

The Aferwards

by John McGregor

The sermon emphasizes the hope found in Jesus' continual presence and the importance of following Him in love and obedience.

Duration: 36:40

Scripture: John 21

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that Jesus wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives, not just the big things. He teaches that Jesus provides for His servants, including food, fire, fellowship, and growth. The speaker shares a personal story about learning to trust in God's provision. The sermon then transitions to a reading of John chapter 21, highlighting the importance of hope and the message of Jesus' resurrection.

Transcript

Thanks Al. We have, and I know this for a fact, you guys can, this is bankable, we have the best pastor in the whole world. For this simple reason that he desires to follow God, he desires to love God, and he desires to lead us, and protect us, and shepherd us, and help us, and love us.

And that's what makes him the best pastor. And the church down the road might have the best pastor too, if that's his desire. But for us, this is a gift from heaven.

This is a gift from the throne. And I just want to welcome John as he comes to share the word with us. Thank you Pastor Brad.

Wow. That's possibly the best introduction I think I've ever had. You know when I would come home when I was playing soccer as a young fellow, and I'd come home and say, You should have seen me dad, I scored this goal, and I did this, and I did that.

And my dad was a pretty level-headed sort of guy, so he would always say, I'll get the joiner to come on Monday, that's a carpenter. And I'd say, Why do we need him? He'd say, So you can get your head through the door. Anyway, let's take our Bibles and turn to John chapter 21 this morning.

And we're just going to read the first 25, well there is only 25 verses in the chapter, so we'll read the whole chapter. And while you're turning there, I'll just say, Bryce, that was awesome. Thank you.

That was marvelous. And I don't have a musical bone in my body, but I sure enjoy it. I sometimes have a struggle to turn the radio on in the right channel.

A little bit like a Baptist pastor I saw down in Florida one time, his congregation was giving him a hard time, and they said, Why don't you clap when we're singing? And he said, You want me to clap? I'll clap. You want me to sing? I'll sing. You want me to do both together? I can't.

John chapter 21 says, Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way. Simon Peter, Thomas, Cadditimus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

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.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called them out. Friends, haven't you any fish? No, they answered.

He said to them, Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. When 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. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

When they had landed, they saw a fire burning. Coals were there with fish on it and some bread. Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish you have now caught.

Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153. But even with so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. None of the disciples dared to ask him, Who are you? They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them.

He did the same with the fish. This was not the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples, after he had been raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than me? Yes, Lord, he said.

You know that I love you. Jesus said, Feed my lambs. Again, Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you truly love me? He answered, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

Jesus said, Take care of my sheep. The third time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt. Have you ever noticed that? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, Do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things, and you know that I love you.

Jesus said, Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, Follow me. Peter turned and saw that disciple whom Jesus loved was following them.

This is the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and said, Lord, who is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him? Jesus answered, If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me. Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die.

He only said, If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? This is a disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well.

If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the world would not have enough room for the books that would be written. Let's pray together. Father, as we come before you this morning, thank you that we can come to the very throne of God because of Jesus.

And thank you that the Spirit of the living God is here in our midst this very morning. Thank you, Lord, that it is your purpose to encounter each one of us today, to touch us and to lift us, that we might know your glorious presence and truth afresh all over again. Lord, as your people, we worship you.

We thank you for all of your mercy and grace and goodness. Lord, in these moments, we ask that you would take the written word and through the ministry of your Spirit, cause it to live in our hearts, that we might be changed because of these moments together. Before we come to meet you at your table, Lord, we ask that you would come and meet us in your Word.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. God's people said, Amen. I am thankful that we don't discover all of God all at once.

One thing, I couldn't take it all, all at one time. But I'm so grateful when you look at the Scriptures, and as we saw last week, when you begin to think about the reality of the people and the things that are happening in their lives and how the Lord talks to us through His Word. I really want to focus in this morning for a few moments before we meet at the communion time, just to think about one word.

At the beginning of this chapter in the NIV, it says afterward. Some of the other versions say after these things. But you get the same idea, afterward.

You see, that gives me tremendous hope. And I think one of the things that the church needs to be strongly responsible for is to bring the message of hope into lives and hearts and homes in these days and times. And as we think about this word, afterward, aren't you glad that there's an afterward? That Jesus comes again and again, afterward.

