

Your Beginning and End

An evening with the Author and Finisher of your faith.

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Thursday, January 29, 2015

Based Upon John 21

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Throughout His public ministry, we can see this fact illustrated. An interesting illustration of this can be mined from our theme chapter. Though the details are sitting right on the surface, we must look deeper for application.

The Bible says that the third time following His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and was standing on the shore of the Tiberias Sea one day. He called out to them to enquire whether they had caught any fish, but they answered, "No!" not realizing it was Christ who had called out to them. He told them to cast their nets from the opposite side of their boat, and miraculously, so many fish were netted that it seemed the boat almost capsized. It was at that point, having been amazed, that they realized it was Christ who spoke to them.

What can we learn from this simple lesson? We could say that when Jesus tells us to do something, we must do it to eventually see the heavenly outcome. We could say that our God will supply all of our needs. We could say that all of nature obeys the voice of the Master. Yet there is another lesson to which I would direct your attention: You may recall that just over three years prior, Jesus gave a similar command to these fishermen. And when they had toiled without catching even one fish, upon His command, they launched out into the deep, and almost burst the nets for the incredible volume of their catch. They were also amazed then.

Remember, at the beginning I said that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. At the beginning of His encounters of these men, He demonstrated that He would make them fishers of men. They would perform many wonders of evangelism in His name. And, at the end after He had already won the victory on the cross, He reaffirmed the fact that in His strength, they would evangelize the world. Interestingly, this lesson was taught right before He gave Peter his close encounter with self-inventory. He probed Peter with questions regarding his love for the Master. When he was finally overwhelmed by Jesus' line of questionings, Jesus commanded him to feed His people. As all of this was going on, Jesus was preparing a meal for His friends.

How do we tie this all together? Here it is: When we submit to Christ through close encounters with Him, He will give us faith with which to lay hold of His power, continue to keep us along the way, and seal our faith in the end. The same One who initially called and equipped you, will preserve that calling and equipping until the end. He will never leave us, nor forsake us. Don't miss the fact that Jesus kindly provided a meal. The Scriptures say that if we answer the continual knocking of Jesus upon our heart's door, He will come in to our homes and sup with us. When Jesus eats with us, who provides the food? The original language suggests that Jesus would not simply come in and have a meal with us, but just as the with the Last Supper and this seaside feast, He was the One who provided it.

When we begin our journey with Christ, He gives us faith and power. When we continue our journey with Him, He provides faith and power, when Jesus returns, if we continue in Him, we will eat from the blessed Tree of Life that He had prepared for us from eternity past. He longs to eat with us,

friends. Will you make the commitment, with me, to be at that lovely welcome table when He comes?