

Many scholars say that the story of John’s Gospel was originally complete at the end of chapter 20. If you read the verse 30 of chapter 20, it sounds like the conclusion of the story (NRSV):

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But *these are written* so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

The writer of the Gospel knew what he was doing; he had one purpose of writing this book: to let people know about Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, so that they may have “life”-- a life that is different, happy, and eternal. He says that this life comes through Jesus.

He says this little book does not have all; there was much more of what Jesus said and did; but this book is “enough” for us to know who Jesus is and what we should do to have life.

Ok, that is the end of the story. John is done. The Gospel is complete.

Then, why do we need another chapter after that? If the story was enough and complete, why would they waste ink and paper?

To me the story of chapter 21 is a very unique one that gives us an important message. I think the Gospel of John would have been different without this chapter.

One of the key messages that I find in this portion of the Gospel is this: it brings the community together and it calls our attention to the call we have as the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Let me get to the bottom of what I mean by that.

First of all, the story says, Jesus showed up when the disciples were fishing in the lake. It sounds like we heard this story many times but not in this Gospel; this is the first time we hear about fishing in John’s Gospel.

Just picture the faces of those fishermen; they were there all night to catch some fish, to make a living, to put some food on the table, to support their families. But they got nothing.

Jesus said, “Cast your net to the right side of the boat,” the disciples did just that and they got so many fish that they could not even haul the net.

What the text is trying to picture is “the image of abundance.”

The Lord doesn’t just provide—he overwhelms.

This is the God we see in the Bible. When Jesus fed the multitude of 5,000, he did not just give each of them a bag lunch. He gave them more than enough so that there were twelve baskets of leftovers, too. When he gives, he overwhelms people.

The Father we see in the Bible does not just welcome the prodigal son home. He runs to meet with him, embraces him, and throws a great party. He overwhelms his people. He surprises his people.

Picture those tired, exhausted, yet happy faces of those fishermen who had been there all night catching nothing, but all of a sudden this abundance was given. Wow!

What's amazing here is that Jesus even makes breakfast for them. I think this is the first time I see Jesus as a cook in the Bible.

God is good. He not only knows about our needs but also cares about us.

The Son of God who created and runs the whole universe also knows about the small details of each and every one of us. He knows the pains and sufferings of each of us. What amazes me is this: Jesus calls and asks Peter three times.

"Peter, do you love me?" "Peter, do you love me?"

"Do you love me?"

I don't think this is just a simple question; there is something bigger going on between Jesus and Peter.

As we know, Peter denied Jesus three times. So by asking him the same question three times, Jesus is restoring and curing this man.

Peter was a failure; he was the symbol of denial; as a disciple, he was dead when he denied Jesus; he was done!

But now, his failures were rectified; his sins were forgiven; he was resurrected by the resurrected Jesus. But not just Peter is restored; the community Peter represents is also resurrected. They are all re-empowered by the risen Christ to carry his work forward.

“Feed my lambs” “Tend my sheep” "Tend care of my people."

That was the word Jesus spoke to this beloved community.

They were all re-commissioned as his disciples.

Love is what matters the most.

Love heals broken hearts; love brings people to God; love empowers people to do what they are supposed to do. That is what Jesus did that day for his disciples.

Jesus not only loved but made Peter and his fellow disciples great disciples, who eventually gave their lives to God until death.

The same Jesus, our risen Christ, is here today with us and among us. First of all, he is here to show his love for us. It doesn't matter what we did in the past; we are in the presence of God, who loves us; God wants to rectify our failures. God wants to forgive our shortcomings. God wants to resurrect our spirits. God wants to make sure we know His love, his unconditional love. God also wants to call each and every one of us to be his workers, the workers of his kingdom.

But don't worry.

He is going to empower us abundantly so that we can love ourselves and others in the world. The only question God has for us is this:

Do you love me? “Son, do you love me? Daughter, do you love me? Children, do you love me?”

I hope all of us could say “yes” to this question. Amen.