And this is the third time it says that He met them after the resurrection. We are a week only after Easter now, but it's a good time to focus in on that risen Lord Jesus and the things that He is doing and saying and working in the lives of His people. So let's first of all just explore a little bit, when did they see Him? Well, we come back to that one word, afterwards.

I wonder what's going on in our lives and hearts today that we need to see Him afterward. It's then that they see Him, after His resurrection. You know, what a glorious thing to go to the grave and it's empty.

I mean, that's a real whoo-hoo! Don't you think? I want a glorious thing as the word starts to spread amongst His people that Jesus is risen. And yet, after the resurrection, it continues to happen. In 1 Corinthians, we read that more than 500 people saw the risen Lord Jesus.

And it is after His resurrection and the third time now in this text. And it is after He had breathed the Holy Spirit on them. You look at chapter 20 and verse 22 with me for a moment.

And you see, it says, and with that He breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. So even after they have received the Holy Spirit, He comes afterward. I like that, don't you? Because you know, sometimes we, if we're honest, come to the place of saying, is this all? Is this all there is, Lord? Am I going to have to fight my way through this? Is this all there is, Lord? I've had the blessings in the past of seeing the Lord come and work.

Is this all? But it's after He breathed the Spirit. Then again, they see the Lord Jesus afterward. Oh, you know, this is a word that gives me hope.

And it gives me hope for the circumstances of life. And after He has dealt with doubting Thomas. Don't you love the story of Thomas? In chapter 20 and verse 20 through 28, you find that passage.

And could I say this? I think we're pretty hard on Thomas. I sometimes have said, you know, people will say, well, how could he doubt? I mean, all the other disciples have seen the Lord. How could he doubt? How could he say that, Thomas? You ever read John chapter 11? In John chapter 11, Jesus says at the beginning of the chapter, let's go back.

And the disciples are saying, hey, Lord, if you go back into Judea, they're going to kill you. Who is it that makes this statement? Let's go and die with Him. It's Thomas.

You can check it out in John 11 for yourself. It's Thomas who's the one who is so sold out to Jesus that when the Lord says, I'm going back into Judea, and they know that there's a plot to kill Him, it's Thomas who says, I'm going. Let's go and die with Him.

Talk about commitment. Wow. I mean, this is doubting, Thomas? I love the characters of the Bible because I see some things in them that I see sometimes in me and sometimes in us as the people of God.

What was the problem when Thomas said, unless I can put my finger in the nail holes and into the spear wound in His side, I will not believe. What was it? Well, you see, he had been so sold out to Jesus, and when he saw Jesus die on that cross, and when he saw Jesus laid in that tomb, and when he saw that rock cover it, every dream, every desire, every hope that he ever had in his heart was gone. And so Thomas is really saying, I don't want to be hurt again.

I trusted. And I got hurt, and I got disappointed. And it's going to take something major to change that.

I'm not going to get hurt again. I would suspect that I'm not the only one in church this morning who knows a little bit about being hurt. You see, that's the very nature of relationship.

Sometimes we hurt each other without even knowing or thinking about what's going on. Thomas. Doubting Thomas.

But Jesus stood in the middle of that room, and although Jesus wasn't there when Thomas was saying, it's going to take something really major to move me, because I'm hurt. What was it that changed him? It's

when Jesus himself, the risen Savior, stands there. It wasn't when the other disciples gathered around and said, oh buddy, you know, let's lift you up a little bit.

Come on along with us. Come on, we'll try, we'll get you there. Somehow, we'll get you there.

It's not too weak for an old man, is it? Okay. But it was when Jesus stood in the middle of that room, everything changed. It was when Jesus stopped there and said, Thomas, don't be disappointed.

Don't be hurt. Don't be wounded. Here.

Here's the nail prints. Here's the spear mark. You go ahead, man.

Touch it for all it's worth. Know that the resurrection is powerfully true. Know that in all things, I am King of kings and Lord of lords.

It's afterward. There's so many deep hurts in these days, in relationships and in churches and so on. And you know, friends, I'm Irish and there are sometimes things I need to say just in an Irish way, so let me do it.

