

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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AND LIVING
WITH THE BELIEVERS
IN RESURRECTION

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Living Stream Ministry

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The intention of the Holy Spirit in writing the Gospel of John was to show us that we have been made the sons of God by the resurrection of Christ. This is wonderful and glorious. We human beings were worthless, sinful, low, mean, and dirty. But by the Lord's death and resurrection, we have been made the sons of God. We have the life of God, the nature of God, and the fullness of God. Thus, we are the sons of God, just like the Only Begotten Son of God. How wonderful! The Lord has given us the glory which the Father gave Him from eternity past. What is this glory? It is the life and nature of God which we have received and which make us the sons of God for the expression of God.

Being the sons of God simply means to be the expression and the manifestation of God. In other words, Christ is the Son of God who has the life and nature of God and who is the very

manifestation of God. This is the glory which God the Father has given to the Son, and it is the glory which the Lord has given us by His death and resurrection. By His death and resurrection, the Lord released Himself and imparted Himself into us so as to make us exactly the same as He is. He is the Son of God, and He has made us to be the sons of God. He has the life and the nature of God, and He has made us to have the life and the nature of God. He is the very expression and manifestation of God, and He has made us to be the expression and manifestation of God. Therefore, we have the same life, nature, and position that He has. This is the glory which the Lord has given us. It is truly wonderful!

The Lord sends us just as the Father sent Him (20:21). The Father sent Him by being in Him and by being one with Him. Likewise, Christ sends us by being in us and by being one with us. Now we are the expression and the manifestation of God because the Son of God has been imparted into us and is now within us. Since He is now the Spirit, He is within us and is one with us. Hence, we have what He has, we are where He is, and we are exactly the same as He is. Consequently, He could send us and

give us the divine and heavenly commission. This is the purpose of God which was designed in eternity past. God's eternal purpose is simply to work Himself into us, mingling Himself with us so that we may become His expression and manifestation.

The Lord has accomplished all this by His death and resurrection. He was the one grain of wheat which was multiplied into many grains by death and resurrection ([12:24](#)). He was the Only Begotten Son who has been duplicated and multiplied into many sons ([Heb. 2:10](#)). By His resurrection He multiplied Himself, and after His resurrection He revealed to Mary that the disciples were now His brothers ([John 20:17](#)). He was the Only Begotten Son, but now He has become the firstborn Son of many sons. Before His death, He was the only Son of God without any brothers. But after His resurrection, the Only Begotten Son became "the Firstborn among many brothers" ([Rom. 8:29](#)). Consider the illustration of a grain of wheat. After it falls into the ground and dies, it is resurrected and multiplied into many grains. Where is the original grain of wheat? It is now in the many grains. In fact, it even is the many grains. In [chapter twelve](#) Christ was the one grain, but in

[chapter twenty](#) He became the many grains. This was made possible only by death and resurrection. Before [chapter eighteen](#), He was the Only Begotten Son of God, the only manifestation of God. Throughout the whole universe and among the entire human race, there was only one Person who was the very image and manifestation of God. But after [chapters eighteen and nineteen](#), we have many sons of God and many manifestations of God. Through the death and resurrection of the Only Begotten Son of God the many sons have been produced. The one grain has now been multiplied into the many grains. Thus, all the Lord's disciples have become His brothers. These brothers can now be the very manifestation of God and can now represent the Triune God. They have been committed with the divine, heavenly mission to do something on this earth whereby they can express and manifest God. This is the meaning of the Gospel of John.

At the end of [chapter twenty](#), everything is wonderful and complete. It seems that we have touched upon something divine, spiritual, heavenly, eternal, and beyond our conception, and that there is no need for [chapter twenty-one](#). What is the meaning and purpose of this additional chapter? By the end of [chapter twenty](#), the

Lord has come back as the Spirit to be with the disciples and to be everything to them. Therefore, this Gospel is closed there (20:30-31). Thus far, this Gospel presents something divine, but we are human. It reveals something heavenly, but we are still on earth. It unfolds something eternal, but we are still in time. In other words, although we have been born again as the sons of God, we are still in this physical body. We are the sons of God, yet we are still the sons of man. We have been committed with the heavenly commission, but we still must provide food for our eating and our living. How can the disciples make a living? What should they do to carry out the Lord's commission? How should they follow Him after His resurrection? What will be their future? An additional chapter is needed to deal with these problems. Thus, [chapter twenty-one](#) covers some very practical matters. We cannot always just sit here, praising the Lord and shouting, "Hallelujah, everything is wonderful, heavenly, divine, and eternal! Oh, now we are the sons of God! We have the life and the nature of God, we have the glory of God, and we are the representatives and manifestation of God!" But what about tomorrow? What shall we eat? Where shall we obtain money to buy food?

