

# 5/1/22 - John 21:1-14 - "Ordinary Days"

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want us to recall the events in life that are worth remembering. I want you to recall events in your life that are worth remembering.

Often what comes to our minds, number one, would probably be the day of our birth. We celebrate year after year, and that is a day that we anticipate.

Maybe graduation, maybe your first day of school leading up to graduation, the kid's first day of school. Maybe your wedding day being a day to remember.

Maybe having your first kid, maybe having your first grandkid being a day to remember. However, these events in our lives serve in our minds often as a mental Instagram of highlight reels, of what's going on, and looking back upon those highlights, right?

And now, we would be gravely mistaken, gravely mistaken, to imagine living a life in striving to continue pursuing another highlight reel.

[ 1 : 24 ] As if everything in our life is meaningless, unless we have this experience in life that is worth remembering, right?

Those moments that you feel that you're on top of the world experiences. Well, the Bible has a lot to say about these moments.

I mean, after all, we're just a couple Sundays away from celebrating the resurrection. I mean, how can you even match that? You can't.

And so, the disciples have just experienced that highlight of a moment in their life. And John provides for the church, even for us today, insight into the other 99% of the majority of our lives, right?

That consists of ordinary days. It's those ordinary days of waking up in the morning.

[ 2 : 33 ] Some of us struggle more than others. Preparing yourself for the day for work. And going off to labor during your regularly scheduled hours.

And you come home, you wind down, go back to sleep, and repeat, repeat, repeat. Ordinary days. Those days of not only waking up from work, but maybe hearing the sound of your kids stirring in the bedroom.

And you can hear them getting into mischief, and it takes every fiber of your strength to get up before those full nighttime diapers explode with those absorbent beads.

I speak from experience in that. You got to beat the beads. Those days when it just seems uneventful.

As if your life were made into a sitcom. The negative reviews and the ratings would just reaffirm how boring your life actually really is, and how ordinary it is.

[ 3 : 42 ] And now, I really do speak from experience with that. Ordinary days. Let's turn to the word. And look.

And allow the Bible to clarify and destigmatize this frame of mind in a sermon titled, No Other Than Ordinary Days.

Let's pray as we enter into the exposition of God's word. Let's pray. Father, thank you for a time that you have designated for the church to gather and assemble around your word for equipping us for your world that so desperately needs truth.

Help us to understand this truth. Hold tightly to this truth. And bear this truth for all around us see. Use this time for that.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So we see, I'm going to break this up. It's traditional narrative structure.

[ 4 : 50 ] You've got the scene setting. You've got the rising action. And then the resolution. And the next scene. And so in that, we'll break this up into three sections. And so I'm going to give you a

couple points.

Usually I do sections or things like that. I'm going to give you some points. This is the last sermon in John. I'm giving you pointers here. So, point one is your faith is tested in ordinary days.

We see this developing in verse one where it says, After this, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias. And he revealed himself in this way.

This scene is developing at this point. And I believe it would be most helpful for us to identify the oddity of the beginning of chapter 21.

And in turn, establish for us a faithful interpretation of what John is, in his inspired writing, is attempting to communicate to us.

[ 6 : 02 ] And so, let's look at the oddity. After this. Just two words into chapter 21. After this. Well, John, after what? After the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After the reappearance to the disciples. After the reappearance to Thomas.

As Rick faithfully preached yesterday. Verse one says, after this. Well, there's more. After the purpose of this book.

Look previously to the verses two before chapter 21. Where John, at the very end of the book, uniquely places the purpose that he's writing the book.

I believe most of us would get an F on our papers in college and seminary. If we're putting the purpose of our thesis statement at the end and not the beginning. Points would be docked.

[ 7 : 11 ] And John writes after that. The very purpose has been accomplished in the book. Not only that. He's revealed himself yet again in verse one.

Boy. What else is there to say? The mission of the cross has been accomplished. The mission of the book has been accomplished.

What's the loose change here, John? Why chapter 21? Maybe he intends for us to understand that while belief is established.

