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casting a net in Matthew 4:18. The word often is used to throw or to cast. This net was several hundred feet long -- the upper edge was boomed up and the lower edge was weighted. It is let down from a boat in a line parallel to the shore. And in this way they pulled in by ropes attached to each end. The use of the casting net requires more skill. It forms a circle of 10-20 Ft. in diameter. And it goes to some distance and at the same time, spreads out into a wide circle.

Fishermen are often referred to and mentioned as a distinct class. They are noted for their strenuous work and this rules out weaker workmen. For the fishermen were exposed to all kinds of weather and this he had to be hearty and have a lot of patience for many trying circumstances. They often toiled for hours without success and yet were always ready to try once more.

Fish of course, in that day, were largely used for food. Habakkuk 1:16. Special garments were worn by these fishermen as they described in John 21:7. As a coat of a garment. We have fish hooks mentioned in Job 41:1 and Amos 4:2.

The ancient noblemen in Egypt used to amuse themselves by fishing from their private fish pool with hooks and lines. We read that in the Egyptians monuments there have been carved hooks or pictures of fish, and the hook was still in use, in Bible lands and also is the net.

1  
"THE SIGNIFICANT CHARGE"

JOHN 21

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most interesting characters in the Scripture is (Simon Peter). Peter had a strange mixture of weaknesses as well as great strength. And Peter became a great power for good. And in this closing chapter of John we find the admonition -- the (charge) being given to him. Christ comes with (a mandate) it seems from Heaven, to this man. I have divided this up into four different divisions.

- I. The Charge Concerning Daily Tasks, Verse 6.- 14.
- II. The Charge Concerning Devotion, Verse 15-17.
- III. The Charge Concerning Death, Verse 18-19.
- IV. The Charge Concerning Duty, Verse 20-25.

I. The Charge Concerning Daily Tasks, Verse 6-14.

V.1 Verse 1, we have here the account of (Jesus appearance) to his disciples at Tiberias. When we first consider the appearance of Jesus that went before, we think of Him meeting them in a (solemn assembly) upon the Lord's Day when they were to gather and perhaps they were not expecting His appearance. But here we come on a week day when they were fishing. And

2 they had little thought of His appearance. This leads us to point out the truth that Jesus is found in the common ordinary business of life. For example, whether the shepherds were tending their flocks or whether there is someone in a busy shop working. It seems that he had an appointment to meet them in the mountains of Galilee and he would appear unto them that they were to wait for him with expectation of his coming meeting. Now the 40 days of appearances, many things took place. It seems that John alone recorded the beginning of the miracles in Cana at the wedding, and then at the close of his gospel, he records once again a closing miracle of Jesus.

The Sea of Galilee was usually referred to by the others but by John as the Sea of Tiberias as in Acts 6:1. This was the capitol city of Galilee. It was near the coast. And had been built by Herod.

2/ In Verse 2 he tells us who assembled. Who was with them. And not all of the twelve but seven of them were present. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be much together. Not only in solemn religious assemblies, but it seems in common every day business. Christians testify and increase their affection one from another by example and by conversation.

Christ chose to manifest himself to them when they were together. Not only to continue this joint witness but here were seven together working and we observe this is a good

3 witness for a testimony. (Thomas) was listed in this list. You may be sure that he would stay close with the group now. The son from Zebedee was named. Their names were James, John, and Peter was also in this group, two other disciples - possibly Andrew and Philip.

3/ In Verse 3, "I go a fishing". Now we know that these seven disciples were together and it seems to be the natural expression or outcome of their being together. And we know that in some cases, Peter acted a little quickly and in others, John was a little late. We remember that Peter used his sword before the Lord was dead -- there he was too quick. And we know after the resurrection John got to the tomb first but Peter was the first one to go inside. And now with these men standing around, he said, I am going fishing. We have a living and it looks like a preacher's occupation is gone, and we were professing Christians and going back to our old business.