We cannot fast all the time. Because of these additional problems, we have [chapter twenty-one](#) to help us take care of our living, our family, and the many other things on this earth.

If we compare the levels of [chapters twenty and twenty-one](#), we shall see that the level of [chapter twenty](#) is very high, but that the level of [chapter twenty-one](#) seems quite low. The reason for this is that the last chapter deals with such practical matters as our living and eating. How we earn a living is very practical. We need to understand the reason for having [chapter twenty-one](#) after [chapter twenty](#), for having an additional chapter after the conclusion. This chapter simply shows that after we have been wonderfully and divinely regenerated as the sons of God, we are still in this world, we are still on this earth, we are still in time, we still have some practical needs, and we still have some practical problems which must be solved. Because of this, the Holy Spirit continues to write another chapter.

MOVING AND LIVING WITH THE BELIEVERS

In [21:1-14](#) we see the Lord moving and living with the believers. In resurrection, the Lord

was not only meeting with the brothers but also moving and living with them. He is not only with us when we meet; He is even with us in our daily walk. Wherever we go, He goes. Whatever we do, He is there with us. Whether we are right or wrong, the Lord is with us.

In [21:1-11](#), the Lord moved with the disciples to the sea, manifesting Himself again to them at the sea of Tiberias. Peter, the leading brother, took the lead to backslide into the world, saying “I am going fishing” ([21:3](#)). Six of the other disciples said, “We also are coming with you.” Not only did the six disciples follow Peter, but even the Lord Jesus followed him. The Lord did not say to Peter, “Peter, what are you doing? Are you backsliding from My call? Are you going back to the sea? I will never go with you. If you go there, you must go on your own.” Some may say, “If I go to a movie theater, will the Lord Jesus go there with me?” Yes, He will go with you. He is not only with you in the meeting place but even in a movie theater. But He will not go with you to the theater to give you peace, but to trouble you, to stir you up, and to tell you to leave that place. Because He would be with you at the movie theater, you could never have a sweet enjoyment while being there. Eventually you would have

to say, “I must forget about this movie, for Jesus will not leave me alone.” This is life in resurrection. In resurrection, the Lord Jesus moved to the sea with the disciples.

APPEARING AGAIN TO TRAIN THE DISCIPLES TO REALIZE HIS INVISIBLE PRESENCE

[Verse 1 of John 21](#) says, “After these things, Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias.” This proves that His coming to the disciples in [20:26](#) was actually a manifestation, for here it says that He “manifested Himself again.” Once again, He was training them to practice His invisible presence. It was not a matter of His coming but of His manifestation. Whether they were conscious of His presence or not, He was with them all the time. But for the sake of their weakness, He sometimes manifested His presence in order to strengthen their faith in Him.

TRAINING THE DISCIPLES TO LIVE BY FAITH IN HIM

The Lord manifested Himself to the disciples in [chapter twenty-one](#) to train them, especially Peter, to live by faith in Him. [Verses 2-14](#)

reveal two main things: the weakness of the regenerated people who have been committed with the divine mission of God, and the all-sufficient provision of the Lord who can help us live on this earth for His commission, for His purpose, and for His testimony. Let us first consider the weakness of those who had been regenerated and commissioned by God.

PETER AND OTHER DISCIPLES BACKSLIDING TO THEIR OLD OCCUPATION FROM THE LORD'S CALL

At the beginning of this chapter, we see a picture of seven disciples under the leadership of Peter ([vv. 2-3](#)). Along with Peter, there were Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. The number seven represents the whole Body. What were the whole Body and their leader doing? They were backsliding from the Lord's call to their old occupation ([Matt. 4:19-20](#); [Luke 5:3-11](#)). Peter said to the other six disciples, "I am going fishing" ([v. 3](#)). His purpose in going fishing was to make a living, to get some food to eat. All the other disciples said, "We also are coming with you" ([v. 3](#)). Because Peter was the leader, the others went fishing under his leadership. Thus, the whole Body went fishing,

forgetting their divine commission. The Lord had instructed them to tarry at Jerusalem, for they had been commissioned ([Luke 24:49](#)). The Lord had told them to wait in Jerusalem for the day when they would all be clothed with heavenly power from on high. But this picture in [chapter twenty-one](#) reveals that the disciples had left that position, giving up that ground. By leaving Jerusalem and coming to Galilee, they gave up their position. They had decided to go to the sea to fish. Peter and the other disciples went fishing because of their living. They might have lacked a sufficient supply of food and were very concerned about it. Peter might have said, “We only have food for one meal. I don’t know where the next meal is coming from. I’m going fishing.” Not only did the six disciples go fishing with Peter; the Lord Jesus went also.