There's a couple tests that he wants us to see. As the disciples go about their ordinary days. Maybe we've forgotten so quickly of what Jesus said in John 16, verse 32.

Behold, the hour is coming. Indeed, it has come. When you will be scattered each to his own home. And you will leave me alone.

[ 8 : 20 ] Might we then, church, be able to understand the oddity that's establishing some tension in the narrative?

And verse two says, Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and sons of Zebedee, and two other of the disciples were together. The church was together. And Simon Peter said on this day, Hey, I'm going fishing.

And they said to him, We'll go with you. And they went out and got in the boat. But that night, they caught nothing. After all the awesomeness of the resurrection, and the revelation of Jesus Christ, not only being laid as the victim into the grave, but rising as victor in his resurrection, all is normal. Peter's back on a boat. It's just another day, right? And not only that, the narrative is depressingly normal.

Mundane, almost. Boring. They fished for an entire night. They labored without any sign of any return.

[ 9 : 50 ] They didn't get a paycheck here. At least you go to work and you get a paycheck in your sometimes pointless labor as we see it, right? They got nothing.

And church, our belief finds its greatest testing in the mundaneness of life.

Our faith finds its greatest testing in the mundaneness of life. And better yet, the uneventful mundaneness of life.

Every day, showing up to work on time, not taking your lunch break a minute over than you're allotted, clocking out not a minute early, probably, if you want to be honest, a couple minutes late, maybe on your own time, then arriving home, eating dinner, brushing your teeth, going to bed, and repeat and repeat.

normal things, seemingly boring things. And while John has just stated in the purpose of the book, the purpose of the book being, now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.

[ 11 : 06 ] But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus Christ, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

There's many other signs that were done in, that were not written in this book. Because the basis of belief has been established, the resurrection has happened, the reappearance has happened, and now there seems to be not signs that are of most importance in the book of John, but rather tests, as we see.

And that tests, as we see it, being everyday belief, which is rooted in conviction, and conviction being simply that deep-seated knowledge that often our mundaneness of life tests.

Do you really believe all of that? Look around you. It's dark. Eh, just return fishing.

Nothing happened. It was all a dream, right? Consider these veteran fishermen. Peter knows what he's doing. I'll tell you that much.

[12:26] And I'd imagine they're probably just as shocked at the limited return upon their investment in their night-long toil and laboring. And so this leaves the narrative and begins to take off from the tarmac strip in rising tension of the absence of Jesus Christ at this moment, and the absence of fruit in their laboring, their night-long laboring.

And so the conflict begins, and John develops a narrative in a couple changes. You see a couple changes in the passage, one regarding the time of day, and the other, the characters, and also the return on investment.

So let's look at this rising tension, and I have a point for you, that Christ's presence brings meaning to our toil. And so we have to appreciate, I believe, in this passage, I tried to read it in a way that will help you understand its almost comic side of John's writing here.

We'd have to appreciate that as we feel that sense of comedy in his storytelling. So let's look at this rising tension begins. Verse 4, Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to them, Children, do you have any fish? And they answered him, No. And he said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.

[14:23] Can you imagine the scene, church? Let's pause there for a moment. Can you imagine the scene? Have you ever been fishing in the early mornings? Have you ever been camping in the early mornings? Maybe watched a movie or something?

There's got to be something that we can bring into our minds of what is taking place right now. This morning, I can imagine the Sea of Tiberias would have that mist coming off of the waters as the sun is breaking through.

And you can understand just this solemn peace that's going on. It's just a deep peace of the wilderness. It's almost like you can hear a whisper, not only from 100 yards away from a shoreline, but probably a couple hundred yards.

You could hear a whisper of just that solitude. And so Jesus doesn't have to speak very loud. He just yells from the shoreline, Children, have you caught any fish?

This would be similar to an anonymous observer. We just watched the 2022 Masters, if anybody's a golf fan. And this would be like an anonymous observer there yelling to Scotty Scheffler, Hey, did you try to tee the ball up?