This leads me to say that a back sliding preacher makes a mighty poor farmer or anything else. If he is successful in secular business, it is pretty good proof that God never called him. And if he does not succeed, then it certainly seems that he is out of place. Now the fishing industry was great in Galilee. And we read in the New Testament. For example Matthew 13:47. They had a drag net and were

away enriched. In order that Christ gave them the promise, was followed up.

Even following in obedience, they did not know that it was Jesus yet. However, no doubt they were willing to follow the advice. Many times it is a very humbling experience but we must accept the advice of others. And especially of Jesus. We should see that there is nothing lost by following the orders of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And there a great miracle was performed. We see here, his judgment in the abundant supply of the necessities of life. We see here a great mystery very significant of that work which Christ had called them to do. Here is a symbol, the prophets had been fishing for souls and caught nothing, or very little. And now the disciples let down their nets, and how wonderful was the success. We can just see them tugging at the nets, turning failure into success. They obeyed by this sign and it all happened through the power of Christ.

We see that even the religious problems of our day, things that confront us -- the sadness, the misery, the battle, that Jesus has the power to tell us, to charge us in our daily task, that we might be successful.

8/ In Verse 8, the little boat and a large boat came closer to the shore. They got nearer the beach and here was the stranger.

Some fishing is done with polls, fishing from a boat, or from a shoreline, with an instrument perhaps like a barbed sphere. Fishing with nets is the most familiar Bible story and today most fishing is done the same way. These nets were home-made and families took part in mending and repairing the old nets during the stormy days. There were some fishermen who had long seine 100-200 yards, and leaded on one end. It is played out from the boat in such a way as to surround a school of fish. Long ropes are fashioned to the two ends and carried ashore. Many yards apart and from five to ten men on each rope, gradually draw in the net.

Of course when we think about fish, we think about the great book of Jonah in which the old prophets spent three days down in the deep. But the fish was used for food as Nehemiah 13:16, there was even a gate known as the fish gate on the wall of Jerusalem, mentioned in Nehemiah. And of course we know about the wonderful miracle performed by five loaves and two fishes which fed multitudes in that day. Now it seems that Peter was happy about his old past time. Just to throw himself into this with excitement and relax, and naturally he suggested, I am going fishing.

Well, sometimes today we have a little time on our hands but fishing is a great relaxing sport. And he had missed his boat. He had missed his nets. And he had left all to follow

Jesus. And their disappointment in their fishing that night when they had toiled and caught nothing. Well, it might have been that they had forgotten where the fish were. I remember this amusing story told of two Irishmen who went fishing and they happened to hit a real spot. They hauled in a bunch of whoppers. And one of the men was called Jim and one was called Jake. Jim said we better mark this hole and come back tomorrow. So Jake pulled the anchor and as they neared the shore, Jim said, Jake, did you mark the place. You bet, he said, I put a cross mark on that side of the boat. And Jim snorted, you have a loose screw. How do you know we will get the same boat, tomorrow!

Well, these seven men were working together and they were out on the sea and then things went wrong while they were waiting and it was a frightening situation because they fished around all night. And of course, fishing had not solved their problems and neither had they caught anything.

4 They had toiled all night. They felt that they would get some fish to eat. And in Verse 4, we see the (awn) was breaking and we discover that Jesus showed himself. And they had labored all through the night with failure and now that it was breaking day.

5 Verse 5, he asked them, Children have you anything to eat. Well, if we would have used the expression that Jesus might have

7 used today, he would have said, boys have you caught anything. In other words, is there any relish now to go along with the bread. Is there any meat, that we might eat. It might have been a traveler who was passing by on the shore, and they might have thought that he wanted to buy some fish, if they had caught some, to go with his bread. But have you any meat the question was. And they acknowledged that they had taken nothing. And so they made no attempt to make it look like they had caught something. Which reminds me of a lot of fish stories we hear today, when people come back and exaggerate the situation as to how the big one always escapes, and gets away.

6- In Verse 6, here is a testing of their faith. And here is the charge to daily tasks. For he said, cast the net on the right side of the ship. They had toiled all night with no purpose and now the day was breaking, they had given up hope. And Jesus knew where the fish were.

