

# Merry Christmas

Part One: Where are you? Where are you going?  
John 21:1-25 (vss. 1-3)



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

Winter 2021

The first time I heard the following wisecrack was all it took. It stuck. It's been with me ever since. Here it is..."One thing's for sure, wherever you are that's where you are." Honestly, I have no idea about its origin or its original intention. I do know I love its certainty. Right? It's got a certain stability to it. It's like saying, "Calm down. Focus. Let's stop to pray. Right here, right now, there's at least time for a deep breath. There's a moment to think.

It reminds me of some Bible proverbs:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (Proverb 3:5)*

*Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered. (Proverb 28:26)*

*Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Proverb 29:20)*

It also reminds me of what Jesus said when he encouraged the folks to lean into God:

*Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:34)*

Sometimes, we just need to know where we are, where we're going, where we stand, and who's with us and who isn't. We need some wisdom about what we keep doing and what we should be doing. It's like what one fella said about his Mom. He tells of her wisdom when in a firm voice she would say, "Be still. Be quiet. Now listen." Then she did some "splainen." She explained to him about...

...RELIGION: When I spilled grape juice on the carpet, she instructed, "You better pray the stain will come out of the carpet."

...LOGIC: From her decisive words, "Because I said so, that's why."

...FORESIGHT: "Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you get into an accident."

...IRONY: "Keep laughing, and I'll give you something to cry about."

...STAMINA: "You'll sit there 'til all that spinach is finished."

...WEATHER: "It looks as if a tornado swept through your room."

...THE CIRCLE OF LIFE: "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

Merry Christmas: Where are you, Part One

You know what I'm talking about, right? Sometimes we need some reevaluation. We need to hear again about just where we are in this hullabaloo called Life on Planet Earth. It's what Jesus did for his early disciples after his crucifixion and resurrection and before his ascension into heaven. Part of his wisdom is found in John chapter 21, verses 1 through 25. It breaks down like this...

- John 21:1-3        Where are you when everything seems unbalanced?
- John 21:4-6        Where are you when expectations go awry?
- John 21:7-14        Where are you when the Lord begins to poke and prod?
- John 21:15-19        Where are you when the Lord closes in on your personal stuff?
- John 21:20-25        Where are you when the Lord reveals to you that you are part of an eternal team?

Let's now turn our attention to those first three verses. Remember, the Supper, Prayer, and Discourse before the crucifixion (John 12-17), the Betrayal, Arrest, and Trial (John 18), the Torture, Crucifixion, Death, and Burial (John 19), and the Resurrection and first Appearances (John 20) have passed. The Lord was nearing the end of his stay on Earth. There was time and necessity to help his close followers to receive more grounding. He did not want to leave them dazed, confused, or aimless.

The chapter begins...

*"After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing." (John 21:1-3).*

Imagine. God Almighty had invited them into his family...his closest circle. They saw things, heard things, and did things of earth-shattering implications. Eternity and the King of Eternity sang and danced the infinite plan of the Trinity not only before their very eyes, but with invitation to partake within the inner circle. Three short years split them from the rest of mankind. They were now meant for Act Two..."All The World Must Be Told!" Yet, what did they do? They went home. They hung out all day. In the evening, they went fishing...they went fishing. The wrong kind of fishing.

Perhaps a look backward might make this more clear. Mathew, Mark, and Luke all provide details about the moment Jesus called these men to their eternal destiny (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:2-11). Here is how Matthew recorded the event...

*"While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."*

Fishing at night for a living was once their livelihood, but those days were over. Their new mission was not a livelihood it was LIFE...for them and all mankind. They were to cast a net over all the world, but instead, well...rather than gathering a crowd to share their news they went fishing.

This is a pattern flowing throughout the Bible. From Adam and Eve to Abraham to Moses to David to the Prophets to the Apostles to the churches, folks seem to quickly forget where they are with God. The same can be said of Christ-followers throughout the centuries right up 'til now. So God, in delivering the word of God through John, an Apostle of God, to us, the people of God and the soon to be people of God, catches us off guard just as he caught those first followers of guard.

Is there an application in these first three verses? Yes.

Sometimes, we may think we've given it our all, but have gained nothing. Where are we then? The rest of John 21 will help us sort that question out. Until then, think about this...are you fishing in the right place and are you fishing the right way?