[15:38] I saw you hook that last one. Did you try to tee the ball up? Of course. These disciples probably tried a different net, probably tried a different side of the boat.

They probably were on the verge of trying a different boat and sink that darn thing, right? They were probably frustrated that these veteran fishermen were experiencing.

The emotional thermometer, as you can imagine, in a cartoon sort of fashion, is ready to burst in anger. No, oh, yeah, we didn't think about that, but oh, yeah, we'll cast our net over here.

And if you come a little bit closer, I'll show you where I can put this net if you keep this up from the shoreline, Mr. Anonymous person, right? Come on, these are human beings here.

And in so doing, the verse says, they cast it. Probably like wise guy. And lo and behold, as dawn is breaking on this day, just the day of the resurrection, they were not able to haul all of their catch in because of the quantity of fish.

[17:04] In so doing, as they are getting this massive amount of catch on this seemingly boring, mundane night of fishing, it would recast their entire perspective.

not just a net, but it would recast their entire perspective of this mundane, this everyday, ordinary, boring, apparent, fruitless life.

And what a wake-up call, church. What a wake-up call. Because what we have here is a passage that talks about the fish, but it's not about the fish.

it's not even about which side of the boat that they're casting out on. It was actually the presence of Jesus Christ entering into their mundaneness.

And what a reminder that John offers in this series of tests. Jesus once said in Matthew's gospel, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[ 18 : 31 ] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in hearts, and you will find rest through your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. The fruit of the church's labor isn't just about completing a task of barely making it through your work day of a seemingless boring, mundane, ordinary life, but in yoking to Jesus Christ Christ in your laboring.

In that, we can have a good day or we can have a bad day. We can have a blessed day or we can have a traumatic day.

Regardless of the day, when you are yoked to Jesus Christ, as the point states, Christ's presence brings meaning to our toil.

And may I add, meaning to our often meaningless toil. Don't believe me? We gotta look at what Peter's response is.

[ 19 : 55 ] Verse 7, that disciple whom Jesus loved, therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord. Lord, you gotta appreciate the humor in this.

I mean, imagine this scene. When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garments because he was stripped for work and he threw himself into the sea.

The other disciples came in the boat dragging the full net of fish. They were not far from land, but about a hundred yards off. There goes Peter.

You'd imagine the last thing you're worried about is your clothes. I'd probably say, well, let's take some time and let's keep our clothes here to keep them dry, something to change into, but he had complete self-abandonment when he found out Jesus had entered into his everyday mundaneness, complete abandonment.

of self. And if we want to take it a step further, Jesus Christ is calling the church to abandon yourself in your labor as well.

[ 21 : 11 ] Forget the boat, forget what clothes you're wearing, forget the temperature of the water, forget the fish, forget your friends, and forget even if you can swim.

laboring for Jesus Christ because he brings meaning in our labor will equate in self-abandonment, complete self-abandonment in service with him and to him.

And so the narrative sort of resolves at this point and it's a very long resolve from verse 9 through 14. And we see this last point, oops, I have a typo, yeah, point 3, the sustenance of the church's labor is Christ's labor.

And so we get to a very great transition point to the sermon next week of this little meal that takes place. And verse 9 says, when they got out on land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread.

and Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish that you have just caught. Isn't it interesting that John doesn't let us forget the charcoal fire incident.

[ 22 : 33 ] If you've plugged in with the series, the last time we saw a charcoal fire being mentioned it was Peter warming himself with the enemies of Christ, hiding, disowning Jesus Christ.

And here we have an invitation to a charcoal fire that used to be a symbol of rejection of Jesus Christ. Redemption for Peter.

In the simple act of self abandonment, Peter's often the guy that needs to just shut up. He's just the guy who needs to put his foot in his mouth, just listen to Jesus and obey.

I'm that guy. I'm not alone. And Peter's abandonment of Jesus Christ was a forgotten memory to Jesus Christ under the justifying power of the resurrection.

