

Simon Peter

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[0 : 0 0] just next to us here our immediate neighbor on my left is harris garage most of you know that for those who are visiting you you might not have noticed but that's that's our neighbor and i remember noticing in the past one day when i was there getting some diesel or putting something in in the in the getting the car serviced that the the manager of the business who was taking over at that time john strudders i'm looking around for it i'm not seeing today but there was a sign up there at the garage door and when it was open for business the sign said open but when the garage was closed didn't say closed it said gone fishing and those who know john know how literally true that was but that's a phrase that we sometimes use when we're not on duty when we're not uh working the sign is up there uh gone fishing and that's our first point today takes us into the the passage that we were reading uh our first point is is gone fishing this by way of context uh was after the resurrection of jesus and john in the previous chapter has made clear that jesus has appeared on at least two occasions to the disciples already why did he appear to them well we we thought a little about that he appeared to them so they would believe that he really had risen from the dead the stories were going round uh some had question marks jesus appeared to the disciples so that they would really believe that he had risen from the dead he appeared to them so that they could see his wounds because apart from seeing and understanding why he was wounded they couldn't be saved uh he appeared to them so that they would see and understand and accept that he was the the savior that he was the the lord that he was the the son of god he was the christ who died and rose to to secure their salvation he appeared to them so that they would be enabled as they did to receive his peace and his his joy in his life and he appeared to them to give them a very clear instruction to go out with the gospel message they were locked in a room terrified immobilized and jesus and john 20 and look at verse 21 in particular jesus says to them peace be with you as the father has sent me i am sending you so we kind of expect them just a wee bit on here to be up and doing we kind of expect to define the disciples um about their master's business and engaged in in gospel mission speaking to people about the risen christ encouraging each other in the faith that's what we'd expect but when jesus calls when he appears to his disciples now for the third time the sign is up gone fishing look at verse 1 to verse 3 afterwards jesus appeared again to his disciples by the sea of tiberias it happened this way simon peter thomas called didymus nathaniel from cana in galilee the sons of zebedee and two other disciples were together i'm going out to fish simon peter told them and they said we'll go with you so they went out and got into the boat they'd gone fishing as jesus looks into our lives

as there is in christ who is amongst us in the power of the holy spirit as he looks around and as he recognizes his believing people and as he looks into my life and your life as he analyzes and studies our routines he tracks our movements what does he see are we open for gospel business or have we taken a break have we gone fishing i was in a meeting in edinburgh recently and one of the ministers who was at the meeting said the greatest need that we have in our church today is for our people to become evangelists for our people not just to come in to these church buildings and to sit under the ministry of the word and to be encouraged and to be built up but once we've done that to go out and tell people about jesus see just as jesus sent out the disciples back then we have through matthew 28 the great commission been sent out we're thankful for this building but this is a place where we come in to be encouraged and to worship and then we go out with the gospel message so are we doing that it's the question for me and for you are we looking for opportunities and praying for opportunities day by day to to tell people about jesus are we looking for these chances to tell people about the forgiveness of sin and the eternal life that is offered to them in christ and also the danger that there is in not responding to and not trusting christ the wrath that is to come for those who live apart from jesus are we telling people that do we have a clear vision of

christ and do we have a clear vision of the mission that he has given us or as jesus looks into our lives does he see the sign up gone fishing that's the first point gone fishing the second point is is gone astray we could put a question mark at the end of this but i think it's likely gone astray and just on the same section still in verse 3 i want to underline particularly peter's words peter says i'm going out to fish now if we turn the clock back in peter's life and his experience to day one when he first met jesus and when jesus first spoke to peter what did jesus call peter to do he called him to leave his nets flick to matthew chapter 4 for a moment please matthew chapter 4 and verse 18 as jesus was walking beside the sea of galilee he saw two brothers simon called peter and his brother andrew they were casting a net into the lake for they were fishermen come follow me jesus said and i will make you fishers of men at once they left their nets and followed him now we find peter and he's picking his nets back up he doesn't seem to be following jesus closely he seems to be going astray he may have lost sight of of god's calling on his life maybe he thought he'd let the lord down so badly that he just could no longer be useful as a disciple so he says i'm going fishing don't know what you guys are doing but i'm going fishing the commentator bruce millen and john stock this is what they say about this they say why were they the disciples back here in their old haunts and about their old business when jesus had died and risen and sent them on their new tasks beginning in jerusalem accordingly this whole expedition is commonly interpreted as expressing the disciples disobedience so the implication here is we can't be certain but the implication here is that peter is going astray astray it's not waiting on the lord as we sang but he's going astray which is sad to see and it's sad to hear but actually what makes this sadder is that peter actually seems to be leading others astray because after peter in verse 3 says i'm going out to fish simon peter told them we'll go with you is what they say so they went out and got into the boat not just peter but now a cluster of the disciples they're out fishing i remember hearing a story i went looking for the story but i couldn't find it so i'm just recalling this from memory but i remember hearing a story about a father who was struggling he was a christian man but he was struggling he was going astray spiritually and one of the evidences of his waywardness was in his drinking so in the evenings after they had their meal this man would sneak off and he would drink in a tavern this is an old story and he would come back late once his children were asleep one evening he went out as he often did and it was snowing that night and what he didn't know was that just a little behind him following his tracks was his little girl she followed his tracks he was off in the distance she followed the steps the mile or so out of the house through the woods to the tavern where she arrived opened the doors and in this raucous bar to her father's dismay as he looked around she saw him she followed him she followed him astray and as

