

## When I Feel Stuck

1. Warm-up Question: Sunday's sermon began with a story about Pastor Jason borrowing Jeff's fancy new vacuum sweeper and sweeping his office without the dirt canister attached. All that effort, but nothing accomplished. Tell us about a time lately when you put a lot of effort into something, but accomplished nothing.
2. In your life right now, where do you feel most stuck?
3. Our Gospel passage this week is about how we should respond when we feel stuck in life. Read John 21:1-14 as printed on p. 3.
4. Jeff suggested that the key to understanding our Gospel story is found in the phrase in verse 7 where Jesus says, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat." In other words, the disciples were catching no fish because they were fishing on the wrong side of the boat. That raises the question, "What does the 'wrong side of the boat' represent in this story?" For Peter, returning to fishing meant going back to his old profession before he met Jesus. By returning to fishing, he was stepping away from what Jesus had called him to do and returning to what felt familiar and comfortable to him. As a result, he was experiencing the frustration of being unproductive. He didn't catch a single fish all night.
  - a. As you look back over your life, is there a time when you decided to do something – maybe related to your career or a relationship or financially or with your children or your health – that proved to be unproductive? How did that feel? Looking back, do you think you were doing what God wanted you to do?
  - b. Suzette Hinton once said: "It's the doing of your calling that attracts the support of the God of the Universe. When I stepped into that space, the wind in my life changed direction. The doing rallied the Heavens. It was the voice of my faith. If you don't do out of your being, you aren't truly showing up. Maybe that's what's meant [when the Bible says works without faith are] dead. Without it, there are no smoke signals going up to attract the people, resources, or opportunities." Do you agree with what Hinton says? Have you ever experienced that "wind at my back" feeling that caused you to know that you were doing exactly what you were meant to? What happened?
5. If the key to living productive lives is to fish on the right side of the boat, that raises the question: How do I know if I'm fishing on the right side of my boat? For the disciples in today's Gospel story, the answer was to listen to the voice of Jesus calling to them from the distant shore. In other words, ***the key making productive decisions is to listen to the voice of the Risen Christ in our lives.*** This is the difference, Jeff said, between a self-directed and God-directed life.
  - a. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a person, but the end thereof is the ways of death." What do you think that proverb means?

- b. Psalm 37:23 says, “The steps of a good person are ordered by the Lord.” What does it mean to allow our steps to be “ordered by the Lord?”
  - c. If listening to the voice of God is the key to productive living, it’s absolutely critical that we know how to listen to God’s voice. What does listening look like for you? What are some concrete things we can do to try to tune into God’s voice in our lives?
6. At the end of Sunday’s sermon, Jeff added a word of caution. He said, “When you’re assessing whether you’re being productive in some area of your life, don’t confuse ‘easy’ with ‘productive,’ or ‘hard’ with ‘unproductive.’ Productivity has both a short and long-term component and, therefore, can be hard to measure. The key is not to measure productivity in the moment, but rather to listen to the Voice that calls to us and trust if we follow that Voice, our lives will matter in all kinds of eternal ways.” Jeff offered the example of Adoniram Judson who served as a missionary to Burma for 38 years. He translated the Bible into Burmese, but died with only 25 converts in the entire nation of Burma. Since then, though, 600,000 Burmese have come to believe through the witness of the original 25.
- a. Tell us about a time in your life when you did something that was really hard that may not have seemed productive (at least at the time), but looking back you feel God definitely wanted you to do it. Why didn’t you give up?
  - b. Go back to your answer to Question 2 above about where you feel most stuck in your life right now. What do you think God wants to say to you about that area? As you listen with your heart, do you sense God saying that your stuckness is because you’re trying to do the wrong thing (i.e., fishing on the wrong side of the boat)? Or do you sense God saying your stuckness is because you are being called to do a really hard thing and you just need to persevere and keep pressing forward? What do you hear God saying to you?
7. Since this is Thanksgiving week, take a few minutes at the end of your time together for each person to share something you feel really thankful for this year.

### **Important Reminder**

Our Church Family Thanksgiving Potluck will take place at 1:00 pm on Thanksgiving Day at the Church. Due to COVID precautions, reservations are required. If you plan to be there, make your reservations ASAP at <https://LifeJourney.church/links>.

## **John 21:1-14, selected verses**

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>4</sup> Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. <sup>7</sup>That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. <sup>8</sup>But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

<sup>9</sup> When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.