I know that feeling.

There are things of this world that I want at times in an almost ridiculous dimension. At that moment when Satan builds something up in your mind and yet you know that Christ is saying to you, no, this is what I want. I know that feeling that says, wait a minute, I just want to step back to where I'm comfortable.

Not a wicked life maybe, just a life in my zone. Maybe that's where we are this morning. Maybe you're at the place of catching nothing.

Maybe you made that backslidden decision. Maybe you made that backstepping decision a week or a day or a year ago and you've been fishing all the time from that time up to now and you still have not caught a single fish. Not a sunny, not a little fingerling, nothing.

Maybe that's where you are at. Maybe you're just very conscious of the fact that I keep pulling in these nets with an awful lot of effort but I'm getting no fulfillment. Maybe that's where we're at this morning.

Maybe Jesus is saying to you this morning, have you any meat? Son, daughter, are you finding the meat you were looking for? Are you finding that bedrock of fulfillment that makes you almost immune to other desires because you don't need anything else? Have you any meat? Maybe that's what Jesus asks of you this morning. Maybe you're halting in that moment after hearing the voice of Jesus say, cast your net to the other side. And you may not realize that your whole experience of backsliding and the futility of your human efforts and the futility of trying to find fulfillment outside of Christ, you may not realize that all of that funnels down into the decision of this tiny moment when you hear the voice of Jesus give you a simple, simplistic, crazy command, throw the net on the other side.

And if I could just help us this morning to focus our attention onto the importance of that moment because our life's direction hangs in that moment, in that decision. Our fulfillment or living a life of unfulfillment, our life of blessing hinges on that one moment. Maybe that's where we are this morning.

Not sure. Is it really worth it to take the net over to the other side? Should I really obey this simple command? Maybe you know the fulfillment of all those fish. Maybe you are living on the right side of the fish, pulling in a net which at times is so overloaded with fish that you're looking at it and just saying, that net, your heart, your life, is not meant to handle that amount of blessing and fulfillment.

I know we don't always live there. When you live a life that is poured out for Christ, there are sacrifices and difficult times. But if you are living a life of obedience to Christ, there are recurring moments in your life where you know, this is too much.

This is too much blessing. This net, this human heart, is not meant to hold 153 great fish. Maybe you're on that side.

And if you are, that's wonderful. And if you're not, we need to go there. We need to get there.

Because if we submit our hearts to the direction of Christ, we can walk through and come to that life of blessing in very short order. Do you identify with Peter? Don't you see yourself? I see myself. I see myself at different times in my life.

And I could give you testimony to being in every one of those places in Peter's life and outlook many times in my life. I know the futility. I also know the fulfillment.

I know the indecision. I know the desire to go back into my comfort zone. It is sometimes an incredibly strong desire to just step back a few inches from the white hot heat that Christ is asking of our lives.

I can identify with Peter. I always have been able to. He sticks his foot in his mouth many times.

He says, oh yes, I'll follow you. Oh, you're the Son of God. Oh, Jesus, you can't go to the cross.

Shall we call down fire upon them? That's Peter. And that's you and I. And I know that you can identify with Peter this morning as he walks through this spiritual crisis in his life. I know you can identify with Peter.

Verse 15, So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou me more than these? Lovest thou me more than these? We could start over and preach a whole new sermon from these verses. We could preach about what it means to love Him more than these. To love Jesus more than these.

We could preach a whole message on that. We could preach a whole message on the fact that as soon as Peter affirmed his love for Jesus, Jesus gave him work to do to prove His love. We could preach a whole message on that.

But then you would say I'm preaching another missionary message. And I've done enough of those. At least for now.

But I would just like us to continue in the tenor that we have been looking at these last verses and continue to empathize and identify with Peter in this moment. You know, the other disciples were along, but I believe this entire experience was basically about Peter. Peter was the one who said, I'm going fishing.

He was a leader. They followed him. And now it is Peter that Jesus is pinpointing with His questions.

Peter, lovest thou me more than these? You know, if Jesus had asked Peter that question in a vacuum, it would have been very, very easy to answer. In a vacuum means without the surrounding circumstances. Without the picture frame.

