

153 Fish!

Scripture Reading — John 21:1-14

“Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” . . . It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. — John 21:10-11

Here’s the intriguing account of seven disciples catching 153 fish on Jesus’ orders. Why report 153 fish? Scholars aren’t agreed. Many meanings have been proposed, but (pardon my pun) all seem to be fishing for answers. It’s better to admit we don’t know why 153 fish are reported rather than to try to divine the Master’s mind. Perhaps it’s just a record catch.

Early one morning after his resurrection, Jesus finds his disciples back on their fishing boat. Having grown up on a lake where we fished often, I know Jesus’ question made the disciples cringe: “Haven’t you any fish?” They’d caught nothing after fishing all night.

“Cast your net on the right side.” What difference would that make? Fish don’t hide on one side of a boat. Yet immediately the net filled with 153 “keepers.” And the net did not tear.

Remember, Jesus had drafted Peter and Andrew, as well as James and John, from the ranks of professional fishermen. Instead of catching fish for a living, he said, they’d become fishers of people for eternal life (Mark 1:16-20). Whatever 153 means, it tells us God would draw a great number of sinners to salvation through Christ. How do we know? That original band of twelve disciples has become a worldwide church of billions! Now, that’s a haul!

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are fishing for humans to save. Make us your fishers and fill our nets with all whom you are bringing into your boat. We pray in your name. Amen.

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