



# Believe

## JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Peter's Fishing Trip – Backsliding or Foreshadowing?

Bible Reading: John 20:30-21:14

**30** Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**1** After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way: **2** Simon Peter, Thomas (called "Twin"), Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples were together. **3** "I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them. "We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. **4** When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. **5** "Friends," Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you?" "No," they answered. **6** "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," he told them, "and you'll find some." So they did, and they were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish. **7** The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea. **8** Since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards[e] away), the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. **9** When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. **10** "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus told them. **11** So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish—153 of them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. **12** "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. **14** This was now the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### I. Chapter 21 – an Epilogue

#### A. The purpose of this epilogue

1. How should the disciples live in the post-resurrection world?
2. What is the role and mission of the church?
3. May address some problems that arose during John's time

**II. Jesus reveals Himself – 1:1**

A. Abundance of fish is similar to the wedding at Cana – 2:1-11

1. With abundance of wine

B. Also similar to feeding the 5000 – 6:1-14

1. With abundance of food left over

**III. Did Peter and the others backslide?**

A. Some think Peter backslid from his ministry

B. There is no indication that they were backsliding

1. According to John's gospel we do not know they were fishermen.

2. Motives are never mentioned

3. Jesus does not condemn, in fact Jesus has prepared a meal for them

**IV. The fishing trip is not backsliding but a foreshadowing what was to come**

A. This is a sign related to the mission of the church

B. Unable to catch fish

C. Catching fish at the Lord's command

1. Catching an abundance of fish

2. The beloved disciple recognizing the Lord

3. Peter's response – impetuous

**V. Symbolic relationship between catching fish and the church's mission**

A. Seeing the two levels of the fishing story

1. First level – the disciples need food

2. Second level – fishing symbolizes the preaching ministry of the church

B. Confirmed by the drawing in of the fish – v. 11

1. To haul in the fish symbolic of drawing people to Jesus (6:44; 12:32)

2. Bring some to me (v. 10) – joining with God to draw all people to Jesus

3. The net not being broken – some suggest the oneness of the church

C. Application

1. Fish as a team – 7 went fishing

2. Fish with a net – not individual but as group – community groups (summer activities)

3. Need Lord's leading – the "right side"

4. Need to abide in Him – apart from me you cannot do anything" (15:5)