Just the picture. If He had just said to Peter, Peter, do you love me more than these? Out of the blue. Peter could have said, of course I love you more than these.

Whatever the these are. And it's very easy for you and I to glibly say that at times. Of course I love you.

But look at the surrounding circumstances that frame this question into Peter's life. Peter has just been through a crisis in which his desire for comfort, his desire for the Peter that he knew, his desire for his life as a fisherman is there in stark relief. He knows that just last night he led the rest of the disciples to go get in a boat and go fishing.

He also knows that at the command of Jesus, 153 great fish filled his net. A fisherman's greatest dream. And now they're sitting there on the shore right beside the scene of Peter's comfort zone.

You following me here? And in that moment, the water gently lapping up on the shore, the boat that Peter had just led the disciples into, sitting there in the water, probably tied up to a dock. 153 great writhing fish still in the net off to the side, bread and fish in their hands. Jesus says, Peter, do you love me more than these? I don't think that these is the disciples.

Because He goes on and says, feed my lambs. In other words, you're going to have a ministry to these people and to a greater circle of people. I think that these is probably the fish.

I think that these is the boat. That these is the water. Do you love me more than this water? Do you love me more than your comfort zone? Do you love me more than the water gently lapping on the side of the ship on the Sea of Galilee? It's a beautiful morning.

Do you love me more than all of these? All of these things that have made up your life, Peter? Do you love me more than all of those things? Jesus repeats the question three times. But in the first time that He asks the question, He puts a value judgment there. He puts a word that denotes value more.

It's very easy to say, I love you. That in our American language means very, very little. Because we love all kinds of things.

We love hamburgers and we love potato chips and we love dogwood trees and we love dodges, I hope not. But we like all kinds of things and we use the word love very cheaply. Very easy to say, of course I love you, Lord.

But Jesus did not ask Peter in this moment, do you love me? His first question had a word that denotes value. Do you love me more? Is your measure of love for me, Peter? I know there's love for me. But do you love me more than you love all of these things? You know, Jesus saw into Peter's heart and He knew that Peter loved fishing.

Just like you love your life. Peter was a fisherman. He'd probably been on the boat since he was a little boy.

The feel of the breeze on his face. Rough hands pulling in nets. Riding fish.

A good catch. Pulling back into the dock. Going up to the fish market.

That was Peter's life. And Jesus looked into his heart and knew, Peter, you really love this life, don't you? You love those fish, Peter. I keep seeing your eyes.

Going over there to that pile of fish. Peter, you love the fish. And you love that boat.

And you love this fisherman's life. Peter, do you love me more than all of this? And He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He doesn't really deal with Jesus' question there.

And I'm not going to make an issue out of whether He sidestepped it or not. But He doesn't say, I love you more. I think Peter's probably grappling with a lot of serious things this morning by the seashore.

He says, yes, Lord, I love you. Peter's life went on to prove that he loved Jesus infinitely more than 153 great fish in a net. His life proved it.

But this morning he just says, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my lambs. Feed my lambs.

Feed my sheep. Jesus asks him again. He answers the same.

Jesus says, feed my sheep. Third time. Peter's becoming embarrassed.

Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. And yet I believe that Jesus was concentrating the force of His question by repetition.

Peter, do you love me? Oh, I know you love me. Peter, do you love me? You know that I love you, Lord. No, Peter, do you love me the way that I mean love? Surrounded by your fishing buddies, your boat, and a great heap of fish, and the Sea of Galilee where you've grown up.

Do you love me? I don't know what your these are. You know, everyone is different. Something that I really, really love.

Something that is a very great sacrifice for me. You could look at it and say, I wouldn't miss that. I wouldn't miss that.

Since we're back from Africa, people say, what do you miss? What are you really enjoying since you're home? The truth is broccoli. Now, you may look at that and say, broccoli? Broccoli is something I don't enjoy. That's fine.

That's you. But I'm me. And I like broccoli.

And since I'm back, I really like broccoli. I'm eating it almost every other day. I love broccoli.

So, I miss broccoli in Africa. What are your these? You might look at Peter's life as a fisherman and say, that would be easy to give up. I can't imagine spending the whole night pulling in nets.

