

Sunday, May 11, 2025 Morning Worship Sermon

"Fishing at Dawn" Pastor Takaaki Inoue

John 21:1~14

**① [Christ who appears in the resurrected form many times]**

Today I will tell the story of Jesus, who appeared in the resurrection on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias). According to John, it was the third time, but according to the book of Acts (verse 14), it appeared for 40 days (Acts 1:3). I believe that the reason why He appeared in the resurrection over and over again was for the education of his disciples. People can't understand it right away even if they're taught it once or twice, and they need time to understand it from the bottom of their stomachs. It is not a matter of this world, but a mystery of heaven.

●A congregation who lost his wife to illness had always said that he could not believe in the Bible and that it was useless to pray, but the other day when he ate bread and wine at communion, he said that he felt for the first time, "Oh, Jesus has entered." How many years did it take? I think of the love and prayers of many people and the patience and love of God up to that point. Repetition, especially the repetition of the same prayers and actions, can be a great help in the growth of faith.

**② [What we learn from two catches of nothing]**

Peter and his six disciples got into a boat and went fishing. But we didn't catch anything that night. In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 5, there is also a story of "fishing that catches nothing." Why do we find stories of similar experiences in the Bible?

(1) People repeat the same experiences and make the same mistakes. This is true for one person, and the same experience is repeated by many people throughout the ages. All of these stories are written as precedents and for us to learn from them. If you make the same mistakes over and over again, something is wrong.

●The other day, a resident of Sharon Senri (a facility for the elderly) said, "Teacher, I got the Bible, so I read it, and it seems to predict the state of modern human beings who cannot stop fighting even if they acquire scientific knowledge, such as the story of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. The person who wrote this book is amazing, it's incomparably deeper than any other book." I was told. The Bible says,

"This is about me!" I have to read it.

(2) What do John and Luke have in common about their fishing that they can take nothing? "I fished with my nets down all night" and "I didn't catch anything." What's the difference? Luke said, "Jesus was in the boat," and John's said "Jesus was on land." The Jesus in the boat is the form before the resurrection, and the Jesus on the land is the form after the resurrection. The lake symbolizes the unstable world, and the land symbolizes the shores of the kingdom of God. However, both of them had to follow Christ's instructions to have the experience of a great catch. In Luke we are told, "Go out to sea, unload your nets, and fish" (Luke 5:4), and Peter says, "Teacher, we toiled all night, but we got nothing. But since it is your word, let's take down the net." (Luke 5:5), and he did as he said. John said, "Cast a net on the right side of the boat, and you will get it." (John 21:6), and when the disciples cast their nets as they were told, they caught 153 fish. Hieronymus in the 4th century interpreted the 153 fish to mean that all kinds of fish in the Mediterranean would be saved. One scholar also interpreted it as "the right side of the boat means foreigners." It seems that the Jews of that time could not have imagined that a foreigner would become a believer. If we struggle all night and don't get any results, we easily draw conclusions by thinking, "If this doesn't change, it's useless to do it anymore." But if you try it one last time, it might pay off.

"Let your bread float in the water, and you will find it in the days that are over."  
(Proverbs 11:1)

"Sow in the morning, and do not rest in the night, for you do not know whether it will bear fruit this or that, or both." (Proverbs 11:6)

This is especially true of evangelism. I think there are some things that we make up our minds about before we share the gospel. They think that the yakuza can't do it, that their parents can't do it, that this person can't do it, and they don't even preach the gospel at all. As I read this, I began to have the courage to tell everyone clearly. This is a test of who is sovereign. It is a test of whether you are the master or Christ is the master. It is a test of whether you will do it at your own discretion or become a servant who obeys God's word.

● It reminded me of the story of Pastor Yasuo Enomoto. When he was a seminarian, he was sent to a rural church. The pastor there invited him to go on a roadside mission. Enomoto followed the pastor with a wooden tangerine box for him to stand on. Standing on the fence, the pastor stood on the box and spoke, but no one stopped to listen. Suddenly, a boy approached and mocked Enomoto by saying, "Amen, somen, cold somen" (a word used by Japan to mock Christians). When I return to church feeling embarrassed, angry, and frustrated, the pastor tells me to say a prayer of thanksgiving. Enomoto was so

angry that he didn't pray, saying, "What is gratitude, this is why Christianity is ridiculed." A few years passed, and a seminarian was sent to Pastor Enomoto's church. As soon as he saw Enomoto-sensei, he asked, "Sensei, do you remember me? This is the boy who made fun of the teacher who used to do roadside evangelism by saying "Amen" and "Somen." He was told. Pastor Enomoto was amazed at what God was doing, and he repented with tears.

### ③ 【There is also a life of faith to know the Lord】

When the disciples went ashore, they found a charcoal fire, fish on it, and bread. (verse 9). Bread and baked fish were already prepared on land. So what did they struggle to get them to fish? What are we evangelizing for? Is it to increase the number of believers? The Bible says, "All who are destined to have eternal life have entered into the faith" (Acts 13:48). Those who believe are already ordained. The answer is that by evangelizing, we can know that God is really alive and experience His work. In a nutshell, it means "to know God." There is a recurring phrase in the Old Testament: "When you do ~ and glorify me, you will know that I am the Lord." There is all the life of faith and various activities to "know the Lord." That's why it is written here that the disciples "knew that he was the Lord" (John 21:12).

It doesn't matter how big or small the church is, it is meaningless if the "work of the Lord" does not appear. We want to know that we cannot do anything apart from Him, that He is in control of this world, that He really lives and works.

### ④ 【Have breakfast with Christ】

When the disciples went ashore, their morning meal was already prepared. When we go to heaven, we will have what we need.

● Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath by saying, "My Father is still working, so I will also work" (John 5:17). One monk read this Bible and said, "We work in this world in the same way, for we have an eternal time to rest." He said. I want to continue working in this world, thinking that rest and rest are prepared for me.

Jesus said, "Come, come and have your morning meal" (v. 12), and He took the loaves and fishes and gave them to His disciples. This shoreside meal is reminiscent of a heavenly table. Interestingly, the Bible begins with the story of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and ends with the story of eating the bread from the hand of Jesus. The Bible is consistently run through the "story of eating." Only Christianity eats together (the sacrament) in worship. To eat is to live. In other words, it teaches that man lives by God, and that the goal of life is to receive life from the hand of God Christ and to live forever. People

cannot live on their own in this world or in the next. When I was a premature baby and was in an incubator for six months, I couldn't live on my own. It's actually the same now that you're an adult, and it's the same in the next life. What a power and beauty the bread of life comes from the hands of Jesus. I will live forever in the afterlife. Because He wants me, He loves me with eternal love, He makes me alive with His life. "Come, come, and have your morning meal," let us savor these words and live with a peaceful heart, thinking of the shores of heaven.