

FISHING, FEEDING, FEELING

THIS STORY CREATES IN ONE'S MIND A TRANQUIL SCENE BY THE SEA OF DAY BREAKING, FISHING BOATS, AND CALM WATERS. IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN UP JUST BEFORE SUNRISE THERE IS IN MANY INSTANCES A WORLD COMING OUT OF THE NIGHT AND THERE IS A FRESHNESS OR COOLNESS IN THE AIR AND A PEACE OVER EVERYTHING BEFORE THE MAD RUSH OF THE DAY GATHERS STEAM. HOWEVER, BEHIND THIS PICTURE OF TRANQUILITY THERE ARE EARTH-SHATTERING THINGS HAPPENING AMONG THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.

THREE PARTS OF THIS SCENE WERE THE FISHING THAT WAS OCCURRING, THE FEEDING OF THE DISCIPLES, AND FEELINGS OF THE DISCIPLES, ESPECIALLY PETER HAD FOR JESUS. ALL THIS WAS HAPPENING ON THE SURFACE, THINGS WE COULD SEE AND TOUCH, BUT FOR US WHO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF LOOKING BACK ON THE EVENTS IN THIS LAST CHAPTER OF JOHN CAN FIND MORE GOING ON, WHICH AFFECTS US NOW IN OUR DAILY LIVES. THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE AMAZING TRAITS OF THE BIBLE, OUR LIVING WORD!!!

ON THE SURFACE IT IS A SCENE OF MEMORY AND REDEMPTION. WE RECALL WHEN JESUS FIRST CALLED HIS DISCIPLES. MANY TIMES THEY WERE FISHING AND IN FACT THEY HAD NOT CAUGHT ANYTHING AND HE INSTRUCTED THEM TO CAST THEIR NETS OVER THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BOAT AND THE CATCH WAS SO LARGE THE NETS BEGAN TO BREAK.

IN TODAY'S READING THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES WITH THE SAME RESULTS - THE RECOGNITION OF THE MAN AS THE LORD AND JESUS CHRIST. WE CAN TAKE FROM THIS IN BOTH CASES THAT HEARING JESUS' VOICE AND TRUSTING AND OBEYING IN HIM BRINGS RESULTS! **NOW HOW MANY TIMES HAVE HEARD TO TRUST AND OBEY? YET I BELIEVE WE HEAR SUCH TRUTHS OVER AND OVER BECAUSE FOR SOME OF US IT TAKES AWHILE FOR THE THOUGHT TO SINK IN! THE BIBLE IS OUR LIFE TEXT BOOK.**

IN 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to **teach us what is true** and to make us realize **what is wrong in our lives**. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right".* **IF THESE WORDS ARE TRUE THEN WE SHOULD BE SPENDING MORE TIME IN THE BIBLE AND WITH GOD,** SO THAT WE APPLY TO OUR LIFE WHAT WE HAVE READ AND GOD HAS REVEALED. NOW THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE USE THAT TO WONDER WHY SOMEONE ELSE ISN'T APPLYING WHAT GOD HAS SHOWN YOU. MAYBE THEY DON'T HAVE THE PROBLEM IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU KNOW THAT "SPECK IN THEIR EYE AND THE LOG IN OURS" THING. LET'S NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT THE OTHERS PROBLEM, LET'S KEEP THE FOCUS ON OURSELVES. **WE ALL KNOW ONLY GOD CAN CHANGE, REALLY CHANGE SOMEONE DON'T WE?**

GOING BACK TO THE READING, **THE DISCIPLES DID OBEY JESUS. WHEN WE ARE DOING SOMETHING AND HEAR JESUS CALL, WHAT DO WE DO?** IT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US TO LIVE OUR LIFE TO THE FULLEST, REACHING OUR GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL AND SINCE YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD HE IS CALLING YOU. **CAN'T HEAR HIM? MAYBE YOU'RE MAKING TOO MUCH NOISE TO HEAR HIM.**

HIS VOICE MUST CARRY A TONE THAT ENCOURAGES. THE VERSE SAYS THEY DID NOT EVEN KNOW IT WAS HIM! **YET THEY TOOK HIS ADVICE.** THEN FINALLY JOHN SPEAKS "IT IS THE LORD", AND OF COURSE, OLD PETER JUMPS OUT OF THE BOAT AND HEADS FOR SHORE. YOU HAVE TO ADMIRE HIS ENTHUSIASM. DO WE HAVE THE SAME REACTION WHEN WE ARE PRESENTED WITH A VISION THAT PULLS US OUT OF THE BOAT AND THINK WE MAY GET WET? JESUS WAS ALL ABOUT MINISTRY AND REACHING OUT.