But that was Peter's these. That was the things that framed Peter's life. Those were the bedrocks that Peter said, yes, this is what I am.

I am a fisherman. Anybody who looks at me will know, I'm a fisherman. It's the life I know.

It's the life I love. It's what I'm most comfortable in. I can fish with my eyes closed.

I'm a fisherman. And yet it was those things that Jesus said, when you compare your love, Peter, for all these things, and you look at your love for me, do you love me more than these things? You all have these. You sisters have these things.

You have things that you love. I don't want to start down lists. It could seem petty.

And I would probably miss your thing. I would probably miss the thing that is the greatest sacrifice to you in staying right behind Jesus. I would probably miss it.

But the point is that Jesus asked a comparative question. And the point is that in your heart and my heart before God, we know what our these things is. We know what we are tempted to do.

Peter knew when Jesus asked that question. Peter knew, just last night, I just had this urge to go fishing. I had this urge to go back to what I knew.

And you know what your urge is. Not necessarily an evil one. I hope that we've walked with God long enough that we're beyond evil attractions.

But even good things can be of these things. Because there's nothing wrong with fishing. It's a great occupation.

It's good hard work. And I'm not suggesting here that you're supposed to leave your jobs. That's not my point here this morning at all.

Those fish filled the net at Jesus' command. And yet, Jesus did ask Peter just moments later to say, Lord, I love you more. More even than 153 fish in the net.

Can you see how Jesus arranged all these circumstances of Peter's life to bring him up to that crucial moment. If you had asked him, do you love me more than fishing after a futile night of fishing, it would have been easy to say yes. But he asked him, do you love me more than fishing after Peter just had the exhilarating experience.

It says he's the one. He went back to that net and pulled it in. And yet, just shocked that the net's not breaking.

What are your these things? And do you love him? Do I love him more than these things? See, if we love these things more than we love him, then the temptation for us to back up into our comfort zone is almost overwhelming. If we love these things more than we love him, then any time these things come in conflict with what Jesus is asking us to do, our automatic inclination by the love of our heart is to protect our interests. To protect the things that we love.

To protect the life that we know. To make sure that whatever happens, we keep padding our comfort zone. You understand that? Human emotions.

Our love is a powerful thing. Never underestimate the power that the things that you love has in your life. One human heart is capable of an unbelievable amount of love.

You get married, then you'll know. You just think, it's not possible to love more than I love on my wedding day. A couple years later, it's not possible to love more than this.

This is so much more. You're looking at the net and saying, this has got to break. And yet it continues to grow.

God has made the human heart to be able to hold an incredible amount of affection. And yet those affections guide our lives. And if we love these things more than we love him, it will distract us.

It will detract us. It will pull us away. It will guide us away from those things that Jesus is asking us to do with our life.

You know, Peter sitting there in that moment, the picture I painted for you, Peter, the boat, the water, the fish, and Jesus asking this question. Peter knew what he... Peter could weigh very easily in his mind in that moment. Do I love him more than these things? And it's okay that that's a hard decision.

If that's a flippant decision, maybe you're not understanding it. But if you are like Peter, sitting right beside the thing of your dreams, the life that you've always dreamed of is right there. And then Jesus asks you, there'll be no question in your mind as to where your heart is.

And it's going to be a difficult place. And yet Peter said, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. You know that I love you.

We're identifying with Peter this morning. Have you sat in those moments in your own life where you see all that you desire at your fingertips and yet have to turn away from because of your love for Christ? I'd like us to just mentally turn back for a minute to the disciples obeying Christ. As we close here, I do not want to leave you in your heart in a negative place.

Turning from all the things that we love and saying, Lord, I love you more than all these things, is not an easy thing. And I want it to seem difficult in our hearts because it is difficult. I want it to be serious in your heart.

It is serious in mine. I know that many times I stand in my life making those value judgments and just shaking my shoes because of how difficult it is to say, yes, Lord, I love you more than everything else. I will not turn back six steps from what you are asking me to do.