THE MIRACLE OF PROFESSIONAL FISHERMEN CATCHING NO FISH

In [verse 3](#) we are told that the disciples “went forth and got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.” Peter and the sons of Zebedee (John and James) were professional fishers, the sea of Tiberias was large and full of fish, and

night was the right time for fishing, but through the entire night they caught nothing. It was a real miracle for the disciples to fish the whole night and yet not to catch any fish. As expert fishermen, they knew that nighttime was the best time for fishing. But although the sea was full of fish, they did not catch even one. They cast their nets again and again the entire night, but they caught nothing. The Lord must have sovereignly controlled all the fish, keeping them away from the nets. Perhaps the Lord Jesus commanded the fish, saying, “Fish, stay away from this net.”

The miracle of catching no fish was a lesson to Peter and the other disciples, and it is a lesson for us today. We should not think that we can just go out, find a job, and make a living. If the Lord keeps all the jobs away, we shall never be able to find one. Do not think that you can go to the sea and easily catch some fish. If our fishing is under the Lord’s guidance and according to His will, we shall surely catch some fish. But if it is not according to the Lord’s will and we go out on our own, all the fish might be frightened away, sovereignly being kept away from us. As Christians who have been regenerated and commissioned by the Lord, we must go and do things according to the Lord’s will, even in the

matter of making a living. Since we have been regenerated and the Lord has committed to us a divine, heavenly mission, we must walk according to His will. We should not think of making a living naturally. Others can, but we cannot. There might have been quite a number of unbelievers fishing in the sea of Tiberias at the same time the disciples were, and they probably caught many fish. These believing disciples labored the whole night, and only from them were the fish kept away. This was a miracle. Therefore, do not think that we can just go to the sea and catch fish. If we do this on our own, we shall probably end up with nothing.

Verses 4 and 5 say, “Now as the morning was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, Little children, do you have any fish to eat? They answered Him, No.” The Lord Jesus appeared as “the morning was breaking.” The Lord did not come—He appeared. In **verse 14** we are told that “Jesus was manifested to the disciples.” Before the Lord Jesus stood on the shore, He was there already. When the disciples were in the boat fishing, the Lord was already there, for He was within them. But at this particular

point, the Lord appeared and showed Himself to them.

THE DISCIPLES HAVING FISH WHEN THEY WERE IN THE RIGHT POSITION

We may compare [21:5](#) with [Luke 24:41-43](#). When the disciples were in the right position, as in [Luke 24:41-43](#), they had—even inside the house—more fish than they needed, and they offered a piece to the Lord. But here they were in a backslidden condition. Thus—even on the seashore—after fishing the entire night, they had no fish, not even one piece. Not only did they have nothing to offer the Lord; they had nothing with which to feed themselves. The Lord asked them if they had any fish to eat, and they said, “No.” Their answer must have made them feel very shameful. If I had been Peter, I would have been ashamed to answer the Lord’s question.

THE MIRACLE OF CATCHING AN ABUNDANCE OF FISHES AT THE LORD’S WORD

[Verse 6](#) says, “He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. They cast therefore, and they were not able to haul it in, because of the abundance of fishes.”

The morning (v. 4) was not the right time for fishing, but when the disciples, at the word of the Lord, cast their net they caught an abundance of fishes. Surely this was a miracle. It must have been that the Lord bade the fish come into their net. By this miracle their eyes were opened, and the “disciple whom Jesus loved said then to Peter, It is the Lord!” (21:7). The first one to recognize that it was the Lord was John. When Peter realized that it was the Lord, he jumped into the sea and came to the Lord. The other disciples came in the little boat, dragging the net full of fishes.

CALLING AND RECOVERING PETER BY MIRACLES IN FISHING

In [Luke 5:3-11](#), the Lord called Peter by a miracle in fishing. Here He also recovered him to His call by a miracle in fishing. He is consistent in His purpose.

THE MIRACLE OF HAVING FISH PREPARED ON THE LAND

When the disciples got out onto the land, “they saw a fire of coals laid there, and fish lying on it and bread” (v. 9). Peter and the disciples very clearly saw the fish on the coals of fire and the bread. There had been no need to catch any

fish from the sea, for there were some fish on the land already. The Lord performed this miracle to teach the disciples that under His will they will find fish at any place, even on the land. But if it is not under His will, they will not find any fish even if they go to the sea. Catching fish does not depend upon the natural way; it depends upon His will. He is sovereign, and everything is under His control. Even in a place where people think that there is no fish naturally, the Lord will prepare fish for us. This is not the fish in the sea; this is the fish already cooked and prepared for us.

