

**Sermon: The Purpose of Life****Text: John 21****Discussion Questions:**

On that first Easter Sunday evening, Jesus comes to His disciples to show them that He is alive. But more than just showing them that He has risen from the dead, Jesus commissions them to go and take the message of who He is and what He has done to the world. In that meeting, these men essentially cease to be disciples (followers of a teacher)—and become apostles (sent on a mission). More than that, Jesus gives five precious gifts: Peace; Proof; Purpose; Power; and Privilege. He offers them His grace-filled peace, making absolutely clear how much He loves and forgives them. He shows them His scars, proving without question that He is back from the dead. He commissions them to go into the world with the Gospel. He breathes on them the life and power of the Holy Spirit. And He grants them the great privilege of proclaiming with absolute certainty the message of forgiveness of sins. In this encounter with the resurrected Lord, the disciples go from being filled with fear and discouragement to being filled with joy as Jesus changes everything for them through the power of the resurrection.

Just like the disciples, all who believe in Jesus and submit to Him as Lord have been commissioned to take the message of Jesus into a lost and dying world. We, too, have been given new life through the Holy Spirit—and can go forward with a new authority to stand on the Word of God and confidently proclaim that forgiveness is available.

- Most people have experienced a “lightbulb coming on” moment in life. A time when everything becomes clear and they see things clearly. Have you experienced one of these moments in your life? Share about that experience.
- What were you missing before the “lightbulb” came on? What was the one thing that you can point to that flipped the switch and turned the “lightbulb” on for you?
- What was the outcome of the “lightbulb” experience for you? How were things different moving forward because of the new clarity that you had?
- On a scale of 1-10 (1 being no impact at all) how would you rate the impact of a “lightbulb” moment in life?

**Examination:**

- Read **John 21:1-14**
  - In chapter 20, we see Jesus appearing twice to His disciples. The first time is on Easter Sunday evening, when the disciples are locked in a room, scared to death that the authorities would come in search of them—to do the same thing to them that they had just done to Jesus. The second time is a week later, in the very same place and circumstance. John 21 now recounts the third time that Jesus appears to His disciples after He was raised from the dead (v. 14). Where does this third encounter occur (v. 1)? How much time had passed since the second appearance?
  - How far away from Jerusalem is the Sea of Galilee (look it up on a map)? Does it surprise you that the disciples have gone so far away from Jerusalem? Why do you think they might have left Jerusalem? Might Matt 28:7 & Mark 16:7 have anything to do with it?
  - According to verse 2, how many of the disciples does Jesus appear to? Why do you suppose it was these seven?

- Does it surprise you that Peter suggests fishing? Is fishing ever a bad idea ☺?
- This isn't the first time following the resurrection that Jesus' closest followers fail to recognize Him (see Jn 20:15; Lk 24:15-16, 30-31). Why do you think that was?
- This isn't the first time Jesus gives some fishing tips (see Lk 5:1-11). What strikes you as interesting or noteworthy about this "caught any fish yet?" exchange in verses 6-7?
- Why do you think Peter jumps into the water to swim—and not wait for the boat to be rowed the 100 yards to shore (v. 7)?
- Wow—what do you make of the fact that Jesus already had a fire going, complete with fried fish and loaves of bread (v. 9)?
- Do you think John recounts this story to remind us of the very first time Jesus meets these men (Lk 5:1-11)? What does Jesus tell them they will be fishing for?
- Why do you think John tells us there were 153 fish (v. 11)? Any deeper meaning?
- If they knew it was Jesus—why do you think John included the detail that "Nobody dared ask Him 'Who are you?'"? Does this indicate uncertainty?

### Read **John 21:15-25**

- Jesus now turns His attention directly to Peter and John—specifically Peter (v. 15). He asks Peter a simple question: "Do you love me more than these?". Why do you think Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him? Who are the "these" that He mentions?
- Jesus shifts from the "fisherman" metaphor—to the "shepherd" metaphor. What's the difference?
- How do you feed lambs (v. 15)?
- Is there a difference between feeding lambs and taking care of sheep (v. 16)?
- Most Biblical experts connect these three questions with Peter's three denials. Do you agree? What do John 18:18 & John 21:9 have in common (the ESV helps)—might there be a reason John points this out? Do you think Peter "got it" in the moment? What do you think it might have meant to him later in life?
- Back in John 10:11, Jesus describes what a good shepherd must be willing to do for the sheep. Is this what Jesus is calling Peter to?
- Commonly accepted church tradition is that Peter was killed in October of the year 64AD by the Roman Emperor Nero. Unbelievably—he requested to be crucified on a cross upside down, because he did not consider himself worthy to die as Jesus had died. With that in mind, how does this "fit" with what Jesus spoke to him along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Do you think what Jesus said to Peter gave him courage to "follow Jesus" later in life?
- These verses also confirm what we know about John's life—that he outlived all the other apostles, and wrote this Gospel some 25-30 years after Peter's death (vv. 22-23). Do you think John had it in his mind that Jesus would return prior to his death? Might this be why John didn't write this Gospel until later in life?
- How important is it to John that we believe these things as absolute truth (v. 24)?
- What do you love about verse 25?

### **Application:**

Do you love Jesus? What are you doing to show Jesus how much you love Him? Be honest—are you truly "fishing for others" with your life? Are you feeding sheep...or are you the sheep being fed? Shepherds are willing to lay down their lives for their sheep...what sacrifices are you willing to make?