



## SoulShare

January 8, 2022, 9:00—10:30 am Breakfast & Discussion

### Simon's Fish Story

If I know anything it is fishing. So, when Jesus the teacher told me to cast out my nets in the middle of the day, I was sure it would accomplish nothing. But instead it produced a boatful of fish! It also convinced me that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

It was not the first time I had met Jesus. Andrew and I and our business partners, James and John, may be blue collar tradesmen, but we were aware of what was happening in the world. You might say that there was a sort of Messiah-mania going on in the whole region and we wanted to know what was real. Andrew had agreed to go hear what John the Baptizer was saying. He was with him when that rough-hewn wilderness preacher said, "Look, the Lamb of God."

So, Andrew followed Jesus of Nazareth to where he was staying and spent the day with him – what normal Rabbi spends a day with a fisherman? Then Andrew came to me and said, "We have found the Messiah." He brought me to Jesus, who seemed to know me. He said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Peter."

Then Philip and Nathanael met Jesus and they were also impressed and began to follow Him to Cana, Jerusalem, Sychar in Samaria then back to Cana. Andrew came back to me and the fishing business in Capernaum. That was where Jesus later appeared, teaching by the seaside. As the crowd pressed in, Jesus asked to speak from our boat, which we granted. Then he made the strange request. "Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch."

What I complained about was that we had worked all night and gotten nothing, but on my mind were the reports we had heard over several weeks. John the Baptizer had been imprisoned. Jesus had returned to Galilee through Samaria -- which is just not the thing good Jews do. There were reports of healings, but he had gotten in trouble at the synagogue of Cana to the point that the people wanted to push him off a cliff. Was this really the one or just another flashy fraud?

When we pulled in the biggest catch of fish I had ever seen or even heard of, I knew He was the Messiah. When James and John had joined us to unload the boats and Jesus said, "Come, follow me," we had no hesitation.

John was the thinker among us. We had been discussing all these things and he remembered the Rabbis' teachings from way back when he prepared for Bar Mitzvah – I wish I had paid better attention. He said the problem in Cana was just as the prophet Isaiah said, that Messiah would be despised and rejected.

It was a wild ride from then on, teaching in the synagogue, healings of all kinds including my wife's mother, who, as soon as she stood up, completely well, began waiting on Him and all of us – she was back to normal, all right. And besides the healings there was the casting out of demons, who screamed when they saw Jesus, "You are the Son of God!" If they knew Him, certainly we should! But many of the people seemed to be only interested in the benefits. They did not want to know Him for Who He was. Perhaps it was the excitement or novelty?

Jesus did not heal everybody and often took time to go apart for prayer. John told me he thought it was because Jesus' real mission was the Good News, available to all. His real purpose was to be "The

Lamb of God!" John also said, we are living in interesting times. We were to find out exactly how interesting over the next three years. John 1, Luke 4 and 5, Mark 1, Isaiah 53

### *Simon's Fish Story Discussion*

*Remember that these monologues are essentially historical fiction, based on the Scripture but filling in plausible subjective details, both emotional responses and motivations. Your first task is to decide if they are reasonable.*

*Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was present at John the Baptist's announcement "Behold the Lamb of God." Is that surprising?*

*Do "ordinary people" often seek God more sincerely than the elite?*

*Is it surprising that Jesus "spent the day" with Andrew?*

*We have sometimes been challenged to "leave our nets and follow Jesus" as if this was the first contact the fisherman had with him. How does the correct chronology change our interpretation?*

*How does "diligently seeking Him" relate to the grace of God in our spiritual journey?*

*Is it natural to share truth you have found with family and friends?*

*Why do we sometimes neglect doing so?*

*Is it reasonable that the fishermen may have had doubts about Jesus from the reports of his poor reception in some places?*

*How would you have felt if you had been on the receiving end of Jesus command to cast out the nets for a catch? How about after pulling in the nets?*

*John, in his Gospel, sounds like a philosopher. John 1:1-5 "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him." Is it believable that he would have been thoughtful as a young man?*

*Think about how the Holy Spirit gives gifts as He wills and that natural gifts are also from God. Are you aware of situations where God has made His purpose for the gifts plain to us?*

*What unique contributions did John make, to the Kingdom and the church?*

*Compare John's ministry with Simon Peter's ministry and the preparation each underwent for it.*

*Why was it not John but Peter who gave the evangelistic sermon at Pentecost?*

*Why was Peter chosen to be the early leader of the church?*

*Were some who followed Jesus there for less than pure spiritual motives?*

*Was there any way that the disciples could have failed to believe that demons were real and needed to be dealt with in a spiritual manner?*

*Why do some today believe that demons might have been an ignorant explanation for mental illness?*

*Why did Jesus often command those healed of illness or delivered of demons to not tell what happened?*