

Slide Children's Time – Ask children to come up to the front.

Title: Breakfast on the Beach

Theme: Following Jesus brings great rewards.

Objects: A rod and reel and other fishing gear

Scripture: He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. John 21:5-6 (NIV)

Slide Do you enjoy fishing? I have heard some people say that they enjoy fishing even if they never catch a fish. They say that they just enjoy the peace and relaxation of fishing. I will have to confess, it doesn't sound like much fun to sit in a boat holding a fishing pole without ever catching any fish. How about you? Imagine that you have been sitting in a boat fishing all night without catching a single fish. As the sun begins to come up you can see someone standing on the beach at the edge of the water.

"Hi!" he calls out. "Have you had any luck?" "I haven't caught a thing," you answer. "Well, if you would put your fishing pole on the right-hand side of the boat, you would catch a lot of fish." Would you try it, or would you say to yourself, "That's the craziest thing I've ever heard. What difference does it make which side of the boat I am fishing from?"

Well, that is almost exactly what happened in our Bible lesson for today. Several of Jesus' disciples were gathered beside the Sea of Galilee. The group included Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Suddenly, Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "We'll come too," the others said. So they got in the

boat and they fished all night, but caught nothing."

As the sun came up, Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't make out who it was. Jesus called out to them, "Have you caught any fish?" "Not a thing," the disciples called back.

"Throw your nets on the right-hand side of the boat and you'll catch some!" Did they do it? Yes they did! Did they catch any fish? They caught so many fish that they couldn't even pull the net into the boat!

Then the disciple that Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Peter heard that, he jumped into the water and headed for shore. The others stayed with the boat and dragged the loaded net to the shore. When they got there, they found Jesus cooking breakfast -- fish over a charcoal fire and some bread.

"Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. Peter dragged the net to the shore and there were 153 large fish. "Now, come and have some breakfast," Jesus said. Then Jesus served them fish and bread.

Oh my! It just doesn't get any better than that. Breakfast on the beach with the risen Lord! What would have happened if the disciples had refused to throw their nets on the right-hand side of the boat? They would have missed out on a wonderful breakfast on the beach with Jesus. What happens when you and I refuse to do the things Jesus has called us to do? We miss out on the wonderful blessings that he wants for us!

Father, we know that you have wonderful blessings in store for us when we faithfully follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that we will always be obedient disciples. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Slide Testifying of Christ

Blank The prolog of verses 1 to 18 is over and the Apostle John launches into the next division of his gospel. Verse 19 takes us into the first week of the ministry of our Lord Jesus. These first seven days begins with John the Baptist being met by a delegation from Jerusalem. Day two is found in verses 29 to 34 and has John the Baptist identifying Jesus as the Lamb of God. The third day is covered in verses 35 to 39 with the testimony of John the Baptist causing two of his disciples to leave and follow Jesus. Day four, seen in verses 40 to 42, talks of the growth in the number of disciples Jesus calls to follow Him. On the fifth day Jesus calls two more disciples in verses 43 to 51. Then there is the journey to Galilee on the sixth day. This first week of Jesus' ministry concludes in chapter 2, verses 1 to 11 and is centered on Jesus, His mother and his disciples at the wedding in Cana.

This first week of Jesus' ministry begins in verse 19 with John the Baptist who is the last of the Old Testament prophets confessing that he is not the Messiah. As we begin to look at this passage I suppose the greatest mistake a person could make as one reads about the witness of John is to think that the task of witnessing of Jesus was somehow peculiar to John. This would be a mistake and a grave one at that; witnessing is every Christian's job. Jesus Himself makes this clear in chapter 15 of John when speaking to His disciples He said, **Slide**¹⁶ "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and **that your fruit would remain ...**" **Blank** Christ began by choosing the disciples, which we will look at in depth in the next few weeks, just as He has chosen every person who has been

and is saved. One of the prime directives of our Lord is that each believer is commissioned with the task of telling others about Jesus. In the early church, which flourished under the pressures of the Roman Empire, every Christian – small and great, rich and poor, slaves and freemen – made it their consuming passion, even to the point of death, to tell others about the Lord and the salvation Jesus gives freely. This passion for sharing the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus was the single most important factor in the astounding outreach and expansion of the early church. Today many Americans believe it is the responsibility of the pastor to evangelize and share the gospel. No! A thousand times no! The pastor’s job is to build up the saints spiritually so that they may be prepared to share the gospel to **Slide** “preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” (2 Timothy 4:20) Jesus is calling you, each of you to fulfill His calling for you and that is to spread the good news of Jesus the Christ, the Savior.

