

Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2015 5:26 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study

Our lesson last nite, on John 21, provided a fitting close to the gospel John wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! John MacArthur describes this text as a kind of "epilogue," essentially "closing out some loose ends that were left unanswered in chapter 20." These include the question of what will happen to the disciples now that Jesus was about to leave this world, and return to His Father? Will He continue to "provide for their needs"? And what about Peter? Will he be restored in his relationship with Jesus and become a true leader of the "new messianic community"? And what about John? Will he be the only disciples still living when Jesus returns, as had been rumored? And, finally, why did John limit, as he did, his coverage of the things Jesus said and did?

Well, we know Jesus would continue to provide for the needs of His disciples, and for all who would follow Him--although He never promised an easy and "carefree" life! In fact, quite the opposite! Jesus's "manifestation" to them must have brought back many memories for the disciples! He had amazed them, and rescued them many times before on this same Sea of Galilee! Remember when He first called Peter, James and John, and Andrew, to follow Him, saying He would make them "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:18-21)--how they immediately left everything and followed! And, later, appearing to them, "walking on the water," in the middle of a storm--telling them "not to be afraid"! (John 6:15-21). And another time when they experienced a "fierce storm," and awoke Him out of a sleep only to see Him "rebuke the winds" and bring about a "perfect calm"--causing them to observe that "even the wind and the sea obeyed Him" (Mark 4:35-41). Or a similar incident to the one we just studied in our text, recorded in Luke 5:1-11, when--after a long and hard nite of catching nothing--He told them to go out again and "let down their nets," and they went reluctantly, but caught so many fish the nets couldn't hold them all! And so now, Jesus is back! And the incident is repeated! John calls Him "Lord!" And Peter "threw himself into the sea," to get to Him first! Imagine the great excitement over His appearance--and then, that special breakfast on the beach with the risen Jesus!

And so, would Jesus always "be there" to take care of their needs? Perhaps they remembered Jesus's words from Matthew 6:25-34, where, as part of His "sermon on the mount," He instructed them not to "worry about tomorrow," and how if they "sought first His kingdom, all these things would be added to them!" Or maybe His promise that even though "in the world they would have tribulation...they were to take courage for He had overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We also saw from John 21 how Jesus tenderly took Peter aside to affirm him and his calling! Peter undoubtedly was dealing with a great weight of shame and guilt over the denial episode, and obviously needed this encounter with Jesus! And, as a result of this encounter, and with the later coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, he would become the "leader of the pack" in helping to spread the gospel to all the world!

It was John himself who, through his writing, dispelled the rumor that he would remain alive until Jesus returned! And it was Jesus who made it clear to Peter--who whether out of legitimate concern for John's welfare, or over a feeling of favoritism by Jesus for John--that he didn't need to be so concerned about the plight of John! He just needed to "follow Him"!

Well, John closes his gospel by noting again how selective he was in recording the things he did about what Jesus did and said! He already had written in his "purpose statement" (John 20:30-31) that there were "many other signs that Jesus also performed in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but that these were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in His name!" Kostenberger observes that John had to be very selective in the events he chose to include--but, in doing so, "marshaled more than sufficient evidence for his readers to be persuaded" of the gospel message!

Well, that's about it, men! We're going to meet next Tuesday nite for one last time in our study of John! And we'll be back to our normal routine, starting off with snacks and our large group session in the choir room, followed by the final meetings of our small groups! We're going to look back on our study of John, with Kirk leading the large group session!

See you then! May God bless your week!

Lowell