I wonder if they were slow to take the man's advice. Because they were experienced fishermen, they knew how to fish. They knew if there were any fish there, they could catch them. They had a kind of instinct - they knew all about the habits of fish. And he ordered them to cast on the contrary side of the ship which they had been fishing from. And he assured them that they would not go away empty handed but they would go

John, and your friends, more than the boats and nets, and the pleasure of fishing.

Now this question would be pretty hard for some people I know, because there are some people who love to work in community affairs but they never do anything for the church. There are lots of people who will be tied up in social, secular, organizations and they say, I just don't have time for church work. There are other people who would spend all their time on the Lord's Day in the kitchen, and never attend worship. There are others who always must go and go. There are some who say I have to work so hard 5 1/2 days a week, that I just have to stay home on Sunday. Now people come to you and they say well now, I don't want you to think that I am trying to get out of something because I love the church and all the time they are telling something that is not so. Now Simon said, Lord I love you dearly.

For you see, this challenge was whether or not he loved the highest devotion of love from the soul. Agapai This was love that denotes high moral regard and Peter answered Phileo -- that his personal affection that they loved him as a friend. And how tragic it is that we have Christians today who are spasmodic, they come when they feel like it, and that's not too often. Some who are periodic, come at Easter and Christmas. Others are occasional, such as weddings or funerals.

9 Verse 9, all their needs were provided. Here was the Lord. We remember that Philippians 4:19 says my God shall supply all your needs. We think that here were these fishermen come ashore. There was a fire, there were the fish, and there was the bread, and Jesus was taking part and he had met their needs. Where did the fire come from. Where did the fish come from. Where did the bread come from. Well, I don't think we need to question this, because we could go to Elijah and asked him where his food came from -- if he would tell us that the ravens brought it to him. We could go to the mountain side and ask the multitudes where did all the loaves and the fishes come from.

10 In Verse 10, Jesus invites them to bring the fish that they had caught. To make use of the fruit of their labor, take care to secure the results. And at his direction, they brought these fish.

11 In Verse 11, they found it difficult to bring these fish in. This was hard work landing this net. John says he remembers that they counted them. There were 153. He also states they were of great size. When they had been counted and taken from the net, they were probably added to those on the fire and were broiled, and were ready to eat. John recalls this very vividly.

12 In Verse 12, they were invited to dine. There was a

delightful breakfast in the presence of the Risen Saviour as they listened to the good tidings and had fellowship one with another and they recognized Jesus.

14 In Verse 14 he tells us that this was the third time he had appeared to this group. You remember he appeared to Mary, to the two on the road, to two Sunday Evenings, and this miracle here was certainly proof that Jesus had really risen from the dead. And they needed to learn that he would charge concerning their daily task. It proved it in a striking way. And this miracle proves that he will come back time and time again and identify himself with us if we are faithful unto him. It is a symbol of their future work. That he will multiply their usefulness, and give them assurance.

There is no need for us to try to fish without Jesus. These seven fishermen were equipped in their own way. They had spent the proper time, all night, and they had cast over the side of the ship. But when Jesus charged them in this daily task, why the net was filled. The same thing will be in the kingdom of God. There will be real success.

Now their failure opened them to better things. It is because they had failed that they discovered through their failure their wants were filled. And sometimes I think our poverty, our lack of things, leads us to discover some of the

best blessings which our Lord is able to give. And this was a picture here, something of the final feast which will take place in Heaven. There was everything ready and prepared. And there was great joy that morning. Why the nets were just about full. The rope could not hardly bear up any longer. The quality of the fish, they were wonderful. And they cast on the right side of the ship.

### I. I. The Charge Concerning Devotion. Verse 15-17.

Quite often questions stir up thought. They call for an answer. Jesus used them often. And when we think of this charge concerning the devotion of Peter, the occasion in verse 15, they had fished all night. You remember this took place after the resurrection of Jesus, it was after breakfast, and there were several disciples standing around.

