

**WELCOME 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 – Christ the King/Day of Fulfillment/Last  
Sunday of the church year '20 A**

John 20:30-21:19

Welcome again this morning! I'm glad you're here. I pray you experience God's grace in abundance in this brief time together. Please check our website for our weekly Zoom Bible Study times & other important information & updates.

We're continuing w/ our adapted worship...so as usual there are Group Study/Discussion resources right there in your hands. *Special welcome to those who have jumped in on-line. Please make your way through the songs we've linked to this morning so that you experience at home what we're experiencing here. Our aim is to equip you so God leads you into the fullness of His word & his work in your lives & then out into the city to share what God has done for you.*

Remember all the great things we need to do to keep each other as safe as we can in this unending season of "the virus." Hand sanitizer. Masks. Sign in. Distance. Offering. Communion. Special thanks to our set-up/clean-up folks!

***As we move into this week...***

Everyone...every person to ever live...at least once in their lives...reaches a "Why moment" ...usually more than 1. A crisis, circumstance, event, or experience that forces us to ask "Why?" Why this illness? Why my job? Why my spouse, child? Why this catastrophe? Why now? Why me? It usually includes "Why God? What're you doing!?!?"

As much as we like to say "God has a plan" Deep in our heart we know that ol' stuffed toy isn't much comfort in the ICU or cemetery or fire line or after the crash... But is there some deeper purpose that makes sense of the seemingly random days of our lives & the apparent haphazard situations in which we find ourselves? The calamities that come out of nowhere? Is there some greater understanding of the "Why moments" & "God what're you doing?" days that we can cling to w/ all our might & share w/ all our hearts? *Then Jesus told Peter, "Follow me."*

Because Jesus has already written you into his story of eternal life & unfailing love & abundant joy; you can trust that Jesus' purpose from cradle to cross to risen & ruling over all things...is to bless & heal...to comfort & restore...to raise up & make strong...to transform you into his likeness & make your life his best example of abundant life – unconditional love – extravagant grace - prodigal forgiveness and restoration & power beyond every imagination...

We'll explore & experience that together today. Let's pray...then we'll get stuck into it.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

*Gracious God, give us spiritual insight and wise understanding, so we can see our neighbour and this world from your point of view. May our words and actions bring honour to Your name and joy to Your heart. May all we do bear fruit for Your kingdom, and may we come to know and love You more each day. Amen.*

Let's sing & then we'll hear God's Word...

**FAITH CHAT:**

1. What's the most difficult promise/commitment you've had to keep?
2. What's it like to get a second chance at something?

**BIBLES**

## Christ the King/Day of Fulfillment '20 A – HIS STORY – YOUR LIFE: HIS PURPOSE

Dot-to-dot puzzles...loved 'em as a kid. Start @ 1 finish @ 10/20/33. Keep an eye on the pattern...hey presto...Teddy Bear. I think a lot of us try to live life that way. We live our days as dots...1 after another after another & we hope somewhere along the way a pattern/purpose/coherent picture emerges as we string 'em together. We live the dots...years on the job, students taught, seeds planted & harvests gathered, children born, sicknesses, weddings, funerals, successes & sadnesses, time spent sober...One after another after another...or so it goes...Until we get something like this. No Teddy Bear there...but how often is it life comes at us faster than we can draw the lines? I hear all the time: "Busier retired than I ever was working." "No white space on my calendar." "Never get it all done" "Haven't caught up w/ \_\_\_ in forever." "I thought all this technology was going to make my life easier." Sound familiar?

And before we know it life isn't a coherent ANYTHING...it's just random events occurrences situations circumstances some good, some bad, some are "once in a lifetime," others are the daily dots of routine & habit...the daily dots of wake up go to work/take your medicine/get through the day come home & do it all over again tomorrow...dots you do w/o thinking?

Here's the deal...when life gets hard, difficult, confusing, tiring, painful, slog, scared, we retreat to those habits/routines. In the midst of disorder we fight to order our world in the most comfortable safe predictable way possible. When we're struggling to stay afloat...dots don't make sense...keep our head above water...make it through today...we fall back on those things we can do w/o thinking – rote – habit – routine. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." I understand that... Really I get it...

During Jesus' earthly ministry Peter had a hard enough time understanding what Jesus was doing or what **HE** was supposed to do in response. He sure didn't get the crucifixion & he had no idea now. *I'm going fishing...* Confused or scared, unsure uncertain unsettled...anxious worried...Do I wear a mask, sing, shake hands, do my own shopping, visit my neighbour...I'm staying home. I understand that...really... fight it in my own heart every...day.

So Peter & the others retreat into the safe & comfortable confines of their boat. They go back to doing what they'd always done the way they'd always done it. They went to that one place where they were convinced their old skills, old habits & old routines would offer some assurance some stability some something to point a way forward. Some pattern. Some meaning. Some purpose. Some coherent picture of what life was supposed to be like now. *So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all*

**night.** Imagine how the professional fishermen are feeling now. Not only fear or confusion of what they're supposed to do if Jesus leaves them again, which he said he was going to do...or what'll happen if the Jewish leaders come after them or the Romans decide to put an end to this whole Jesus-thing once & for all...but they can't even organize a fish from all their efforts. They retreated to their "safe place" & all it did was prove void...come up empty-handed...failure shame added to their fear & confusion. Maybe you know...stuff up a few times in a row & convince yourself to not try again?