Peter followed Jesus previously he was a great encourager of other people to follow Jesus but as Peter begins to go astray others are following Peter on that wayward course who are you and I following that's actually a very contemporary question we could have asked that question 20 years ago and we think about just who we have an interest in nowadays we actually follow we click the links on twitter or instagram or facebook or whatever it is and we're following who are we following who's filling up our feed who's filling up our screens on social media on tv who are we following in real life who is it that we're looking up to who are we following who are the role models that we have and are they leading us closer to or further away from Jesus that's one question in that location here's another one who's following you parents grandparents friends work colleagues who's following you see someone's always following us we may not know it we may not recognize it but someone's always following us so where are we leading them are we leading them closer to Jesus or are we leading them on a track away from him gone fishing is the first point gone astray is the second point gone hungry is the third point we asked the question why were they fishing and I suppose the answer if we distill it down is they needed to eat they had gone fishing maybe it was to get their breakfast for that day maybe this was the beginning of a new commercial enterprise going back to what they used to do in their previous time before Jesus but they were going fishing perhaps to make money but they were making money in order to live and to eat and these disciples were fishermen Peter in particular was a fisherman he's the one who led them out he's the one we can imagine him at the helm of the boat imagine him at the thick of all the action he was a fisherman he's a professional fisherman he knew what he was doing he knew where the fish so as we read of him going out and we kind of wait for him to come back we would expect

[14 : 46] Peter to come back with a boat full of fish we'd expect him to have a good catch of fish so they could eat it or they could sell it and yet that's not what we read verse three they go out fishing Peter says i'm going to the disciples say we'll go with you they're out fishing all night but that night

verse three they caught they caught nothing nothing not their catch was a wee bit down but they caught nothing and I can't help wondering if Jesus words were in their minds can't help wondering if they were thinking back to the teaching of Jesus just just a matter of days prior for Jesus said to Peter and those gathered in John 15 verse 5 we finished on apart from me you can do nothing because that's how it seemed here

I mean for Peter especially he could do fishing he'd done it for years but now as he seems to be going astray from Jesus he couldn't even do the things that previously were no problem to him so as he returns from this arduous fishing trip the nets are empty and the disciples are going hungry for the night they have gone hungry and this is a lesson that I've had to learn many times in the past it's a lesson that I keep on having to learn apart from Jesus I can do nothing I learned it in the years before I was a minister I tempted to tell you a story but it would take 10 minutes and I haven't got the time but I remember clearly an occasion where Jesus just made so crystal clear to me that the thing that

I seemed to be good at when I didn't trust him I couldn't even do that and as a minister I don't know how many times I have come back with empty nets worn out and I hear the words of Jesus coming back to me again apart from me you can do nothing Peter couldn't even do fishing and he was apart from Christ it's good for us to be reminded of our weakness it's good for you and I to be aware of our own inability to do anything apart from the help of Jesus we sang in Psalm 40 about an acute need for God's help because apart from him we can do nothing he is the one who has given us life he is the one who can give you your next breath or not he's the one who has given us food the reason we had breakfast this morning was because the Lord has allowed it he's the one who has given us the homes that we're able to shelter in he's the one who's given us the clothes that we're covered in he's the one that has given us the work the employment that we have and the skills to be actually able to do it he's the one who's given us water he's the one who's given us this church building he's the one who's given us the salvation that we need which we could not receive apart from his blood having paid for it he's the sole supplier of the grace that sustains us and the grace that keeps us he's the only way to receive eternal life he's the only one who can bring satisfaction to your soul and mine apart from him we can do nothing nothing nothing apart from him we go hungry in every sense so let us come to him in worship day by day thanking him for all that he has done and is doing in our lives let us remain in him let us not drift apart from him they had gone hungry so far that is the fourth point has gone overboard verse four early in the morning

Jesus stood on the shore but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus he called out to them friends probably the more literal is lads it's a very informal way of speaking and the word is used haven't you any fish know the answer he said throw your nets on the right side of the boat and you will find some when they did they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter it is the Lord as soon as Simon Peter heard him say it is the Lord he wrapped his outer garment around him for he had taken it off and jumped into the water Peter's gone overboard the situation here strikes me as similar to the situation of the feeding of the 5,000 except it's at sea feeding of the 5,000 we have the lunch of a small boy and Jesus multiplies it creatively into a feast for thousands and now at sea