There were three personal questions.

Verse 15, he calls Peter by name. He does not speak as though he is concerned about anyone else except Simon Peter.

"Loveth thou me more than these." Now there are two parts to this question. Loveth thou me, now this is a supreme question. Not do you fear me, not do you honor me, but do you love me.

The second part is, "more than these." I think Jesus went a little deeper, more than these disciples, more than James,

16 man, it must naturally be understood as reaching out the hand either for support or for guidance. Now this is in evidence in something that we can understand. So we can see in this the former liberties which Peter had understood -- his days had passed by him.

My dear friend, this faces every individual in this world. And will possibly take place in your life. You see the reverse of all of this in I Samuel 2:5.

What a change in Peter's life. He must leave all and follow Jesus. He no longer girds himself and goes in his own direction. What a change this will certainly bring in his life as well as in the life of this man as he grows older, and his mind and his body slips away. I think this is a clear illustration even as we look at Sampson after his hair had been cut, he could shake himself, as at other times but he had no power to move as he had in days before.

19 In Verse 19, he signifies what death Peter was to die. He spoke of his death as glorifying God. We will come back to think of this a little later. But here is a prediction, that when Peter finished his course, he would do so to the glory of God. And it is appointed to man once to die and it is appointed to each one that he should die whether natural, violent, sudden or painful.

It ought to be a great concern of every man whatever death

And thank the Lord for those who are loyal, who come without excuse. They are always to be depended upon. Now Jesus said to him, feed as a herdsman. Feed those that are weak. Feeding rather than controlling is here expressed.

16 Verse 16, it calls him by name. Loveth thou me. He challenges Peter's statement, concerning his love.

He comes back and he says, shepherd my lamb. Now he gives him a little more authority here.

17 In Verse 17, he calls him by name and this time Jesus uses the same verb as used by Peter. Peter had answered him, I love you as a friend. Now Jesus challenges that. This warm, personal affection. And I just wonder how many people tonight love Jesus. Here is a charge concerning devotion of Peter and I think Jesus would have a charge concerning your devotion to him. Do you love him enough to be concerned about sin.

Do you love Jesus enough to be concerned about honesty.)

Do you love Jesus enough to be concerned about watching your language.) Do you love Jesus enough to be concerned about back sliding.) If you love Jesus enough, you'll consecrate your life to him. Are you willing to make sacrifices to carry on His work.) and to be His. Do you love Jesus enough to let people know about it.) I think this certainly was something of what was involved in what Jesus was asking Peter.

17/ Peter was grieved. Why if Christ ask you three times, Verse 17, I wonder how you would feel. It reminded Peter of John 13:37. And it reminded him that he had denied the Lord three times. That he had been asked now three times about this sin. I wonder tonight if there is some sin that grieves you. Is there something that you have done, some evil or something that you have failed to do that grieves your heart. This was the case of Peter. When Jesus asked him and finally Jesus said, feed my sheep. Feed the weak, the immature Christians, also the advanced Christians.

18/ The answer was Lord, you know all about me, you know if I am truthful. You know whether or not I love you in Verse 18. Now God knows all about you. And God knows whether or not you love him. And whether or not you follow him and his guidance. Christians are sometimes the most ungrateful people on this earth. And perhaps it is a neighbor, who had helped you out or somebody who has done you a favor. But you have never had time to thank them. And I tell you this is just what Jesus was trying to find out about Peter, at this time. And he had a charge concerning his devotion.

III. A Charge Concerning Death. Verse 18-19.

And now this passage of scripture deals with the closing part of the book of John, as well as the closing part of the

incident on the shore. Jesus had arrived on the scene and he had given Peter a charge concerning his daily task, concerning the fish and the 153 he caught.

And then he had given him a charge concerning his devotion, concerning his love.

And now he is going to give him a charge concerning death. That of his dependence, of his religion, that must be personal of how he ought to glorify Christ in his death.

