

Middle/High School Sunday School Lessons by

rfour.org

Year 1: Session 7 – After Resurrection

Class 19: John 21:2-24 – Resurrected Jesus says “Follow me”

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Revisit the “fight or flight” idea introduced in the crucifixion of Jesus lesson
- Discuss how this story helps us think about how to “Follow Jesus” even if he’s invisible and not physically present
- Use the idea of “red herrings” to focus on some of the things that keep us from accepting Resurrected Jesus’ invitation to follow him

Materials needed

- Video clip from “Finding Nemo” (can be seen on rfour.org)
- Electronics that show the video clip
- Powerpoint file and a laptop to run it with a larger screen to display it
- Powerpoint file can be downloaded from the rfour.org site – or click [HERE](#) to download it.

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- For the opening question for today’s class, I [the teacher] will ask the question, and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- *Here’s this week’s question:* What’s something that somebody else does that you really wish they wouldn’t do because you can’t stop paying attention to it?

INTRO / Transition to VIDEO

- In last week’s class, Jesus died. On a cross.
- This means that today, we will start a new session, called, “After Resurrection.”
- To begin, we’re going to read a story where the Resurrected Jesus makes an appearance.
- Resurrected Jesus tells Peter a number of things, but by the end of the story, you’ll see that Peter isn’t completely following with what’s being said.

- There's also fishing involved.
- So to help us get started, let's watch a brief clip from the movie, "Finding Nemo."

WATCH Finding Nemo VIDEO CLIP

ASK/TELL

- What does Dory offer to do? (show the dad where the white boat went)
- Does she do this? (at first it seems like she is doing that, but then it turns out that she's not)
- Why doesn't she show him where the boat is? (Because she forgot what she was doing)
- How does the other fish take this? (He's a little upset / confused / frustrated)
- What do you think, if someone said, "Follow me" and then forgot you were following them, would that be frustrating to you?
- So in today's scripture story, there's an invitation to follow and then someone exhibits a short attention span.
- Let's see if you can spot who has the short attention span.
- NOTE: As we talk and think about the story, it's going to be helpful to think of Jesus as the same person, but in two different forms. So there's the Resurrected Jesus and then we another word for the Jesus who lived before the resurrection – maybe the pre-Resurrection Jesus or Ministry Jesus? Pre-crucifixion Jesus? Not-yet-dead Jesus? Regular Jesus? Or maybe you have your own better modifier?
- Let's read the story and find out what happens.

READ John 21:2-24 (*recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse, including teachers*)

2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. 9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. 15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.)

After this he said to him, "Follow me." 20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" 23 So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

ASK

- Verse 3 – what does Peter and the other disciples do? (Go fishing)
- Do you remember, by any chance, what Peter did before he was disciple? (He was a fisherman)
- So Peter and the other disciples are returning to their previous way of life, the life that they are very familiar with. In verse 3 we hear how that return to the old life goes for them. How does it go for them? (They caught zero fish – so...not very well)
- Verse 4 and 6 -- Who is it, then, that helps them catch lots of fish? (Resurrected Jesus)
- Verse 12 – What do you think – Is Resurrected Jesus exactly the same as regular Jesus? Or does he seem different to the disciples? (Different – probably looks a little bit different)
- Verse 14 – Is this the first time that Jesus has appeared to them? (Nope)
- Starting in verse 15 – How many times does Resurrected Jesus ask Peter if he loves him? (3 times)
- We didn't talk about Jesus' arrest this year, but do you remember or know how many times Peter denies knowing Jesus after Jesus is arrested? (In John, Peter does this three times)
- So it seems like Jesus is giving Peter a chance to make amends. How does Jesus tell Peter to show his love? (By feeding / tending to his lambs)
- Who do you think Jesus is talking about when he says "my lambs"? (most likely: Folks that will choose to follow Jesus / future disciples)
- What does Jesus then tell Peter and the other disciples to do in verse 19? (to follow him, Resurrected Jesus)
- Verse 21 – directly after Resurrected Jesus says this, what does Peter decide to focus on? (another disciple)
- Verse 22 – What is Jesus' response to Peter? (What is it to you what this other person does? Follow me!)

TELL

- Last class we talked about how Jesus doesn't run away or fight, but makes a prayerful choice to live God's way
- However, as we see at the start of this story, some of the disciples had made a "run away" choice after Jesus' death – they had returned to where it was safe and familiar – they returned to their old job.
- Part of what this story wants us to think about, then, is how resurrection eventually invites us to do something more than the usual and familiar ways of living.
- One reason Peter might want to consider not fishing is because, as we saw, he's not so good at it anymore.
- So it's a good thing that resurrected Jesus appeared to them and told them
 - 1. How to do their old job better and
 - 2. That there was an option that was even better than their old job – the job that Jesus had trained them for.
- The placement of this story is very interesting because in the other Gospels, regular Jesus calls the disciples to follow him at the start of his ministry, in John, though, Jesus is calling the disciples to follow him *after* he's resurrected.
- Which raises the question, since the resurrected Jesus doesn't appear all too often and eventually disappears...how exactly DO you follow a used-to-be teacher who was then dead, came back to life, but is now invisible?

- Jesus' invitation and answer to this question is basically this: Pay attention to me (this is what Jesus is saying/meaning when he keeps asking Peter if Peter loves him or not).
- So near the end of the story, what does Peter become concerned about? (about a different disciple)
- If Peter is focused on what that other disciple is doing/not doing, then what is Peter NOT focused on? (following Jesus)

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- So one reason we might get distracted is because we have a short-attention span.
- A similar reason might be because we allow ourselves to get distracted by other issues that we THINK are related, but actually are not related.
- These distracting issues are sometimes called “red herrings.”
- (*Optional:* The origin of the term is unknown, but is believed to come from ways hunters would train their dogs and attempt to throw their dogs off the scent by using the smell of red herrings – which are a fish, by the way)
- A red herring is something that may seem important, but is instead simply something that misleads or distracts from a relevant or important issue
- To help us think about / understand what a red herring is in real life, let's do the following activity

EXPLAIN

- On the screen, a situation will be posed, and then four responses will be displayed.
- As a class, we will discuss and choose which response we think is the red herring.
- It is possible that more than one of the responses are red herrings – we'll want to identify the reddest of the red herrings.
- Any questions?

DO RED HERRING ACTIVITY

ASK/TELL

- As you can see, red herrings are quite common in our interactions and life in general.
- Lots of red herrings also appear when it comes to paying attention to Jesus
- And they really do get in the way, which is probably why John puts this story last – as a very important reminder.
- He wants us to really think about how amazing and transformative resurrection is – and how easy it is to return to old ways because we get afraid or distracted.
- But if you love something – then you don't WANT to get distracted from it.
- You want to stay focused on that person or thing.
- Which is why Jesus keeps asking Peter if Peter loves him.
- The story, then, is helping us think about how we follow the resurrected Jesus: We have to make a choice to do it (we have to choose to follow Jesus) and then we have to stay focused on following through with this decision: No Dory or Peter short attention spans. But not because have to, but because we want to.
- Next lesson, we'll look at what happens when Peter and the other disciples choose to stay focused on what Jesus tells them.

CLOSING PRAYER