HAVE WE ALL GOTTEN SO COMFORTABLE IN THE BOAT THAT WE WOULD RATHER “SIT THIS ONE OUT?” GOD NEVER STOPS CALLING. THERE ARE SO MANY STORIES OF PEOPLE VERY YOUNG AND VERY OLD ANSWERING THE CALL.

HERE'S THE PICTURE, **THE DISCIPLES NETS ARE LOADED WITH FISH, THIS IS THE RISEN LORD IN THEIR MIDST, AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING?** SITTING DOWN FOR FELLOWSHIP AND BREAKFAST WITH EACH OTHER AND THE RISEN LORD! WHAT AMAZES ME IS THEY ARE NOT, AS FAR AS WE KNOW FROM THE ACCOUNT OF JOHN, OVERWHELMED BY THIS MIRACLE OF THE NETS, AND IT IS SAID "NONE VENTURED TO QUESTION HIM, JESUS, BECAUSE THEY KNEW IT WAS THE LORD!!!! IMAGINE THAT RELATIONSHIP. DO WE WHEN WE SIT DOWN AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS KNOW WHO THAT IS SITTING WITH US? IN THE THREE YEARS JESUS HAD WITH HIS DISCIPLES HE DEVELOPED A RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH ONE. THE SCRIPTURES MAY NOT SAY THAT IN DETAIL, BUT WE CAN BE SURE THAT JESUS DID THAT, BECAUSE WHEN WE ARE SHOWN THE TIMES HE SAT AND ATE WITH SINNERS, HIS RELATIVES AND THE DISCIPLES LESSONS WERE TAUGHT RIGHT ALONG WITH "VISITING" OR GOOD OLD FELLOWSHIP.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT PERSON SITTING NEXT TO YOU THIS MORNING? HAVE YOU SHARED YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE? NOT EASY, AND THAT MAY BE TRUE BUT IF YOU EVER GO ON FACE BOOK, WOW, THERE IS A WHOLE LOT OF SHARING GOING ON THERE AND AS SOME PEOPLE SAY “TOO MUCH INFORMATION”! IT SEEMS MUCH OF THE SHARING IS THROUGH PICTURES AND SAYINGS, BUT IS THAT REALLY WHO THE PERSON IS? WE WON'T KNOW THAT UNTIL WE SIT DOWN FACE TO FACE AND SHARE OURSELVES WITH EACH OTHER. WE MAY TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER, SPORTS OR FOOD, BUT WHAT MAKES THAT PERSON TICK, WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE? I AM NOT SAYING TO EXPECT THAT, THE FIRST TIME WE SIT DOWN AND HAVE REAL FELLOWSHIP WITH SOMEONE, AFTER ALL JESUS SPENT THREE YEARS WITH THE DISCIPLES. I AM SURE THERE WERE A FEW WHO HAD BUILT WALLS TO KEEP PEOPLE AT ARM'S LENGTH, BUT JESUS LOVED HIS DISCIPLES AND WORKED AT IT. **JUST THINK ABOUT THIS – WHAT MADE A GROUP OF MEN, HIS DISCIPLES, AND LATER WOMEN GO OUT AND SPREAD THE WORD AT THE COST OF THEIR OWN LIVES? IT SURE WAS NOT MONEY, A BIG HOUSE, OR A FANCY DONKEY!**

I BELIEVE IT IS THE STRONGEST ELEMENT IN THE UNIVERSE, IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH – LOVE!!!! THERE IS NOTHING STRONGER – STEEL A DIAMOND OR ANYTHING WE CAN IMAGINE IN OUR MINDS!!! GOD SEND HIS ONLY SON TO DIE FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD THAT WE HAVE, IF WE BELIEVE, HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. THAT IS WHAT DROVE, WHAT MOTIVATED THESE DISCIPLES, AND OTHER MEN AND WOMEN DOWN THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH TO STAND FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVED. I WILL VENTURE TO SAY IF WE COULD ASK ANYONE OF THOSE FIGURES OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT THEY WOULD SING A VERY CHILD-LIKE ANSWER - "JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW". **WHEN PEOPLE KNOW EACH OTHER, LOVE EACH OTHER THINGS ARE DONE THAT DEFY THE ORDINARY WAYS. WE HAVE ALL SEEN AND HEARD OF THE UNDENIABLE ACTS DONE IN TIMES OF HARDSHIP, ILLNESS OR WHATEVER BECAUSE OF THE LOVE THAT IS THERE BETWEEN THE PEOPLE. IT IS THIS TYPE OF LOVE AND FELLOWSHIP JESUS HAD WITH HIS DISCIPLES. WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES TOO!!**