Jesus seems to be able to transform waters that appear to be empty of fish and transform them so much so that they're boiling with fish with a word so many fish that they could hardly land them so why did he do it why did Jesus do this he did this so that they would see and know that this was Jesus their minds likely would have gone back to the account that's recorded in Luke 5 time's gone so we can't go there but when Jesus first called the disciples remember he sees them they've been out all night they've caught nothing and Jesus says to Peter put your nets down into the deep water and Peter tired grumpy is reluctant to do this we get that sense of exasperation in his response but he agrees with reluctance and then instantaneously they have so many fish their nets are actually bursting and that was the point that Jesus called the disciples and now we see almost a repeat in their experience because this was the point that

[22 : 21] Jesus was recalling the disciples and as they saw this miracle in action they realized that the risen Christ was the one who was on the shore whose silhouette they could see and John was the first to see and he tells Peter it is the Lord and the moment he does Peter's over the side he's gone he's out of the boat he's gone overboard he's into the waters as soon as Simon Peter heard him say it is the Lord he wrapped his aggrave garment around him for he had taken it off and he jumped into the water why I think the answer is simple it's to get close to Jesus that's why and this

is characteristic of the passion and the zeal and the impulsiveness of Peter this is why we love him J.C. Ryle says this the conduct of the apostle Peter here described as eminently characteristic of the man fervent warm-hearted impulsive impetuous affectionate thinking nothing of consequences acting on the spur of present feeling he at once plunges into the sea when he hears that his Lord is on the shore and struggles to get close to him whatever we may think of his hasty behaviour we must all admire his love zeal for Christ deserves respect even when it leads a man to hasty action enthusiasm even when it runs to seed is better than indifference enthusiasm in the things of the Lord is better than indifference even when it involves us in that moment jumping overboard enthusiasm is better than indifference

I think it's quite possible that some of us need to take our leaves on Peter here because as John says to us through his gospel that we've been studying now for well over a year as John says to us repeatedly and shows us repeatedly with the help of the Holy Spirit the Lord Jesus and as we see him and as in our hearts we respond and say it's the Lord as we see the crucified risen Lord Jesus some of us need to jump overboard some of us perhaps need to leave the deck and plunge into the waters to get close to Jesus some of us have been too distant for too long and I want to say today if you see him take that leap if you see him if you see the

Lord don't hesitate one more moment but come to Jesus get over the side and we might say well I'm fearful don't you think Peter was fearful but he jumped we might say well I've got so many questions don't you think Peter had questions and the Lord had questions for Peter and Peter would have known it yet he jumped you might say well I've let the Lord down so badly in the past so had Peter terribly recently and yet he jumped he came to Jesus and just as Jesus promised John 6 37 Jesus did not drive him away but he said come and Jesus will not drive any of us away but as we come to him with many a question yes and many a fear yes and perhaps many a doubt like Thomas many a failure like Peter we come to him he will receive and he will forgive and he will restore and he will be commissioners if like

Peter we had gone fishing final point and it's 30 seconds of a point going going fishing not gone the last point is going fishing just one little detail and we'll pick this up and go the next week one little detail as we finish as soon as Simon Peter heard him say it's the Lord he wrapped his outer garment around him the funny he wrapped his outer garment around him you don't normally put your jacket on before you jump into the sea he wrapped his outer garment around him for he had taken it off and jumped into the water the outer garment was the garment that got in the way of fishermen when they were fishing that's why it was off but now as Peter sees Jesus and [28 : 38] Jesus calls Peter back Peter picks the garment up and leaps out of the boat and as he does so we get the first hint that he's done fishing for fish and that he's going gospel fishing for men and women and boys and girls who will be disciples of Jesus and we'll continue this and see how this works out next week God will let's pray Lord God we thank you for this passage we thank you for these portraits of the disciples and the reality of their failures as well as the examples that they can often be to us we thank you for your grace we thank you for your patience we thank you for how we see that in the life of Peter and the other disciples and Lord we thank you that you're the God who does not change and we pray that if we have been far from you or if we have never known you we pray that as we see you today in the pages of scripture if we recognise you as the

Lord our Lord we pray that each one of us would come to you maybe for the first time maybe for the first time in a while that we wouldn't hesitate Lord but that we would come and find that you are the one who does not drive us away but who receives us in order to bless us and use us and we ask this in Jesus name Amen amen to us in Jesus anchor Amen God you are you going to be in Jesus in Jesus he only in Jesus and if we may be in God with us He been on Jesus in Jesus when you look at the Jesus in Jesus and having given us