Remember Romans 4, 25, Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification at the resurrection.

[ 23 : 53 ] The church is declared righteous. And at the table of the Lord, we are reminded that there is endless grace at the table of the Lord.

At the very object of our abandonment of Jesus Christ is the same object that can be transformed by Jesus Christ to become an invitation to come and feast.

And we are assured that our sin is indeed separated as far as the east is from the west. And Jesus Christ restores all that is broken.

Jesus invites those who believe to come. And this, look at what it does for Peter. It recasts his ambitions. He doesn't hesitate one time in this passage.

He, I would imagine Peter before the cross would probably be like, you want me to go get more fish? You already have fish. How many fish do we want? We need more fish.

[ 25 : 00 ] Wait, Jesus, are you sure you got this all going? But look, we have just obedience. Verse 11, Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore.

Full of fish. 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. And Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast.

And now none of the disciples dared to ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord. They had belief in Jesus Christ established. That belief is now being tested in the mundaneness of life.

Isn't it interesting that 153 fish were caught, not 152, not 154? There's only one reason, if you're a fisherman like I try to be once in a while, there's only one reason you count your fish down to such an odd number.

Usually I'd probably bump it up or bump it down just to make it an even number. But that's OCD. There's only one reason that I would ever count my fish, and that is to tell a story.

[ 26 : 19 ] Imagine catching a huge marlin. I would imagine anybody who would catch a fish of that size would know the very millimeter of that catch for the rest of their lives and tell the story about it.

Why? Because it's a moment that will be retold and retold and retold. A moment when Jesus Christ entered in to the ordinary days after the resurrection, to the mundaneness of life.

And he transforms their perspective of that. fish. These disciples will never forget the 153 fish that represents a symbolic significance of that morning that dawn broke and the tides shifted from meaningless to meaningful, from emptiness to abundance.

What a wonderful and encouraging test of the disciples' belief. It's also a reminder of Jesus Christ's forgiveness for our abandonment.

The very same people who abandoned him upon the cross are now invited to breakfast. Isn't that so beautiful?

[ 27 : 44 ] And if you're not a Christian today, you haven't experienced that type of invitation before, it's here today and now to accept that, to receive Christ's forgiveness in your life, that regardless of a life living in rebellion against God as we know that we cannot achieve our salvation of doing any good works in this life, we are born into sin and until Jesus bears our sin, we are destined to hell.

And Jesus Christ entered into our journey to hell and said, I will take the punishment, believe in me, and be forgiven. Receive that today if you are not a Christian.

Maybe you thought you've been a Christian for your entire life and you're just like, I've never had this type of feeling before of invitation to the table with Jesus. I ask you and plead with you to believe in this message.

This is a radical message, a countercultural message. We don't earn any of it, but Jesus Christ accredited to us forgiveness that we can never achieve on our own.

It's a reminder of the table of the Lord. And so look at how this sort of wraps up. Jesus came and he took the bread and gave it to them. And so with the fish, some his fish, some their fish.

[ 29 : 19 ] And this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. John's making it clear that the Christian life will always be this, will not, sorry, will not always be this highlight reel.

If we want to get honest, life tends to be really difficult in so many instances that some of us have suffered greatly in this life.

And you know without a doubt that your faith in Jesus Christ is being tested. Some of you are suffering right now and are going through that testing as well.

And John's making it clear. Yeah, you can pay attention to the Instagram highlight reel of all these, the stage of highlights as if that's life's norm and allow the culture to reprogram your mind to actually make you depressed.

Or you can turn, put your phone off, open the Bible and see the source of our contentment in Christ. we can see that belief is truly tested in the ordinary day-to-day things, just as our faith is tested in trials.

[ 30 : 45 ] Our mission in this life is fueled by Jesus Christ alone and this directly transforms ordinary things and makes them extraordinary, regardless of the mundaneness.

things. We also see that Jesus Christ has well more than enough fish. It seems like he's been fishing for a while.