WE HAVE THAT SAME LOVE DEMONSTRATED TO US BY THE GRACE AND FORGIVENESS OF GOD THE FATHER EVERYDAY. *THE DISCIPLES WENT OUT AND PASSED IT ON TO THE WORLD AND CHANGED IT FOREVER. ARE WE “PASSING IT ON”? WE HAVE NUMEROUS WAYS OF COMMUNICATING IN OUR WORLD TODAY, BUT IT IS UP TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, “TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD”.*

IN ORDER TO HAVE THIS BURNING INSIDE, TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP AND SHARE WITH OTHERS THE “GOOD NEWS” THAT YOU ALREADY KNOW, YOU HAVE TO SENSE IT, TO FEEL IT!!! THEN WITH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN EACH OF US HAS AND BY AN ACT OF THE WILL WE WILL GO OUT AND MINISTER WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCES WE FIND OURSELVES.

IN THE ENDING VERSES WE FIND THE WELL KNOWN CONVERSATION BETWEEN JESUS AND PETER, THE THREE TIMES PETER IS ASKED THE QUESTION “DO YOU LOVE ME?” THE FIRST REACTION MAYBE JESUS CERTAINLY COULD LOOK INTO HIS HEART AND KNOW WHETHER PETER LOVED HIM OR NOT, BUT THERE IS AN IMPORTANT LESSON HERE. **THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO US THAT WE MUST CONFESS WITH OUR MOUTH JESUS IS LORD, NOT JUST HAVE IT HELD INSIDE.** ROMANS 10:9 *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* WHEN WE REPEAT SUCH WORDS OF CONFESSION IN THE APOSTLES CREED OR THIS SHORT SCRIPTURE SONG “*HE IS LORD*” ARE THOSE **JUST WORDS** OR DO THE WORDS TOUCH SOMEONE DEEP INSIDE WITH A CONFIRMATION THAT YES, HE IS LORD!!!

THIS EVENT IN THE ENDING CHAPTER OF JOHN REALLY SHOWS US THAT JESUS, AND GOD THE FATHER WANT TO “SIT” DOWN WITH US AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP JUST AS IT SAYS IN I JOHN 1:7 *“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* IT IS THEN WE CAN GO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS BECAUSE OF THE FELLOWSHIP AND LOVE OF JESUS.

Young girl and boy are “in love” Tomorrow will be the one-month anniversary and so the girl calls him up to see what plan he had to commemorate this special day. After all, he loves her, or at least so he says. Maybe the phone conversation goes something like this:

Girl: Hey there guy, what are you doing?

Guy: Nothing, I am just hanging out.

Girl: I am really looking forward to tomorrow.

Guy: Yeah, me too.

Girl: I can't wait to see you. I haven't seen you for like three hours.

Guy: I know. I am forgetting what you look like.

Girl: So, what are we doing tomorrow?

Guy: Ummmm...we?

Girl: Yeah, you said that you were looking forward to tomorrow.

Guy: Oh, I am. The guys and I are going fishing at the lake, then to the game, and afterwards, we are going to see a movie.

Girl: [sobbing] But, I thought that we were going to spend our one-month anniversary together. I thought that you loved me!

Obviously, we have a failure to communicate. In the girl's mind, the guy's actions are not matching up to his words. He said that he loved her, but she felt as if his actions didn't show it.

Sometimes, I think that we do the same thing with God. We tell him that we love Him, but our actions don't reflect our words. It's not enough just to say that you love God. Your actions must also say that you love God.

TODAY'S READING OF FISHING AND HAVING FULL NETS, FEEDING AND FELLOWSHIP ALONG THE LAKE, AND FEELING FOR EACH OTHER PROMPTS THE QUESTION **“WHAT DO WE SPEND OUR TIME FISHING FOR, WHO DO WE FEED AND WHAT ARE OUR FEELINGS TOWARD OTHER? JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE!!! AMEN.**