

He Threw Himself into the Sea

The Resurrection of Christ and a Dream Come True



Sermon Text

John 21:1-8



Big Idea

The great longing within the heart of every human being is to be both fully known and deeply loved. To be deeply loved but not fully known is superficial and unsatisfying. And to be fully known but not deeply loved is our worst nightmare. But to be both fully known and deeply loved would be a dream come true. That would be good news. That would be gospel. This is the offering of Easter. This is what Christ rose from the dead to deliver. This is what He's holding out to you this morning, if you would have it.

Peter, we recall, is the very one who, just days before this scene in our text, vehemently, embarrassingly, denied that he ever knew Jesus, to save his own skin. Now, I'm thinking, if that Jesus, who I just threw under the bus to save myself, shows up again, I'm not jumping off the boat and swimming towards Him. I may still jump off the boat, but I'm swimming in the opposite direction. The guilt, the shame would be heavy. But that's not what Peter does! When He hears that the man on the shore is Jesus, he puts on his outer garment and throws himself into the sea so that he can be the first to get to Him! Now I'm going to argue that's the kind of response you have when you're known to the full—all your junk, all your sin—and yet still you are forgiven, accepted, delighted in . . . loved.

(1) The Denial

Jesus walked with Peter, talked with him, ate with him, ministered to him, entrusted Himself to him, would give His very life for him . . . and yet, Peter, in spite of all of this, when his own life is on the line, he denies ever even knowing Him!

(2) The Pursuit

It's important that we remember again that Peter's denials here, while surely they broke the heart of our Lord, they did not come as a surprise to Him. He knew. He called it before it ever happened. And He was committed to pursuing and loving Peter through it (cf. Luke 22:31-34).

But there's even more to this pursuit I want to bring out at this point. Jesus doesn't just pursue Peter in love before the denials. He pursues him after the denials as well. I wonder if you've ever noticed how the Scriptures go out of their way to highlight how Jesus appears to Peter in particular after His resurrection (cf. Mark 16:6-7; Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5).

(3) The Response

When you get that Jesus sees it all, but He's not turned off by it, He's moving towards you in it—doesn't Peter's response here make a lot sense?! Don't you get why he "threw himself into the sea" not to get away from Jesus but to get near Him?!

Reflection Questions



- Have you ever been loved without being fully known? How does this sort of relationship make you feel? Why are you afraid at times to let people know who you truly are?
- Have you ever been known but rejected? If you're able, describe what happened, how you responded, and any lasting effects these experiences have caused in your relationships with God and others.
- How does Jesus' full knowledge of you and deep love for you set you free? How is it a dream come true? Do you still struggle with wanting to run away and hide? Why do you think? What texts in Scripture help you trust His love for you? Why is Easter morning so critical for our assurance?