He's been on shore for a while. Interestingly enough, right in a position on the shoreline that he'd run into the disciples. And the fire's burning hot and the fish are already cooking.

And look what he says. He still invites them to bring the fruit of their labor as well. Jesus Christ had more than enough fish.

Sufficiency of Christ. And still, Jesus Christ calls the church to enjoy both his labor and our labor. Because Jesus Christ is the essential component in all of our labor.

[ 31 : 50 ] It's all glory be to Christ in our labor and our toil. And so we can trust that in the ordinary days, we can glorify God greatly as our faith is being tested.

And in that, the church's sustenance is only found in Jesus Christ's sufficiency. There's nothing wrong about ordinary.

ordinary. There's nothing wrong with ordinary. Especially when Jesus Christ is in it.

You don't always need a new job, for instance. You don't always need something bigger and better, maybe better benefits and things like that to satisfy maybe discontentment in different levels amid the ordinary daily grinds.

I would challenge you to instead invite Jesus Christ, a presence, allow him to enter your workplace with you.

[ 32 : 59 ] And be satisfied throughout your mundaneness of your work schedule in service to him and his presence. You don't always need to be convicted of being a stay-at-home parent with your children because there's nothing ordinary about dedicating your days to your family.

There's nothing ordinary about that. The culture will say, wow, you really got things together. You stay at home. Well, wow, what a life.

But the Bible has told us and commanded us to care well for our families. And often this is a sacrifice that Christian families often have to see so that their kids are raised in a manner worthy of the Lord.

There's nothing ordinary about dedicating your days to your family, especially when those days, yeah, they might be full of dirty diapers, but they're also full with Jesus.

And it makes that labor all the more worth it. You don't need to be ashamed in your singleness in life. You could be in your 20s and you see Instagram, the highlight reels going up, and you see all your friends and your families filling up homes and filling up car seats and feeling like you're missing out.

[ 34 : 22 ] Well, if that's you, Jesus Christ has brought meaning to your singleness. And in him alone, you can find your deepest satisfaction regardless of how it looks.

And boy, can I even touch on the church life. You often can't get more mundane often than that. Week after week, gathering, gathering, taking the Lord's supper, seeing baptism, singing the songs, reading the same book.

If I read my kids the same book every week, they'd probably say, Dad, we need something different here. This is not interesting anymore. I already know how it ends up. You can't undermine how your faith is being tested as a member of Steel Valley Church.

Yeah, you can try to rationalize a inclination for us to say, well, I saw some people holding a sign out at their church down the road.

They were smiling and waving. Just maybe try them for a while. It's often that same inclination that often wrecks marriages. Just losing interest in your spouse.

[ 35 : 42 ] Having affairs. It's that discontentment that often comes into our lives that says, maybe there's something else. But could it be at that very moment your faith is being tested?

It's when all the lights go off. The stars and all those memories, the highlights fade. I'm going to close with this.

At the foundation of the church's mission is an embarking on an ordinary life that is satisfied in an extraordinary savior.

The church's mission is embarking in an ordinary life that is satisfied in an extraordinary savior.

Your faithfulness in your ordinary life is a testimony of your belief in Jesus Christ.

And the more you endure and are satisfied in him, the less mundane your life will be perceived as. Take Peter for example.

[ 36 : 57 ] And I don't need to say anything more. Remember, why did John say the detail about the net? That the net was not torn. What's the significance in that?

I don't care about that net. I'm sure they didn't either. Could it be that the net was not torn to indicate that there's going to be another fishing trip going out?

There might be another day where there is no fish to be caught. Laboring and no return. Laboring and no return. Faith being tested.

Faith being tested. They're going to be recasting that net out and there's more labor coming. And the toiling and the laboring that that net endured will come again.

Let that transform our futile labor into an ongoing victorious mission that will continue on this earth till our dying breath.

[ 37 : 59 ] Let us live our ordinary days glorifying God as a church family. Amen? Let's pray. one often may will not ever ever have not, say they're going to whatever they are to hear other and they're able can stop to