Blank We talk about missionaries who go overseas to preach the gospel and this is a good thing. But, it must start here. Each of you is an “local” missionary that Jesus calls to share the gospel in your daily living. As Christian men we should get just as excited about sharing the gospel as we do talking about our favorite hobby or sport. Can you get just as wound up about Jesus as you do talking about the Super Bowl, fishing, woodworking, etc.? As Christian women do you have a passion for sharing the gospel with the grocery store clerk and neighbor, as you are passionate about keeping a wonderful home, sharing about your children, homeschooling, etc.? When the Apostle John or as he is also know; John the evangelist spends 33 verses telling us about the first great witness of Jesus – John the Baptist, at least one of his reasons is to encourage all who read this passage that they too are to be witnessing of who Jesus is and what He has done in your lives.

Before you say, “but pastor, he was John the Baptist, he was special and I am but just a simple believer.” Let us look at what our Master and Lord Jesus had to say about John. I will be spending time in both John and Matthew this morning – you might want to put a finger in each of these books. In chapter 11 of Matthew is recorded Jesus’ tribute to John the Baptist. In verse 11, Jesus says, **Slide** “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Can you imagine the Lord Jesus saying something like that about you? Wouldn’t you feel appreciated and that you have proven yourself a good and faithful servant. Can you imagine Jesus speaking of you and it being recording in the Holy Scriptures for all generations to see that you had been faithful? This is exactly what Jesus did say about you. Let me read verse 11 in its entirety. “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Now listen here comes the ending of verse 11 that puts the beginning in perspective. Jesus continued and said, **Slide** “Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (John the Baptist).” If you are saved, then you, my dear beloved, are greater than John. You have been given a command by Jesus and He calls you to fulfill it. We will come back to this later at the end of this morning’s teaching. But, now and through the teaching think about this and keep it in mind as it relates to what is being taught.

Slide Now, will you please rise for the reading of the Word, brother **Shawn** will come forward and read the very words of God that we might prepare our hearts and minds for what God wants us to see and hear this morning with our hearts.

Blank As we begin to study this passage we need some background. Israel had been waiting for 400 years for God to send them a prophet; John’s dynamic and forceful preaching stirred up an enormous amount of interest. Large crowds from

Jerusalem and all Judea began coming to hear John. Many Jews believed the coming of the Messiah would end the time of their country being subservient to Rome. Israel would once again become a strong nation. John's message of repentance; was seen by some as calling Israel to repent of its sins and return to God and God would then restore Israel to power. John was at the peak of his ministry as the crowds grew in number and came from greater distances to hear him. He could have easily claimed that he was the Messiah. The crowds were ready to hear this. The leaders of the Jewish nation grew in their fear of him for they thought John might claim to be the Messiah and because he was becoming so popular with the people. They feared the loss of their power and position. For most of the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees and Pharisees their faith in Yahweh had become a political position of power instead of a position of servant leaders to the Jewish people, leaders leading people to faithfully follow the true God. While John's ministry and influence was growing Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted. John the Baptist preached in the rest of chapter 1 for three consecutive days, to three different groups and he emphasized three truths about Jesus.

This morning we will be looking at the first day of the first week of Jesus' ministry. The fact that verse 19 begins by saying, "[This is the testimony of John](#)" shows this is a shift in thought and this begins a new section of John's narrative. The verse continues with, "[when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him.](#)" The word "[Jews](#)" is certainly appropriate in meaning all people of Israel. However, here John the evangelist is referring to the religious authorities. It was these very authorities, which being concerned about their own power would become hostile to Christ as His ministry here on earth became clear in its purpose. In this verse the word "[Jews](#)" most likely is focusing on the Sanhedrin, which was the supreme governing body in Israel, although they ruled under Roman authority. We

know John preached against the Jewish leadership, which may have added to his popularity with the people from what John the Baptist says in **Slide** Matthew 3:7, “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ ” It is possible that this passionate preaching is why the political and religious leadership sent a delegation to investigate John. **Blank** This delegation consisted of Priests and Levites. This would then also mean by the use of the title Priests that some were Sadducees and some were Pharisees. The priests were the human intermediaries between God and man and officiated at the religious ceremonies. With the coming of Jesus there was no need longer a need for priests, **Slide** “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus.*” (2 Timothy 2:5) One would think that it would be good for some present day religions to read this verse and apply it. **Blank** The priests were also considered the theological authorities in Israel. When they were not serving their two-week annual service in the temple they were at home, living throughout Judea and were the local experts on religious matters. The Levites assisted the priests in the temple and its rituals. The Temple police or guards were also made up of the Levites. It would then be likely that the delegation from Jerusalem would have been accompanied by Levites who were part of temple security forces.

