

04-14-13 - Hook or Crook?

A2Fc – week 9

An old English expression – **By Hook or by Crook** – It means: by whatever means possible – whatever it takes to get the job done.

The Fisherman's hook and the Shepherd's Crook or Staff– These have significance in the church historically.

Some feel the church's mission is strictly evangelism – the fisherman's hook, while others feel its mission is strictly shepherding. I would say there needs to be a balance of both – hook and crook – evangelism and shepherding.

“When Pope Benedict the 16th was inaugurated at St. Peter's square on April 24, 2005, he was given two items of clothing that represented these two ministries. First he was given the fisherman's ring – which shows Peter fishing from a boat, symbolizing the call to be *a fisher of people*. Second he was given a woolen cloak, placed on the shoulders, symbolizing the call to be *shepherd of God's flock*, the church.” ... “The Christian church is called to shepherd the flock of God and to be fishers of people, catching people with the good news of Jesus Christ.”
(A2Fc - Pulpit Perspectives).

Fish Story – fishing with Brian – the huge bluefish...

I have another fish story for you today. It is found in our text, John 21:1-19.

READ: JOHN 21:1-19 – NASB – Text on the screen.

v. 1 – After these things... (20:30-31) - The events we just read about in the gospel proper. This chapter is an epilogue to the gospel, which ended at the end of Ch. 20. However, if we walk away at that point, we are left with some questions about the disciples and what happens next. Therefore – Ch. 21 – fills in some gaps.

I chose the NASB today because I want to look at some specific words and the NASB is the most accurate literal translation I know of.

“After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius, and He manifested Himself in this way.”

“manifested” – means revealed – He was there all along, but now He revealed himself to them. And He **“manifested”** himself to them in this way. John then explains this miraculous manifestation of Jesus that realigns their world again, back to what He had called them to in the first place rather than back to their old life.

The disciples went back to Galilee – back home – back to what they knew and were comfortable with – back to the Sea of Galilee – back to their boats and nets – they went back.

Only John refers to the Sea of Galilee as Tiberius – see 6:1. We know where they are – Sea of Galilee (that is Tiberius).

Their world had just been turned upside down. How would they survive now? Jesus was no longer with them to take care of them. How would they earn a living? They only knew one career. Jesus needed to reel them back in somehow.

HOOK:

v. 2-3 – Seven of the disciples were present in this text; 5 are named and 2 are unnamed. Peter quickly becomes the main character. Peter is crazy, but he is definitely a leader. He blurts out – **“I’m going fishing.”** The rest of the group follows him. He is used to having people following him, but he was having problems following Jesus.

Night fishing in this time was common and fruitful. The catch could be sold fresh in the morning on the shore or market. They were professionals, and yet they caught nothing. Did Jesus have something to do with their lack of fish? There is an intentional lesson He is teaching them in this part of our text.

v. 4-5 – Early morning – at first light – Jesus stood on the beach – he was just there. Similar to the way he just stood among them in the locked room earlier in the gospel. They didn’t recognize him, but it was Him. He calls out to them, **“Children”** – **“You do not have any fish, do you?”** KJV – *Children, have you any meat?*

This was an embarrassing situation. They were fisherman. They were out to catch a bunch of small fish used as a dip for breakfast with bread. Of all this type of fish in the Sea of Galilee, they came away empty after fishing all night. Humiliating. What would they do now? And who is this man asking them in this way and calling them “children?”

v. 6-7 - The man then responds with a command that was authoritative and strange at the same time. **“Cast your nets on the right side of the boat and you WILL find a catch.”** Who is this guy? How could he say something like this from the shore?

They are fishermen. Why should they pay attention to this person they don't even know. Fishermen rarely take advice from people they do know :-). Yet - they obey! Immediately, they catch a boat-load of large fish...

FLASHBACK - - Luke 5:3-11 - READ

A Miracle - then and now again - It had to be none other than Jesus! It was the same scene - same place (Sea of Galilee) - same miracle - same Jesus. They caught a large number of fish after getting nothing all night long. They obeyed Jesus command and their lives would never be the same. Jesus changes Peter's occupation and commissions him and the others - v. 10 - ***"Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."*** From now on - no turning back.

They left everything and followed Jesus! So what happened?

It convinced Peter then, and it convinces him now again. Sensitive John recognizes it must be The Lord. Crazy Peter puts on his outer garment and jumps into the sea. The others - more sensible - get into the dingy, dragging the net and make their way to the shore.

Peter had to get to Jesus - He is with us after all - He is the One Peter said he was die for. The One he denied even knowing. And now - what were they thinking? It's Jesus. The One who had performed miracles in Peter's life - the huge catch of fish - healing his mother-in-law - the transfiguration - Gethsemane - so many proofs - Yet Peter denied even knowing Him. His head must have been spinning! It's Jesus! ALIVE again. It was Peter's moment ... more than he realized.

v. 8 - The other disciples arrived in a little boat - SMART. Peter swam - NOT so SMART. They took a boat - and apparently the fist - SMART again. Peter abandoned everything and went to Jesus - repentant and eager to see Jesus face to face - SMART finally.

v. 9-10 - ***"When they got out on the land they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread."*** We're not told where the fish and bread came from, but the scene is going to be strangely familiar to them all, especially Peter. The last time Peter stood around a charcoal fire, we are told, was that night in the courtyard. (18:18) - Peter stood around the charcoal fire warming himself with the slaves and the officers the night Jesus was arrested. I'm sure Peter was getting a little uneasy right about now.

