

6/05/2018

JOHN 21:1-14 = GOD (God counts "1, 5, 3..." / Mystery of 1-5-3)

#**SERMON=BEFOREHAND**: We as people normally start counting "1, 2, 3". We're also taught that when you're in a challenging situation, count to 3 before you react/speak. But did you know that when God interacts with us, He prefers to start counting "1, 5, 3"?.. If so - why then? And why would I like to suggest today that all of us that call ourselves "Bride of JC", should rather count "1, 5, 3" before we react/speak in a challenging situation?..

#**SCRIPTURE READING**: Mark 1:16-20 (17/19b), John 21:1-14 (11b), Ephesians 1:18-20

#**SERMON=INTRODUCTION**: What does the expression "I Am God" mean to you? Or should the question rather be: Do we really understand what this expression means = do we fully grasp it?.. I just wonder, if we truly understood it - the full practical implication of it - how much different our lives would have looked like, starting with mine? I just wonder whether we would have inter-/acted differently in many situations during the past?..

+**TRANSITION**: Bride of JC, coming Thursday we're celebrating "Ascension Day" - 40 days after Jesus rose from the grave. I would like to continue to focus on some of the recorded incidents that took place during these days (before His ascension). Hence JOHN 21:1-14.

+**EXEGESIS&APPLICATION**: But before we focus on this astonishing part of Scripture, let's - just for a moment - look back at MARK 1:16-20. One could ask why these men immediately left everything and followed Jesus? Jesus was (already known to some as) a rabbi. We could react and ask: "So what about it?" In these ancient Biblical times it was every young Jewish boy's dream (and his parents' too!) to become a rabbi. But to be selected, you "had to make the cut": You needed a high IQ = ability to read, understand & especially memorise the Torah. In other words - only "the best of the best" became rabbis. If you failed this, the 2nd best thing was to become a talmid (plural talmidim) = a student/disciple of a rabbi. [Hebrew root words: Talmud = comprehensive written version of the Jewish oral law and the subsequent commentaries on it; a record of the rabbinic teachings that span a period of about 600 years / lamad = teaching or learning] Therefore, when Jesus called them, they immediately left everything and followed Him... For the sake of fully understanding JOHN 21, we must remember His words: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (17). Something else that's also very NB to note while reading this, are the words "[they were] in the boat mending their nets." (19b)

*Back to JOHN 21. It's the 3rd time Jesus shows Himself to His disciples since His resurrection (1st = JOHN 20:19 & 2nd = JOHN 20:26). But it's the 2nd time He meets them at their boats on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, busy with "their nets&fishing". B/S, 3 years ago He called them to be fishers of men, but my understanding of Scripture/the Gospels re these 3 years, is that Jesus Himself has done ± all the "human fishing". Now here, in the light of this fact & knowing He's "going home" soon = that they will have to continue "human fishing" without His physical Presence, it is as if Jesus wants to confirm to them His ability to work through them = to let the miraculous happen.

*Let's look at the detail of this incredible miracle. From ancient sources we know how most of the boat fishing on the Sea of Galilee was done during those years. Detail: Because of the inflow of the Jordan river (detail = north side x fish feeding in the inflowing fresh water area) and most of the rest of the fish living/feeding close to the shore, boats fished "clock-wise" on the Galilee. The boats with their nets would be a certain distance from the shore - with

their nets on the left side of the boats. More fisherman in other smaller/little boats, without any nets, lined up behind each other parallel with the "deeper" boats = facing the same direction, but literally next to the shore. They would then start hitting/striking the water with their paddles/oars - chasing the fish into the nets of the deeper boats. They didn't fish in the deep/open = "righthandside" water.

*Then the resurrected Son of God appears on the scene. On His command, they cast their nets on the **"right side of the boat" (21:6) - resulting in a multitude of large fish being caught; counted number -153!** We read an interesting fact in v12b: **"Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?' - knowing it was the Lord."** B/S, why not - how were they so certain it was the Lord?..

The secret lies in the number of fish that was caught = 153. All letters of the Hebrew alphabet have a certain numerical value, with the result that certain words/names have a given value. And in those ancient times, there were certain "totals" that every Jew understood as representing something/someone's name... B/S, please be astonished together with me with the following:

$\square, \eta \eta \eta \aleph = \text{Ani Elohim} = \text{I Am God}$

\aleph (Aleph) = 1	η (Vav) = 6	
η (Nun) = 50	η (Hey) = 5	
η (Yod) = 10	η (Yod) = 10	
\aleph (Aleph) = 1	\square (Mem) = 40	TOTAL = 153
η (Lamed) = 30		

Isn't this incredible? With the result that, when the disciples counted 153 fish, that was the confirmation to them that this was indeed God-the-Son = their risen Lord, JC!

*But isn't this typically Jesus - revealing Himself in the unexpected/super-natural? B/S, these disciples could easily have said: "We've done it 'according to the book/Sea of Galilee fishing guidelines' - and caught nothing! We're tired & done fishing"... Then the Man on the shore shows up "on the other side". By implication He instructs them to expect Him in the unexpected. It's as if Jesus says: "Watch this space - I own the 'Big paddle/oar' & I will do it from the other side!.." B/S, do we realise what must have happened (a) during that night in the waters of Galilee (God preventing any fish to enter their nets = setting the stage for the miracle), & (b) early morning instructing fish - a 153 large fish! - to simultaneously swim into their nets!.. Bottomline is: If these disciples went by reason, they wouldn't have met their resurrected Saviour!

What's happening here? "I Am God" proves to His disciples that it is through the resurrecting power of God that they will fulfill their "fishers of men" calling. He illustrates to them that, because of His resurrection, He can bring/move them into their destiny/calling. Very NB to note v11b: "...and although there were many [fish], the net was not broken."

*And us, aren't we also disciples of JC/called to be fishers of men?.. Re being His talmidim: He's the Rabbi, we're the learners. "School time" is every second we spend here on earth. Every day He will teach us/lessons will be given. Every circumstance will be a classroom. Let's not miss/not recognize our classes/lessons. On the contrary - pay attention/seek them! Let's make it our joy to learn from the Master; Messiah is our Rabbi..

Re us being "fishers of men": It is only through the resurrection power of God - which resides in us! (EPHES 1:18-20) - that "fish" (even the "large ones") will swim into our nets. And best of all - our nets won't tear = we won't need to "mend our nets".

+**CONCLUSION:** I just wonder if we truly understood the Biblical number 153, whether we wouldn't react differently in especially challenging situations? Bride of the resurrected Groom, in future - let's count "1, 5, 3" before we speak/react.. (...Preke\God-wese\Joh21v11b)