18/ In Verse 18, he gives us the contrast of youth and old age. It had been Peter's custom to be able to put on his own belt and walk where he would but now when he was growing old and the New Testament says, that things will change. Hebrews 8:13.

Having committed anew to Peter his last works, it would lead him in a path not chosen by himself. In earlier days, Peter was self-reliant, he was self-willed, and he was rather than being led about -- he went his own way. But the future would be unlike the past. The time will come when you feel that you need help and direction,

You might contrast this with a young baby, a young child as he grows up to youth. He is able to move around under his own power. But when he has reached old age, when it is necessary for someone else to lead him around by his hand or to rest his weight on a cane when this is supplied to an old

20, 21, and 22. Your concern ought to be yourself. We read the gospel about individuals who looked at moat in the eyes of his brother when there was a beam in his own eye. And it is so easy for us to think about the other fellow's religion and forget our own spiritual need. It is an individual matter - now, I might look off yonder and judge this man or that man, or that woman, but that is not God's judgement. And my life is a personal thing and it is up to me. And that was the prophet's question when he came to that family, he said, is it well with thee. It well with thy son. It is a personal question. And we might ask tonight is it well with thee.

The other fellow will not do your work. Peter needed this rebuke and so do many of us. One of the most important lessons which you and I have to learn is to get our eyes off of other people. We need to tend to our own knitting, doing and being what God meant for us to be and to do. Our tendency so many times is to watch the other fellow and sit in condemnation upon him. It is a great day in a person's life when he makes up his mind that he is going to do for God what he can instead of worrying about what the other man does not do. God has a work for Peter to do, a work for John to do. And Peter could best serve God by simply being Peter and doing his work.

You have individual gifts. I Corinthians 12:4-6. Also Ephesians reminds us that we have various gifts. Some teachers

he dies to glorify God in it. For this is the chief end to man. It seems that we would manifest Christ in life as well as in dying. Philipians 1:20.

Now this was the prediction of Peter's death. And God is the giver of life and in life God is glorified. There are many illustrations that we might use as to how this truly glorified God. I remember of reading of J. Wilbur Chapman who used to tell the story of a man in New York, who came forward and told him a story. He said one day I was literally lying in a gutter intoxicated when a gentleman came along and said, if you want to see your boy alive hurry. He said I hastened to the hospital, a great wagon had gone over my boy, and he was dying. I came into the room, and he caught me by my hand, and his fingers were only long enough to go around three of my fingers. He pulled me down upon my knees and holding on to me with his fingers -- they were nearly stiff in death. He said, father, I will never let go of you, I will never let go of you. You must meet me in Heaven. And he said, do you know sir, he died with his fingers around mine. The doctor came, bent them back, and released my hand. It was that hand and holding it up above his head, he said, it kept pulling and pulling until at last I became a Christian. You know who is in the sky, you know who is holding you today. That little boy had died

glorifying Christ and in so doing had been the instrument of bringing his father to salvation.

IV. The Charge Concerning Duty. Verse 20-25.

Here is a question as Peter looks toward John and describes him as a disciple whom Jesus loved.

21 In Verse 21, what shall this man do? Peter knew that Jesus had told him what his job was, in the former verses. But he was to take care of the weak, take care of those that needed growth. And here we might insert how easy it is for us as Christians to judge others. We are so quick sighted and certainly we are very dim when we look at our own hearts and our own lives.

Now Jesus gives him an answer when he says to him, you are your problems, follow thou me and mind your own business. Your own duty. Here is the charge for you. You present duty is to follow me. Christ's purpose concerning John was up to John. John was the only one that could fulfill that place and John was the only disciple, by the way, who did not actually die as a martyr. They tell us that he died in old age. Now Jesus said I have told you what your job is, now it is up to you.

Now there are often many who would try to see about other people, other people's character and line them up, judge them.

And see about other people's affairs, minding other people's business. It is a common thing for people to talk about such and such about an individual. They may seem to be nice but many times they are kinda curious to me. Jesus rebuked Peter for this curiosity and Jesus tells him, you keep on following me. And that lesson Peter needed to learn and that is a lesson for all of us. We need to know our duty, not somebody else's. We need to bear our own burden, for we know a good man's step is ordered by the Lord.