We look for all our answers in all the wisdom that we can find in man and all the programs and so on that we can develop to address it. And really what we need is afterward that Jesus just stand there and say, let me heal you. That's what that table is about.

He's a savior. He's a sanctifier. He's a healer.

He's a coming king. It's about the one who afterward comes when he had dealt with Thomas. After that, after many miraculous signs and strong involvement in people's lives, after calling them, after training them, after saving them, after cleansing them, after all of this, Jesus comes again.

I love this passage in the Gospel of John. So many times the Lord has used it in my own heart. Afterward.

What is it? As he comes to them, what did he teach them? Let's look at that. He taught them that under human leadership and using self-will, they'd be empty and fruitless. Have you any fish? Well, you'd think a fisherman could come up with one if he fished all night.

And it was more than one fisherman because James and John were fishermen as well. Peter, you know, that's what happens when we try to do it. I like old Peter.

I'm sure he is the Irish disciple. Enough of this sitting around already. I'm going fishing.

We'll go too. Jesus is saying, you can do that if you want. You can live in your own strength if you want.

But it's fruitless and it's empty and it brings no hope whatsoever. He taught them that serving under his leadership, surrendered to his will and his word, that's where the fruit is. That's where fulfillment lies.

That's what produces abundance. Look at verses 6 through 11. Throw the net on the right side.

Now, it doesn't say it here, but I think Peter must have thought to himself, I've heard that somewhere before. Because in Luke chapter 5, that's exactly what Jesus told Peter. Go put the net out on the other side and you'll find the fish.

Oh, my friends, don't you love what John says to Peter? It is the Lord. When that net catches, it is the Lord. It's nobody else who can do this.

There's not another one, there's nothing at all that can touch this except it is the Lord. I love it. Oh, so many times I've gone into situations and said to myself, somehow things have to change.

You ever said that? If we could just change this relationship, if we could just change this circumstance and you can beat yourself to a frazzle, there's a good Irish word, trying to accomplish it, it doesn't happen. It is the Lord. It is the Lord.

The lesson, you know, is to put away the self-life. Brian said it so well a few minutes ago, if only there wasn't so much flesh, I'd be able to really worship Him. That's what Jesus is teaching them here.

He's teaching them that self-life gets in the way of living the Spirit-controlled life. And it really does, doesn't it? Afterward. I think that's the lesson that comes to me afterward and afterward and afterward.

When I've tried something in my own strength and I get so frustrated with it and I'm ready to blow up and nothing seems to happen and afterward Jesus is sort of tapping on the shoulder and saying, can I do it? He's teaching them. The nets are empty after fishing all night until at His Word we put them down. I used to sing a little song years ago.

It said, ere you left your home this morning, did you think to pray? It's a song about the fullness of the Spirit and just surrendering all the issues of life to Him. This past week I accomplished something that had been a while in the doing. As the director of Canadian Revival Fellowship, I've had two gold cards.

Woo-hoo! A Visa gold and an American Express gold. Woo! The money I could have spent. Have you ever tried to cancel one of those? It's not so easy.

I mean, you could get Irish and frustrated with it. Well, you'll have to call this number. Or for service in English, touch one.

To speak to a real person, touch zero. On and on it goes. I said to Roberta on Thursday, I think it was, I'm just going to pray before I phone them because I know I'm just going to go around and around and around and around inside this circuit and eventually I'll almost lose my sanctification over it.

I couldn't believe it when I actually surrendered this little thing to Him. I talked to a real person and she helped me to cancel it. Wow! And somehow, you know, we just think about the big things and Jesus wants to be involved in it all.

Every part of it. What else did He teach them? He taught them that He provides for His servants in verses 12 through 14. There's food there.

There's fire there. There's fellowship there. There's growth there.

As He interacts with them, He provides for His servants. It's a lesson I've been trying to learn for 40 years. And every time another major need comes up, it's like I've never learned it.

But He provides. After we stop trying to sort it all out, after we come to the place of just saying, Oh God, only You can sort this out. A couple of years ago, Jim Sinclair from the congregation here came to Ireland with me and a young man called Andrew Gilkinson from Nippawin Bible School.