Here the Lord trained Peter's faith in Him for his living. By all this, the Lord trained all of them to realize that without His leading, though they went to the sea where the fish were, and in the night, the right time for fishing, they could catch nothing; but with the Lord's leading, even on the land where the fish were not, and in the morning, which is not the right time for fishing, the Lord could provide fish for them.

LIVING WITH THE DISCIPLES

The Lord not only moved with the disciples; He also lived with them. In [verses 12 through 14](#) the Lord prepared breakfast and served it to

His disciples. The Lord's words, "Come and have breakfast," indicate His gracious care for the need of His called ones. The Lord did not say, "Peter, breakfast is ready. Help yourself." No, [verse 13](#) says, "Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise." Bread represents the riches of the land, and fish represent the riches of the sea in the Lord's provision. How good the Lord is! He served the disciples breakfast. This picture is much better than a thousand words. Although the Lord did not rebuke Peter, I believe that Peter never forgot this lesson.

How would you have felt if you had been Peter? If I had been Peter, I would have covered my face in shame. I would not have known what to say to the Lord. Could Peter have said, "How are You, Lord?" or, "Lord, I'm sorry that I gave up the right position to come here to fish." Although Peter did not have the face to eat, he was probably so hungry that he had to eat. Perhaps Peter did not eat very much and what he did eat, he might have eaten shamefully. Peter was in an awkward situation. On the one hand, he had some fish in his hand cooked by the Lord; on the other hand, he looked at the multitude of fish in the net. This was a glory to the Lord, but it was a lesson to Peter.

This is a very interesting lesson. We do not need any descriptive words; we only need to look at the picture. The Lord showed them that some fish had been prepared already. Thus, there was no need for them to go to the sea. In effect, the Lord was saying, “If I want you to go to the sea to catch some fish, then I will tell you to do it. Look at these one hundred fifty-three fish. There is no need for these fish, for I have already prepared some fish for you.” Once again, I say that if I had been Peter I would have felt very much ashamed. On the one hand, I would have thanked the Lord, but, on the other hand, I would have had to say to myself, “How foolish I am! There is no need for me to come here to fish outside the will of the Lord.”

The matter of our living is very practical. This is why the Gospel of John has this additional chapter. Since we are the sons of God who have been regenerated and committed with the divine commission, the Lord will certainly take care of our living. We must learn the lesson of not giving up the Lord’s commission because of our living. We must not give up the Lord’s burden in order to care for our existence. We are not the people of the world; we are the children of God. We must seek first the kingdom of God

and His righteousness, and then the Lord will add the practical supply to us ([Matt. 6:33](#)). He will take care of our need. If we have been truly commissioned by the Lord for His burden, for His work, and for His testimony, we may be at peace and rest assured that the Lord will grant us the provision we need. This is the lesson in this portion of [John 21](#).

The lesson the disciples learned here was that they must take care of the Lord's commission and trust in the Lord for their living. We must take care of the Lord's work and testimony instead of our living. If we give up the Lord's commission to look after our living, we shall fail. In [21:2-14](#), the Lord gave the disciples a lesson about their sustenance, showing them that their living does not depend upon their natural means but upon the Lord's will. If we are in the Lord's will and under His will, He will prepare a living for us even in the impossible places. However, if we take the natural way and go to the sea, that is, to the world, to find employment for our living, we shall be faced with failure. If we have been called by the Lord, we should not worry about our living. The Lord Jesus has a way to prepare fish without fishing. He will take care of our food, for He is the One who calls things not being as

being. The Lord who has called us will take care of our living.

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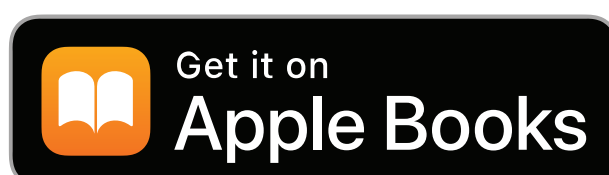
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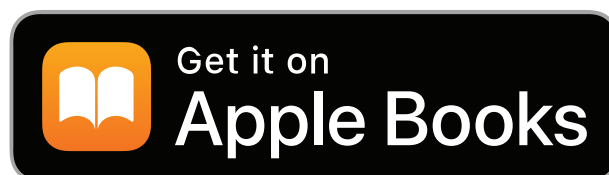
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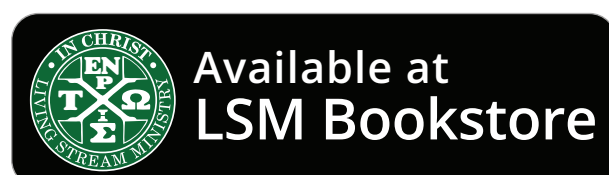
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