**At dawn** *Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. He called out, "**Fellows** have you caught any fish?" "No," they replied. Gk word there literally is children...& the framing of the question assumes "No" is the answer "Children, you haven't caught any fish have you?" Ps 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. Jesus knows the emptiness of their nets the emptiness of their hearts because they're out there w/o him – the emptiness & frustration & disappointment of all their efforts to find a place of assurance & purpose & meaning...old habits old routines old rut & there's nothing there for them anymore...We have to go back to where John starts the story of Jesus: *In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was w/ God, & the Word was God. He was in the beginning w/ God...In him was life, & that life was light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, & the darkness has not overcome it.* John points to an immediate clear contrast: the fishing **at night** yields nothing but frustration disappointment unbelief...all the fruit of darkness. The old habits old routines old securities ...our best efforts to secure our own way in this world to find a sense of stability security meaning purpose for ourselves always yields empty nets They always yield empty nets...confusion disappointment frustration fear...Fished all night & that's all they've got...started in darkness & caught more of it...*

Acc to Jn, all the resurrection except this one appearances take place in darkness as proof of what John has testified: darkness cannot snuff out the light...but in every instance the disciples struggle to believe & understand & be fully transformed 20:1 - *Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark Mary Mag went to the tomb & found the stone rolled away & aaack!...20:19 - That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!* In the place of your deepest darkness, frustration or fear Jesus comes to bring light & life & fullness beyond your imagination...where you are hurt the worst, afraid the most, ashamed the deepest, nets are emptiest, worked your fingers to the bone & have zip zilch nada to show for it...Jesus comes to bring light & life & fullness beyond your imagination. Every. Time. *Then he said, "Throw out*

*your net on the right-hand side of the boat, & you'll get some!" So they did, & they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it. You know what I'm going to say?*

Their lives & their nets fill in direct proportion to their obedience & responsiveness to Jesus. That is always true. Notice I did not say your bank acct...your GPA...but your capacity to do what Jesus says you are to do...your capacity to be who Jesus says you are to be - your capacity for joy - your capacity to love - your capacity to forgive - your capacity to start over - your capacity to share his love w/ someone who does not yet trust Jesus as Lord or Saviour...your capacity for peace for satisfaction contentment. Our problem isn't that we don't know what to do but that we don't do what we know. Our problem, like theirs, isn't a need more information. The guys on the boat like the 2 on the Emmaus road knew all they needed to know **TO KNOW** Jesus had risen as he promised & death, sin & the devil were defeated. They had all the facts & information they needed to take the life they had received from Jesus & share it w/ the world...but there they are out in their old routines at night w/ nothing but blisters & disappointment.

They did not lack information...they lacked direction...*When they got to shore, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, & some bread. "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said..."Now come have some breakfast!"...Then Jesus served them the bread & the fish. Did Jesus need their fish? No...but he always calls us to take our lives & our gifts & incorporate them into his work...We are not religious consumers. We are partners in his mission. And bless Peter...drags up the whole net & all 153 fish & dumps them at Jesus' feet... Jesus, You can have all of me Have given Jesus your whole net yet?*

Then 3x Peter hears the question he's dreading, "Do you love me?" Of course he does & his repeated confession unwinds his 3 Good Friday denials but it's the commands that are critical: "Feed my lambs...Take care of my sheep...Feed my sheep." In Gen 4...there's a haunting question Cain throws in God's face: *Am I my brother's keeper?* Yes we are...as Christ's body on earth we are woven into one another by baptism & are indispensable to one another...If we don't feed/tend each other no one else will. If we don't look out for care for hold each other accountable, who will? If we don't encourage one another & challenge each other & pray for each other... The question for Peter/us is Do you love Jesus enough to look after his children, his sheep, his lambs? Do you love Jesus enough to engage in the lives of his followers for the work of his kingdom? Or are we just strangers here getting our fill at the trough? Do you love Jesus enough to engage in the lives of his followers for the work of his kingdom?

And then the hard reality that the servants would indeed suffer like the master...the students would travel the same road as the teacher...*Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God.* Listen closely...you're a minority in your own country. As a disciple of Jesus you are a minority in your own country. I don't care what the census says, I care what people do...& <sup>b/t</sup> 5-10% of the Oz population is in worship in any given week. Only ~15% of folks who call themselves Xn worship 1x/month. You will always be misunderstood by the vast majority of your friends & family. You will always be viewed skeptically by people w/ whom you work, go to school, play bowls/golf/netball. Your elected officials most likely do not share your Biblical worldview. While I don't believe you will find yourself dragged to your death for your faith in Jesus like Peter was...I do know that in every subsequent generation it gets more obvious that we live in a broken world desperately distant from Jesus...We will always have a difficult mission before us in bringing life & light & hope & joy to the people around us...

Maybe the best we hope for is to die facing the right direction...*Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."* See...our mission our purpose remains. To walk so closely so responsively so obediently in step w/ Jesus that his life his love his power his grace & his mercy pour out in every word every deed every day. Heb 6:18-19 declares: "Therefore, we who have fled to Christ for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong & trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us..."

Jesus has already written you into his story of eternal life & unending love & abundant joy; you can trust that Jesus' purpose from cradle to cross to risen & ruling over all things...is to bless & heal...to comfort & restore...to raise up & make new. He will transform you into his likeness & make your life his best example of abundant life – unconditional love – extravagant grace - prodigal forgiveness and restoration & power beyond every imagination... our mission our purpose remains. To walk so closely so responsively so obediently in step w/ Jesus that his life his love his power his grace & his mercy pour out in every word every deed every day

Let's pray w/ that in mind: **Father in all things you are with us and at all times you are moving us toward your glorious triumph at the end of our days on earth. You have created us to be with you always, to reveal you to those around us and to delight in the abundance of your blessings. Let your Word find its home in our hearts and produce a harvest of righteousness and a bounty of lives blessed for all eternity. Be our strength and our hope so we can offer your loving embrace to others...Jesus in your Name we pray...Amen.**