

April 30, 2023

“BLUE”

John 21:1

1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.

Special Music: “While I’m Waiting”

John Waller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6X71sXagUY>



**RETURN TO THE START**

**What a wild ride!**

**Who could have known?**

**From a crowd of men**

**Made of flesh and bone**

**Twelve were chosen**

**By the Cornerstone.**

**Starting here**

**By the blue of the sea**

**Right here on the sands**

**Of Galilee**

**Twelve were chosen**

**To change history**

**Three short years**

**To retrain their hearts**

**For that is the way**

**Any great movement starts**

**Twelve were chosen**

**To learn their parts.**

**They walked with their master**

**Leaned into his words**

**Learned each of His stories**

**Asked question afterwards**

**Twelve were chosen**

**To listen and cherish His words**

**They learned to love others  
The way that He taught.  
They struggled and failed  
Until accepting the food for thought  
Twelve were chosen  
To teach the world what they had been taught**

**They watched as people  
Praised His name  
Then turned on Him  
Even though He healed the lame  
Twelve were chosen  
To bear witness to the same**

**They watched Him die  
Upon the cross  
Then buried quickly  
Amidst their loss  
Twelve were chosen  
And twelve were lost**

**He rose again  
Three days from death  
Three days had passed  
Since He took His last breath  
Twelve were chosen  
But one had met his death**

**What a wild ride!  
Who could have known?  
From a crowd of men  
Made of flesh and bone  
Twelve were chosen  
By the Cornerstone.**

**Starting here  
By the blue of the sea  
Returned to the sands  
Of Galilee  
Twelve were chosen  
To change history**

**Now twelve minus one  
Had returned to the start  
Waiting for Jesus  
To set them apart  
Twelve had been chosen  
Only eleven would take part**

One of my favorite authors growing up and still to this day was Jules Verne. He had a way of giving truth to my dreams and imagination. From space travel, to submarines, to mysterious islands, and crazed forward thinking world changers, he helped give me insight into what it meant to be a visionary, even if some of those visions might be somewhat troubling. My two favorite books by Mr. Verne were 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and Around the World in 80 Days, both highly adventurous movies with insight into methods of transportation that made my imagination swirl. I wanted to join Captain Nemo on the Nautilus and I wanted to be Philius Fogg's companion on his trip around the world.

I've always felt the greatest adventures are the ones that you take where you end up back where you started having gained a better understanding of who you are and embraced a new-found confidence for your next adventure. Because, isn't that what life is about from a human perspective? A sense of adventure? Those adventures can take many forms. They can be molded around changes in jobs and careers. They can be brought about by changes in relationships. They can come about as we decide that we aren't feeding our souls the way that they need to be fed, so we change location, maybe step into a new way of achieving our goals. There are times when we realize that God has other plans for us and we re-evaluate what He wants from us. Life is too short to be feeling "stuck."

Sometimes we set out to bring about changes in our spirits and sometimes we make changes only to discover that the spirit changes us, or maybe we find a missing part of ourselves. There are times when we are too eager to jump to the

next big thing and other times when we're too afraid to take a chance. There are the times when we are over-confident and other times when we are under-confident. There are times when we pray and plan with God regarding these huge moments of change in our lives, and there are times when we leave the whole prayer aspect out of it, or we fail to do any planning.

In all of these situations we have to ask ourselves at the end of the adventure, "Am I the better for having done it?", "Have I grown mentally and spiritually?", "Will what I have learned make a difference not only in my life, but also the lives around me?" All good questions to ask. If we are not asking these questions, how do we know if we are moving forward or just standing still?

I want to read to short stories from the Gospels for us to compare. The first one is from Luke 5:1-11

- 1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret (also know as the Sea of Galilee), the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.**
- 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets.**
- 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.**
- 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."**

- 5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”
- 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.
- 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.
- 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”
- 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,
- 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.”
- 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

**The second story also comes from John 21:1-14**

- 1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way:
- 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

**3 “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, but that night they caught nothing.**

**4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.**

**5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”**

**“No,” they answered.**

**6 He said, “Throw your net 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.**

**7 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.**

**8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.**

**9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.**

**10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”**

**11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.**



**12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.**

**13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.**

**14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.**

**Full circle. So many similarities between the stories that I often confused them as a child. But the story in Luke is at the start of Jesus’ ministry as He is gathering His Disciples, and the one in John is after Jesus has risen from the dead and told them to meet Him on the shores of Galilee. Both times, He finds them fishing. Both times, He finds them coming up empty. Both times He tells them how to change that. Both times they see the miracle and are amazed. You might think that in the second story they would have gained enough faith that they would not be surprised by much of anything.**

**The Sea of Galilee was in their comfort zone. It’s actually a 64 square mile fresh water lake fed by the Jordan River. Another amazing fact is that it is the lowest fresh water lake in the world, sitting between 215 to 209 meters below sea level. What makes that astounding is that the Mediterranean Sea is just 45 miles away. While most of the lake borders Israel, there is a significant amount of shoreline belonging to Lebanon. The lake area is prone to earthquakes, volcanic activity, and storms. Jesus spent much of His ministry preaching around the area**

of the Sea of Galilee. He knew where the plans of His ministry would take Him so, it really isn't illogical at all that He would start choosing His disciples from the villages and towns located around the lake. And, of course, the commerce of the area was supported by the fishing industry. The lake itself is a beautiful pristine blue.

So, it is easy to see why Jesus would choose this area to start drawing His disciples from. It is here that He would find hard working people who knew the pressures placed on the common person by both the Roman Empire and the religions leaders. People who could understand the needs, sorrows, and heartbreak from personal experience.

But why did Jesus tell His disciples to meet Him there after he had risen from the dead? Why choose Galilee as the place to pass the torch?

**Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.**

While it is true that Jesus could probably have done this torch passing anywhere, He intentionally chose the same place He started. This wasn't a random act. Surely, at this point, having risen from the dead, He could have appeared in Jerusalem to be heralded as King if He so choose. Surely the people would have seen through the intentions of the Sanhedrin to destroy Him. But Jesus did not come for that. He came as servant and savior. In the end, it simply makes sense that He would want to be in the same area He first came to, serving the people He had come to serve, preparing to anoint them for the task ahead.

He wants to mark the end of His three-year journey in the same way He started it. Full Circle. He wants to let the disciples know that they are still looking in the wrong direction. That's why their nets were still empty. If they let go of their inhibitions and allow faith to guide them, the blessings will abound. Their nets will be full. Jesus' journey was complete, but theirs was only beginning. The apprentices were about to become the teachers.

Our own Christian lives are like that. We embrace the joy of the journey of Christianity, becoming the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. And, like Judas, some of us will not make it full circle. That is not a statement of a loss of salvation. That is a statement that there among us will be those who produce little or no fruit, falling short of the expectations that Christ has for us. We might find ourselves returning to our own lives rather than completing the circle of our new lives, lives of service and compassion, lives where Jesus is our example.

I want us all to ask ourselves this question this week. "Where am I on my journey? Am I on the path Jesus wants me on? Or have I returned to the path that I was on before I knew the Grace and Love of Jesus?" I know that it might seem like a trite question, but if we are honest with ourselves we will take the time to answer it truthfully and be prepared to make changes in our path to where Christ wants us to be.

God bless you all!

AMEN

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