

*TO TELL  
THE STORY*



LUKE ITALIANO

## Gone Fishing

Seven men sat glumly in the boat as the water lapped against the hull. They stared out into the darkness.

Peter rubbed his eyes. “And this is why I quit fishing!”

James raised an eyebrow. “Really? That’s why you quit fishing. And not because of Jesus.”

Peter chuckles. “All right. Ah... Ah... All night. And not a single fish! All night long. Maybe God’s trying to tell us something.”

James returned the laugh. “Yeah... remember last time? No fish. Not all night long. And in the morning, here comes Jesus. And he’s teaching and teaching and teaching the whole crowd. And we just sit there and listen. Take care of our nets. And then he tells us to put out of the water. Remember?”

Peter nodded. “Of course. We put out into the water. We threw the nets over... and the boat almost tipped! And that’s when I realized who Jesus was. That he was ... too much for me.”

John gets a little smirk.

James answers, though. “I remember! You begged him to leave! You were so scared of the teacher!”

“Yeah! Yeah! And you weren’t, just last week when he appeared in the room?”

“We all were, Peter. We all were.”

And they fall into silence again.

All night.

Without Jesus, this is all they know how to do. All they knew how to do was how to fish...and follow the Master.

The sky started turning that deep blue-gray right before dawn. And across the water, they can hear someone walking on the rocky shore. And a voice calls out, echoing over the waves, “Friends! Don’t you have any fish?”

Seven glum men look at each other. “No.”

“Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

They roll their eyes. Who does this schmuck think he is? But with a sigh – why not? – they throw the net over.

And the net jerked. It pulled against their grips. They strained to keep a hold of it! And the water burst into a white froth. And there -- glittering silver scales – so many fish! So many!

The boat lurched! They pulled up - -they couldn’t get the net in! And over the sounds of the sputtering water and the splashing of scales – John gasps, “It is the Lord!”

Peter's eyes rise, snap from the net, from the fish, to see the shadowed figure on the shore. And he needs no more encouragement. He grabs his cloak, yanks it up, wraps it around his waist, and throws himself into the water. He flails, lunges to get to Jesus!

The other men, of course, stay in the boat. They try as best they can to drag the net toward shore. It's not far – only about a hundred yards off.

Peter's such a bad swimmer, they get to shore at about the same time! And as they come – Peter soaked from the water, the rest soaked from sweat – they see that Jesus has started a charcoal fire. And there among the coals are little bits of fish – just little bites to pop in the mouth. And the scent of that fish, and fresh-baked bread, and the charcoals – you have never smelled anything as inviting as that.

Jesus gestures to the boat. “Bring some of the fish you've just caught!”

And Peter, still dripping, rushes over the rocks to grab the net and haul it to shore. 153 tilapia fish! Big fish! A fisherman's dream! And the net isn't torn anywhere!

And then Jesus says, “Come. Come, and have breakfast!”

And together they eat with their Lord.

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Brothers and sisters,

It's easy to forget that Jesus takes care of our bodies. We focus – and rightly so – on how he took care of our souls. But see here? He cared for the disciples so much that he provided them breakfast!

This is your risen Lord: who cares for you, body and soul.

And this story is true.

John 21:1-14

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