The delegation arrives from Jerusalem at **Bethany beyond the Jordan**, which is thought by most scholars to be east of Jericho on the Jordan River. The first question given to John is “Who are you?” This question could well indicate the confusion among the Jewish leaders as to who John was. Since the question might imply that the delegation wanted to know if John was the long awaited Messiah, he answers with the emphatic “I am not the Christ.” John clearly understood his role as

the forerunner of the Messiah. Well then, if John was not the Messiah, they thought he might be another significant figure associated with the end times. Therefore in verse 21 they ask, **“What then? Are you Elijah?”** Based on the prophecy of Malachi the Jewish people expected Elijah himself to return in bodily form just before the Messiah returned to establish his earthy kingdom. Let me tie together **Slide** Malachi chapter 3, verse 1, **“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,’ says the LORD of hosts.’ ”** and Malachi’s statement in chapter 4, verse 5, **Slide** **“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.”** Even today there are some Jewish people who still leave an empty seat at the table for Elijah when they celebrate the Passover Seder. The empty seat not only represents their waiting for Elijah to announce the coming of the Messiah, but that their lives are empty for they have missed the Messiah who has already come. **Blank** Back to the time of John the Baptist, his appearance was similar to that of Elijah. In the Gospel according to Mark chapter one it says John was clothed in Camel’s hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist, while in 2 Kings chapter 1 Elijah is described as a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins. Both Elijah and John were passionate preachers who called people to repent. John answered this question as to whether he was Elijah by saying simply, **“I am not.”** Even this straightforward answer did not satisfy everyone. Right after Jesus’ transfiguration He spoke to his disciples, Peter, James and John who questioned Him about Elijah. Look in your bibles in the **Slide** Book of Matthew chapter 17 beginning in verse 10. **“And His disciples asked Him, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He (Jesus) answered and said, ‘Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they**

did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He (Jesus) had spoken to them about John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:10-13) With these words Jesus also interrupts Malachi’s prophecy. **Blank** So, John the Baptist was not actually Elijah, but instead John was Elijah-like in preaching repentance and for people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Both men preached with power and boldness without regard for the religious or political establishment. I feel God has called me to preach in the same way today – without regard for what our government or society says is right. I am to preach the truth of the scriptures. You, my brothers and sisters are to live and testify to the truth of the scriptures and Jesus as the Christ, and how God the Holy Spirit has changed your lives to all who will listen. As Jesus ended the passage of Matthew chapter 17 with, **Slide** “they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer...” Do you not expect to suffer for the cause of our Lord Jesus? John the Baptist suffered, the apostles suffered, many have suffered and been martyred since the coming of Christ and Christ Himself suffered that we might have salvation – expect suffering and then celebrate every blessing you receive from God and share these blessings with others. Is this not what Jesus meant when he said, **Slide** “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.’ ” (Luke 17:10) We are unworthy of God’s salvation, but having been given salvation we are to be obedient and serve our Lord as His slaves with a joyful heart. Amen! **Blank**

Now the delegation asks John, “Are you the Prophet?” This question was prompted by the prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy 18. **Slide**¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you ...¹⁸ and I will put My words in his

mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” There was no consensus in the first-century Judaism about the identity of the “Prophet.” Some believed that the prophet would be a forerunner of the Messiah or one of the Old Testament prophets resurrected or that the “Prophet” would be the Messiah Himself. John the Baptist, I believe knew that the “Prophet” was Jesus and later in the Book of Acts both Peter and Stephen applied Moses’ Deuteronomy prophecy to Jesus. (Acts 3:22-23 and Acts 7:37). So, John the Baptist knowing that it was Jesus who was the “Prophet” and Messiah said simply and directly “No” in answering their question. **Blank**