You know, we were in a church in a very dangerous area of Belfast, right in the hot spot in the days of the trouble. And I had a few copies of my little booklet, *The Battle is Not to the Strong*, and we'd given them to some people. And this lady came up to me after the second service and she said, I read your little book.

You mention a commander in there called Sammy who was trying to kill you. Would that be Sammy Murphy? I should have been smart enough to change the names to protect the innocent. I said, yes.

She said, John, that's my brother. I said, Ruth, how's he doing? She said, Sammy died from cancer two years ago. And three months before he died, he phoned me and he just said, Ruth, I'm not very far from the end and somebody needs to know everything's all right between me and Jesus.

Do you know how many years I prayed and wondered? I spoke to that man once after my friend was assassinated and had no opportunity after that ever to interact with him. But the Lord provides an answer for prayer and the Lord provides a healing for relationships and the Lord provides the things that are necessary on a day-by-day basis. And there is nothing to which we cannot come to Him and bring to Him.

He taught them in verses 15 through 17 that love alone can be our motivation. Simon Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord. Simon Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord.

You know why he asks a third time? Because he had to break Simon Peter. Just like he has to sometimes break John and Brad and Johnny even from our own foolishness. Broken, touched, and healed.

Oh, afterward, Jesus came. What else did he teach? He taught Peter not to fear the future. Look at what he's saying to him.

Peter is saying, you know, Lord, what about this guy? Don't you worry about him. You just follow me. You do it.

He taught them not to compare themselves with others, but to follow Him. Now, you know what? It's so often a comparison, isn't it? We're doing alright. Doing as good as so-and-so.

Not as tall as so-and-so. Not as wide as so-and-so. There's all kinds of comparisons that go on.

But Jesus, afterward as He comes, He's just saying, Peter, forget about that other servant of mine. I've got a plan for him. I'll look after him.

But Peter, you. Just you. Lord, where are we going? Just follow.

Peter, just follow. Lord, who's coming with us? Peter, just follow. Lord, where will we get the resources? Peter, just follow.

If you don't hear anything else that I say this morning, just hear this little thorn. That's exactly what Jesus Christ is calling you and me to do today. Just you.

Follow Him. If I keep going, this is going to turn into a sermon. So, let me work on that for a bit.

What is He teaching us? The people of God here at Glencairn Alliance Church. If we're sidetracked, afterwards He comes to speak to us again. I ask Him, do you have that singular focus on Jesus? We can get our thoughts on all kinds of things.

How can we reach Glencairn and Regina for Jesus? You know what? That's a great thought, but the only way it's going to happen is when you and I follow Him and just have our eyes on Him and allow Him to be Lord of it all in every way. If we're trying to do something in our own strength, it can't happen. It will not happen.

We need a word from Him. If we're concerned for ourselves and our needs, He still holds the resources. I was looking at a Baptist church in Tennessee the other day and I said to them, how old is the building? Two years.

Wow, that's nice. They said, before you ask, 32 million. I said, oh, was that for the building or the parking lot? It's the parking lot, it's huge.

But the thought came to me, whose resources is with it? Not the church's, but the Lord. He still calls us to come and dine and that's what we're going to do in just a few moments. Just at this table this morning would be about meeting Him, the Lord Jesus.

And He'll guide us into the future in His own will and way and plan. So let me just wrap things up. As we think this morning in the Word of God, do you need to meet Jesus? Is there an afterword going on in your heart, your mind, your life? Just quietly before we move to the Lord's table, in your heart, speak to the Lord Jesus.

You can say to Him, Lord, just as afterwards you came and you met those disciples in the midst of their busyness, and you healed the relationship of their hearts, and you loved them beyond anything that they had ever experienced, you know the needs of my heart this morning, and my greatest need is a fresh encounter with You, Lord. You know the sin that so easily besets me. Lord, as we would come to the table in a few moments, search my heart.

Show me the things that I need to confess and forsake. And let my eyes and my heart focus once again only on You. And if you're here this morning, and you're not sure that Jesus is your Lord, you can make sure this morning.

From your heart, you can call out to Him and say, Lord, after all the things that life has handed me, I hear You calling from the shore this morning. Come and die. Lord Jesus, forgive me for my sin.

Cleanse my heart and my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. And in all of the afterwards, let me know Your touch.

In Jesus' name we pray.

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