

# Merry Christmas

Part Three: Where are you? Where are you when the Lord begins to poke and prod?  
John 21:1-25 (vss. 7-14)



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

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It's not as though we catch God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit off-guard when we grow unbalanced or we react irresponsibly on account of unmet expectations. Ever since Adam and Eve, every man, woman, and child has had these tendencies. Yet, once again, let's remind ourselves God became one of us to offer us not only life everlasting (John 3:16), but life filled with abundance (John 10:10). He should be our greatest expectation. After all, he will never leave us or forsake us. He'll find us...and he'll ask us how we're doing. He'll ask, "Where are you? What are you thinking right now? What's up?" In fact, we might just go on ahead and get comfortable with the process, because just as he did with Adam, Eve, Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Paul and the rest, he's gonna poke and prod. We might as well start asking the question, "Where are you when the Lord begins to poke and prod?"

Before we unpack verses seven through fourteen, in which that question will be addressed, let's briefly review what we've covered so far and preview what's coming later in the month...

## Review

Part One: John 21:1-3 Where are you when everything seems unbalanced?

You should recall from Part One in this series, that following the grand three year ministry of Jesus his close disciples just decided to hang out during the day and take up their nets for a night of fishing. They had been empowered to cast a "good news" net over the entire world, but they went home, hung around, and tried to catch some fish. Predictably, they were out of balance.

Part Two: John 21:4-6 Where are you when your expectations go awry?

Jesus met them after their night of fishing. He asked a common question, "do you have any fish" (vs. 5). One might wonder why he did not ask, "Ah come on, what are you doing out there? Is this what you plan to do? It would have been a justifiable question. Instead, he asked them if their night of fishing had met with any success. They answered "No" (vs. 5). He replied, "throw your net to the right side of the boat. You'll catch a net full" (vs. 6). They did as he said and they reaped as he promised (vs. 6). Amazing!

## Preview

Beginning next week we'll tackle verses fifteen through twenty-five in Parts Four and Five. Similar questions will be answered. They look like this...

Part Four: John 21:15-19

Where are you when the Lord closes in on your personal stuff?

Part Five: John 21:20-25

Where are you when the Lord reveals to you that you are part of an eternal team?



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Merry Christmas: Where are you, Part Three

### Part Three      Where are you when the Lord begins to poke and prod?

Jesus showed up early in the morning after their long night of unproductive fishing. Here is how the Holy Spirit inspired John to record their meeting at the shore.

*“That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ Now none of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.”*

Now think about this a little. In our lessons on verses 1-3 and 4-6, we saw two outstanding issues:

First, the Lord’s followers were meant to cast the gospel net around the world. However, they did not. Instead, they went fishing...not for people, but for fish...all night long...like they were accustomed to before meeting the Messiah.

Second, at dawn, the Lord called to them from shore. They did not recognize him. He asked if they had any fish. Of course, they answered “No.” He told them to cast their net on the right side. They did and their catch was so great they could not pull it into the boat.

In the first section, we believe their continued confusion left them unbalanced. Finally seeing this, they, and we also, can learn to ask this question, “Where are you when everything seems unbalanced?”

In the second section, the Lord shows up (of course, it’s not like he was in the dark). In answer to his question, they tell him they have caught no fish. He tells them where to throw the net...they receive the catch of a life-time. For them all was in disarray. Sure, they had received incredible answers (John 1-20), but they were still not completely settled about the future. They, like us, in situations like this should have asked, “Where are you when your expectations go awry?” Empty nets were an answer to, “Should we take up our old livelihood again.” A record breaking catch, after following the Lord’s directions, was a not so subtle reminder of his call upon their lives: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Or, “I will never leave you...neither will I forsake you.” He was both necessary and sufficient for both their needs and their destiny.

As we turn to the next section, notice he did not overtly tell them all this by rebuking them or warning them. As he is so prone to doing, he used the circumstances at hand to remind and enlighten their hearts, souls, and minds. And he wasn’t finished. In verses seven through fourteen, Jesus, all cool, calm, and collected, seized the moment. As soon as they burst into recognition and action, Jesus said to them “bring some of your fish and come join me for breakfast.” It was now time for some talking. It will get real personal in verses fifteen through twenty-five, but for now we’re just touching on the invitation to fish and biscuit breakfast.

Right, you know how this goes. There are those times when everything’s just a bit wonky. It’s not terrible, but neither is it terrific. You know, those times when someone asks, “Can we talk?” Perhaps you then find yourself taking a gulp, breathing deeply, letting out a sigh, rubbing your hands together. Maybe you respond with silence. At the very least you need a moment, because you know some poking and prodding are gonna start rolling in.

In a few short moments...

...the disciple whom Jesus loved burst out with, “It’s the Lord!”



...Simon-Peter , hearing this declaration, adjusted his clothing, jumped from the boat, and waded ashore.

...the other fellas negotiated the boat and the incredible catch right behind Simon-Peter.

...once on shore, they saw the Lord had a fire going and fish and bread prepared.

...Jesus said, “Bring some of your fish.”

...Simon-Peter climbed back aboard the boat and hauled the net with its 153 fish ashore.

...the disciples now recognized him so they did not ask, “Who are you?”

...Jesus served them breakfast.

...and, finally, we are told, “This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.”

Starting with the last of these pieces, we know this meeting between Jesus and his group of men was significant because there were more than three appearances...but this was the third in which he only appeared to the guys. They were leaders. His intentions for them were crucial. Their compliance was vital. We don't know the content of this group discussion...not the small or the big stuff. However, based on John's incomplete yet detailed description, we know there was some give and take.

For example...

- Who is the disciple Jesus loves?
- What exactly is meant regarding the description of Peter jumping over board?
- What's up with the fact that the group could not haul up the catch, but Peter could jump back on board, grab the net full of fish, and drag it to shore?
- Why was it necessary to detail the 153 fish?
- Why would the disciples even consider asking Jesus, “Who are you,” if they had already recognized him?

Volumes and volumes have been penned attempting to answer these questions. The questions have yet to be sufficiently answered. Could it be they do not need to be answered? Doesn't it seem more likely that just knowing Jesus sat with the guys and talked stuff over tells us more than had God inspired John to give us all the details? After all, we know Jesus is never done teaching or reminding. Of course, he would seize this teachable morning. In fact, we should long for such attention from the Savior, because it's a good thing that he pokes and prods.

What's in this for us? It's simple, as we'll see in our next two lessons, God will always seek to dive deeply into our affairs. It cost us nothing to receive salvation, but the Lord expects much from us when we're born again. On the other hand, there is much for us to learn, to do, to negotiate and renegotiate that can be prompted by some simple poking and prodding. It's nothing to fret, but rather something to appreciate. As we grow in our walk with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he will teach and remind us from his word—the Bible—day in and day out. As we reflect on the treasure stores of his truth, we'll sometimes feel comfort and sometimes feel discomfort. Both are designed to make us think, reflect, meditate, and learn. So remember, “Where are you when the Lord begins to poke and prod?”

Incorporate and Tweet these:

- No poking, no prodding, no progress.
- No poking, no prodding, no proficiency.
- No poking, no prodding, no promotion.