24 We know that John, Verse 24, was not ashamed to claim the authorship of this book. That he wrote these things down about Jesus, and he testified of these writings in this

25 book and they were passed around. Verse 25, we discover that there was much unwritten, the record of Jesus would take all the libraries in the world to hold them, they never exhaust the things that Jesus was able to do. Perhaps John thought that enough had been written because he had said what was needful. That is implied here, that many other things could have been written, that were not written, and yet it was not possible to write them all. This is a wonderful picture of how small a collection and how wonderful were the things concerning Jesus. Religion must be personal. If there is one single truth running throughout the Bible, every individual man is accountable to God. We discover this in these verses

some prophets, some preachers. AND God knows what he is doing when he hands to each of us this ability. We should thank God for this charge which he has given us. That he can one know how much is wasted in this day in which we live. I know how it is. We often work hard in the church and we see others who are not doing their share and this disturbs us. They seem to be worldly, indifferent, and free. And we think a lot about the things that we have and we grow tired of the responsibility. Why should I be asked to do all of this and the other fellow do nothing. Now we are too busy wanting the other fellow to follow Christ. And therefore we are not as faithful as we ought to be. Quite often we see the other fellow's weaknesses and failures. And many want a cheap Christ, but Christ will not come down. If you cannot say I am crucified with Christ, you cannot say Jesus is mine. And no excuse will release you of this responsibility. Peter will have no excuse because of John.

Your contention to bear hypocrites in the church does not release you. You will see a lot of professing Christians whose lives are imperfect. You do not follow Christ because someone who professes religion has let you down. Jesus would say to you, what is that to thee, follow me. Now some people never tire of talking about the hypocrites in the church. Why you mention religion and the church to some of them and

*[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. Some words like "charge" and "responsibility" are visible.]*

*[Handwritten notes in cursive script, mostly illegible.]*

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they like to drag out every skeleton out of the closet and talk about all the bad deacons they've ever known and all the bad preachers. And now the people who attend church are confessing that they do need what Christ has to offer. Now the church is not a display room for model Christians. But it is sort of a spiritual hospital, to help those who need hope and health.

I do not preach because I think I am better or smarter than anybody else. I do not stand here because I think I have arrived spiritually. But because I think God wants me too. And because I think he has given me the good news. Peter must answer for himself. And you dear friend, must give your own answer. If you are outside of the church tonight, you will not get into Heaven because of some political achievement, or because of some star or medal that you've won, because of some diploma you have received, or because of some paper you may hold, or because of some indifferent hypocrites that you may criticize. If you get in at all, it will not be because of that. But it will be because your life has been merged with Jesus Christ.

A young doctor heard his pastor speak on the 1st Sunday of the New Year on putting Christ on your calendar. He afterwards told the pastor that the sermon had revealed to him why he had not won anybody to Christ. Though he had made a

resolution each year that he would do his best. He realized that he had not set aside definite time on his calendar for it. He set up Thursday night as his time for personal visitation. He asked the pastor to help him in the matter of getting some scriptures he might use and other things to say when he called upon men. At the end of the year, he had won 30 men to Christ. And all had been baptized into the membership of the church. Now that church has 60 deacons and nearly 300 Sunday School Teachers. What if each of these leaders in the church had done as well.

This thing can be done. God has arranged things, so that a plain man with his feet on the ground, his eyes upon the Lord, he can go and do the work of the Lord.

Here is a charge concerning duty. Here is a mandate from Heaven. Here is your advice, here is your instruction. You get a charge concerning your daily task, a charge concerning your devotion, a charge concerning death, and a charge concerning your duty.

*Today is the Day for You!  
 Do it Now -  
 Some say tomorrow - I will put my faith  
 in Christ - Let the world know of my  
 acceptance.  
 Today is the Tomorrow you talked about yesterday*