Frustrated with John’s answers and trying to figure out what to tell the Jerusalem leadership that had sent them – we read in verse 22, **Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”** John answers with his words and the words of Isaiah found in chapter 40, verse 3. Look in your bibles at our passage of study; John 1:23 it reads, **“He said, ‘I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”** John and Isaiah likened the hearts of the Jewish people to a desolate wilderness, through which a smooth and level road needed to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah. In this statement John again emphasizes his humility and subordinate role to Jesus the true Messiah. John was saying he was only a laborer preparing the way for Jesus the King by preaching repentance and telling people to turn back to God and prepare their hearts for the Messiah – for in truth the Messiah had already come! John was doing what Francis of Assisi came to understand when he said, **Slide** **“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”** John’s ministry was necessary and it began by doing the possible and ended doing the

impossible – to bring Jews to repentance by believing in the Messiah. **Blank**

At this point the Apostle John says the delegation “[had been sent from the Pharisees.](#)” This further clarifies his earlier phrase “[the Jews](#)” in verse 19 as the religious leadership. The Sadducees controlled the temple at this time and were the majority party in the Sanhedrin. Here we learn that it was the Pharisees that had sent the delegation. Since the high priest and the chief priests were Sadducees it is not likely they would have allowed the delegation to not include men from their order. The Pharisees were more concerned about spiritual matters and disagreed with the Sadducees over a number of spiritual things, including the resurrection of the body after death.

Still not getting the answers they were hoping for and trying to get a handle on John the delegation asks, “If you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet then what do you think you are doing by baptizing people?” This is my paraphrase of verse 25. Look in your bibles at verses 26 and 27. Instead of defending his baptizing ministry, John merely acknowledges his ministry’s limitations by saying, “[I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.](#)” The Old Testament or the only Testament, since the New Testament had not been written yet, taught of spiritual cleansing in connection with the coming of the Messiah in Ezekiel and Zechariah. For this reason the Jews baptized converts to Judaism as a symbol of this spiritual cleansing. But John was baptizing Jews and this shocked the religious leaders for Jews were God’s chosen people. The people who came to John to be baptized admitted that by their sins they were outside of God’s saving covenant. This was shocking because that would make them no better than Gentiles. John baptized them as a public expression of their repentance and their desire to be right

in their heart with God and to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Messiah, which in our next teaching John says, has already come. John alludes to this in verse 27, but he will be clearer in later verses. Now in verse 27 John says, *“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”* The reason John says, *“It is He who comes after me”* is two fold. First, John was born six months before Jesus and secondly, John began his public ministry before Jesus began His. John ends the verse again showing his humility by saying, *“the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”* John was making sure that it was clearly understood he was not the Messiah and he was but the servant of God preaching for repentance in order to prepare people for the Messiah.

This passage closes with verse 28 making a distinction between the Bethany near Jerusalem and the Bethany beyond the Jordan where John was preaching and baptizing. This would keep the two Bethany’s from being confused.

Let me read Matthew 11:11 again in closing. **Slide** Jesus said, *“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!* So John is the greatest among all men born up to this time. He faithfully fulfilled God’s calling and the primary purpose of his life – to prepare people for and to announce the coming of the Messiah. Jesus continued by saying, **Slide** *“Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (John the Baptist).”* If you are saved, if you are a child of God, if you are a follower of Jesus and He is your Lord and Savior – then you, my dear beloved, are greater than John. You have been given an order, commission, a command by Jesus. Please turn in your bibles to **Slide** Matthew chapter 28, beginning in verse 18, we now read what Jesus said, not just to His disciples 2000 years ago, but to each of you here this very day, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.* How much is all? Everything, John the

evangelist just spend 18 verses making sure we understood that Jesus is God and has always been in intimate fellowship with God the Father for all eternity. Jesus is God and has ALL authority. If you believe in Jesus as God then Jesus says to every believer, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” It is because of God that you hold a Bible in your hands, the Bible which is the very words of God. All believers are then enabled to know “all that God has commanded you” and when God regenerated your dead soul and made you spiritually alive, you were indwelled with the God the Holy Spirit and this proves the closing of the verse which says, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” What are you going to do now that both the scriptures, the very words of God and what I have made sure you understand about your calling as a believer? What do you plan to do about this? Will you be faithful to Jesus’ calling? Will you be the light of God in this dark world? Preach the gospel of Jesus to all who will listen and as Francis of Assisi said, **Slide** “Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” I am encouraging you, my brothers and sisters to boldly live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus in living your daily lives!