John 6:1-14 is the story of the feeding of the 5000 with a few fish and some bread. Here Jesus has a few fish and some bread to share with these disciples. They were fully engaged with the mission at that time. Here, they are disengaged. Jesus restores the broken and disengaged called back to service. They had questions, but didn't dare ask Him because they knew it was Jesus. Jesus provides what they needed - breakfast - He will always provide what we need when we follow Him. Jesus invites them to bring some of the fish they caught.

v. 11 - Peter - Mr. Muscle - drags the net full of large fish onto the beach. As a good fisherman, he counts and examines the fish. (153 large fish) The number is specifically mentioned - why? I don't know for sure, but there are several ideas out there. Some say it represented the number of types/species of fish in the Sea of Galilee at the time - some equate it to the number of cultures in the world at that time - some say it is the number of diverse peoples reached with the Gospel. These all related to Evangelism - Hook! The good news of Jesus is for all people and the disciples are be commissioned and reinstated to spread that gospel to all peoples and nations - **"For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."** (3:16).

They were not to continue in their old life as fishermen but the new life Jesus called them to as Fishers of Men - reach the lost with the gospel - evangelize.

Has God called you to a ministry, service, a walk in life or even just to Follow Him? Have you bailed out on that calling somewhere along the way? Maybe life dealt you a bad hand - maybe the church let you down or a pastor hurt you in some way - or something happened on the job or you lost your job - maybe you just feel Jesus has abandoned you and you can't sense Him with you anymore. Where are you now? Where is Jesus for you? Do you feel like the disciples in this text or like Peter? He blew it and now Jesus was gone. Or was He?

Jesus was trying to teach them that he will always be with them - caring for them - loving them - leading and guiding them. They were used to seeing him physically and then he was gone. They had to learn an important lesson here. Jesus was with them if they could recognize him as Jesus or not. He is with us the same way. Faith tells our spirit what the Scriptures teach. **"He is with us always - even to the end of the age."** (Mt. 28:20)

CROOK:

v. 12-14 - Have Breakfast - Jesus invites them to eat together with Him. He restores fellowship over a meal. He FEEDS them. Eat first - have physical needs met - then we'll move on to spiritual needs. He had no apparent means to provide the fire, fish or bread. Part of the lesson is: Obey Jesus' commands and He will provide your needs - We don't have to have everything we need first before we choose to obey and follow Him. Jesus was teaching them that He was there with them - They couldn't see Him as the physical Jesus they knew, but they knew it was Him. We must do the same thing - KNOW He is with us, even if we don't recognize Him. He will manifest Himself to us in a way that will confirm His presence among us. Can you sense Him? If you can't, He's still with you.

Don't revert back to your old lifestyle just because you can't sense His presence or even because you blew it or did something stupid. He loves you more than that. He wants to restore your calling to serve The Lord and His kingdom.

This was the 3rd time Jesus manifested Himself to the disciples. Manifested (revealed himself) - He was now resurrected. He had a different body. He could be recognized or not recognizable and then revealed at the right time.

A manifestation is a revealing of what was there all along but hidden. 3 is a big deal number in this part of the text.

v. 15-17 - They finished breakfast - and then - in front of the others - Jesus turns to Peter and begins to question him... 3 times - the number of times Peter denied Jesus - and Peter's answers get more intense with each question just like at the denial where his denials got more intense with each inquiry (see. Matt. 26:69-75).

Q1 - Simon (old name - not Peter, new name - he chose to go back) - Do you LOVE me more than these? Who are THESE? Could be - do you love me more than they do? or could be - do you love me for than you love them? or could be - do you love me more than these old things of the world you went back to?

A1 - "Yes, I love You." - "Tend My Lambs." - Tend to or Feed or provide for my Lambs - the little ones - the new ones. Maybe we can equate them to new Christians or just younger people. This is a call to shepherding - nurturing the flock of God. Jesus recommissions Peter to service as an apostle.

Q2 - Simon son of John - do you Love Me?

A2 - Peter answers – "You know I love you" - Jesus tells him to Shepherd My Sheep. Nurture, care for, disciple the mature among you - the Sheep. Jesus recommissions Peter as an apostle.

Q3 - Simon son of John - do you love Me?

A3 - Peter more intense – "You are God - you know all things - you know I love you." Jesus tells him to Tend My Sheep. Feed the young and the older among you. Nurture and shepherd the flock of God.

Jesus reinstates Peter to the ministry and calling He first called him to. He is not to revert back to his old life anymore. Simon no longer exists - only Peter the apostle - the Shepherd - the Rock. He denied Him 3 times and was restored 3 times. Peter was walking around with guilt and shame since the denial so that he went back to the old life not knowing what else to do. But Jesus restores him to full ministry and relationship.

v. 18-19 - Peter was truly repentant and not as cocky as he used to be. He would never boldly claim that he would lay down his life for Jesus and then fail him again. This is exactly what Jesus would require of him. These verses show they typed of death by which Peter would glorify God - he would die a martyr's death.

"Have you done something you think disqualifies you from serving The Lord? It doesn't matter if it is some sin, attitude, or maybe you denied Jesus three times, there is a widespread belief that, 'God can't use someone like me. You don't know what I've done.' Jesus initiates a conversation with Peter in verse 15 that surprises everyone. He does not accuse, condemn, or even ask for an apology. Jesus doesn't even bring up Peter's darkest hour. He simply asks if Peter loves Him. Peter, knowing that his past behavior would indicate a negative answer, speaks from a repentant heart, and three times affirms his love. And Jesus affirms Peter all three times, with no conditions, directing him to return to ministry and even leadership. There is much opportunity to share the power of God's reconciling and restoring work." (A2Fc - Pulpit Perspectives)

The passage ends with these words from Jesus to Peter - to us...

FOLLOW ME!

Will you follow Jesus today - all the way - no matter what - by hook or by crook?