It's not easy. But I think it is important for us to remember the earlier example that we looked at of the disciples' obedience. It's good for us when we are standing making those critical decisions to remember that a life outside of Christ is a life of empty fishing.

It is a night of emptiness. It is a night of futile efforts. And yet, when we are willing in faith to obey Christ's command and come over to this side of the boat, just those crucial six feet, oh, the blessing.

Oh, the net full of fishes. Oh, the life filled with fulfillment that Christ is offering to us. I wish that you could picture in your heart for a moment, how Christ can fulfill the desires of your heart when you obey Him.

Because it might help you to get over the hump. And I think that we should picture in our minds that net full of fishes. 153 great writhing fishes.

A net just bursting at its seams. A net that spent the whole night empty. Let's say we love Him more.

Let's say we love Him more. Let's choose to obey in that moment. Let's tell Him, yes, I love you more.

When I look at the life of emptiness that I live when I try to fulfill myself. And I look at the life of abundant blessing that you offer me when I obey you. Yes, I love you more.

Last night I was meditating on these verses. And the Lord brought back to my mind a song from my childhood, I believe. And I don't think I've thought of it for 15 years.

And I felt like, well, the Lord brought it to my mind, maybe I should share just the chorus with you. Some of you probably have this somewhere back in your past also. So if you'll excuse my solo abilities, I just like to sing this chorus.

I'd like us to close our eyes when we do it. I'd like us to picture Peter. I'd like us to place ourselves, identify where we are in our lives, in our experience with Christ.

I'd like for us to identify whether we're stepping back, whether we're fulfilled or unfulfilled, whether there's obedience that Christ is asking of us. I'd like us to do that in our hearts this morning. You can just bow your heads, close your eyes for a moment.

Lovest thou me more than these, My child, what will your answer be? Lovest thou me more than these, My child, more than fame, More than wealth, more than the world. Lovest thou me more than these, My child, what will your answer be? O precious Lord, I love thee more than anything, More than fame, more than wealth, More than the world. Father, I thank you this morning for your words to our hearts.

And Father, we confess that we do love the fish sometimes, Lord. Sometimes the things of this world, Lord, do hold an inordinate place in my heart and in our hearts, Lord. Sometimes it is all too easy to step back into that boat.

But Lord, we love you. I love you. We love you this morning, Lord.

I pray God that you will dig deeper this morning. I pray God that you will, with the conviction of your Holy Spirit, help us to see deeper into our hearts, Lord. I pray, Father, that by the power of your Spirit, you would put each one of us beside the seashore of our lives, surrounded by those things that most keenly detract and distract us, or attract us away from you, Lord.

And I pray that in that moment of quiet, we could meet you there, Lord. Reaffirm our love for you. Come back from our backsliding, if we have.

And truly value you, Lord. Thank you for your words to our hearts this morning, Father. Help us to love you more than life itself.

Help us to live that life of fulfillment that you offer. In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you.

Are you fishing? I'm not sure. I'm not sure what the message means to me. I'm not sure.

I want you to pray for me. I think I've stepped back. I'm not sure how.

But I feel in my heart that I have. I want you to pray for me. Maybe that's where you are.

I feel like I need to go home and get in my closet. Maybe that's how you feel this morning. So I would just ask you to pray for me.

A lot of things on me. It never goes away. Christ always asks us to live right there on the edge.

It never changes. It never changes. So I ask you to pray for me.

Just a question and then I think we'll close. I know that God speaks to us all the time. We sit in a meeting and we hear the word of God and God speaks to us.

But sometimes God speaks to us deeply. Is this morning one of those times for you? Let me see your hands. Did God speak to you deeply this morning? My encouragement is we'll go and get alone.

So that God can make very clear applications to our hearts. So that we can let Him touch the areas of our life that He's trying to touch. That's what I plan to do.

I would encourage you to do that. We came face to face with God's heart this morning. And our hearts were convicted.

It's a dangerous thing to just walk away from that. It's a dangerous thing. God has sobered us.

We're hanging our heads. That's good. It is good to hang your head.

I just encourage us all. Don't just let it there. Don't shake it off.

Don't laugh it off. Seize the moment. Ride the wave.

Let God finish what He started in our hearts.

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