

**Sermon delivered by the Venerable Winston M. Thomas
Archdeacon and Administrator of the Mandeville Region
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St. John 21:6 & 7

Jesus said to them “Cast your nets on the right side of the ship and you shall find.” and “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter “It is the Lord.”

Over the years, the scientific minds of human beings have searched for logical explanations for the mysteries of life. This was true two thousand years ago when our Lord Jesus Christ conquered death and the tomb. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke reveals that our Lord responded to the desire of his disciples for a proof.

The Evangelist St. Luke in Acts 1: v 3 says. “He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs. He was with them for forty days speaking about the kingdom of God”.

Today we can be very grateful that Jesus convinced his disciples of his victory over death and the grave. It took concrete evidence to convince them. A lot of things were done to confine Jesus to the tomb: the cold hand of death gripped him firmly; linen grave clothes were wound tightly around his body; there was a great stone that sealed the grave to prevent entrance or exit; Roman guards were placed there. But there was the empty tomb – that is the first piece of evidence of the resurrection.

The women found the tomb empty. The disciples found it empty. The angel declared that it was empty. The Sanhedrin admitted that it was empty. The New Testament mentions at least ten appearances of the risen Lord Jesus. In these appearances he gave his disciples absolute assurance of his living presence and he gave them a divine authority to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the significance of his death and resurrection.

The risen Lord Jesus came to the disciples at the level of their experiences and He comes to us at the level of our experience. He appeared to them while they were doing what they had previously done to earn a living. He comes to us while we are busy with the common tasks of life. He will come to us while we are at home or at our places of business or when we are relaxing.

The risen Lord Jesus was concerned about the well-being of the disciples. He appeared to them on the sea shore. They must have been frustrated and exhausted and depressed because they had spent the whole night at sea toiling and caught nothing. Through the early morning fog they observed someone standing on the shore and asking, “have you caught anything?” Their negative response expressed the weariness of their bodies. Reluctantly, they responded to his command to cast their nets on right hand side of the boat. In other words, if you say so, we will do it. And, casting their nets into the sea, they made a great haul. His concern about them in their frustration showed his thoughtfulness and that he comes to us with the purpose of love.

Life can be an empty net. Have you failed to achieve your potential? Have you refused or neglected to do God’s will? Yes, the command is given to cast your net on the right side and you shall find. On a previous occasion they had the experience of toiling all night and catching nothing and being given the command

to launch out into the deep and let down your nets – with reluctance Peter obeyed. He said, “Master we have worked all through the night without success but, if you say so I will. The result was that they had a great catch.

The difficulty that we face in life today, is that we are casting our nets on the wrong side of the ship of life.

Obedience to the risen Lord transformed failure into success. Indeed, that was the experience of disciples. Indeed, that can be our experience as we go through life today.

There is no substitute for obedience. Whether that obedience is to God, to the laws of the land, to the rules and regulations of the church or to the rules we set for our families or anywhere.

Obedience to the living Lord produces harmony in life. Obedience to the living Lord brings fruitfulness and good success.

The disciples discovered that their net was full when they responded to the command of the saviour.

Today, years later despite critics of the fact, we profess in the Nicene Creed, Our Statement of faith, that “we believe that, for our sake, he was crucified, suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again.”

The risen Lord comes to us at the level of our experience. We pray that God will give us the eyes to see him and the faith to respond to his gracious invitation and loving commandments.

And now to God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit, be ascribed to him might, dominion and power, which are his most justly due, now and always.
Amen.