

In the 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire*, the main character Jamal wins an Indian equivalent of the trivia gameshow *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. When accused of cheating, Jamal recounts his life and how the various events in his life trained him to know the answers to the trivia questions he was asked. The movie itself is a series of flashbacks upon Jamal's life as he reflects on his difficult upbringing in the Mumbai slums.

As we look at the last chapter of John's Gospel, there are a lot of familiar things. Things that happened elsewhere in the Gospels. Many critics who doubt the Bible have tried to argue that this chapter was added later by someone else. Nonetheless, every ancient manuscript that contains John 20 also contains John 21. Clearly, the Holy Spirit was intentional as He inspired these words. Perhaps Jesus was using these similarities to jog the memories of His disciples. Today we learn: **JESUS USES FAMILIAR THINGS TO CALL, FEED, AND SEND US.**

First, I. Jesus uses water to call us and clothe us. **“Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.”** Nonetheless, Jesus calls out to them, and has them lower their nets, and they catch 153 fish. Peter puts on his cloak and swims to shore.

This account reminds us of the time Jesus met Peter and Andrew, and James and John who were called the sons of Zebedee. The men had caught no fish the night before, but then upon Jesus' command, they let down their nets and their nets were filled to breaking. Peter confesses to Jesus that he is a sinful man and asks Him to leave, but Jesus called them to follow Him, and they left everything they had to follow Him.

About three years later we have this scene in today's Gospel lesson. They had followed Jesus, learned from him, and scattered

when He was crucified. They saw Him after He rose again and saw His nail pierced hands and his spear pierced side.

This encounter helped refocus them, to remind them that they are indeed fishers of men, not simply of fish, and that their greatest journey was about to begin. The Holy Spirit would send those disciples to the ends of the earth, over the high seas and over land, to make more disciples.

When Peter jumped into the water, he put on his cloak first. The Bible teaches us, “**For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.**” Jesus has not called us at the side of the sea asking us to drop down our nets, but He uses water nonetheless to call and clothe His disciples.

Baptism is a central part of a Christian’s identity, as the Lord claims us through water and the **words**, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus came to the disciples after a night of them catching nothing, so too, Jesus uses our baptism to clothe and clothe us again.

Our church has the baptismal font in a prominent place, right in the front of the church. Every time you come to worship; you see it right up front. We keep coming back to these promises that God gives us through water and the word. Even when we die, our casket is brought to the center of the church, right next to the baptismal font, representing the fact that the work the Lord has started in that person, He has finished through her death as she awaits the resurrection. Jesus uses the baptismal waters to call us and clothe us.

Second, II. Jesus uses a meal to feed and nourish us. After the disciples recognized it was the Lord, Jesus was preparing a breakfast of fish and loaves over a charcoal fire. Does that sound familiar?

Having followed Jesus around for about three years, the disciples had to have had many meals with Jesus. But two special meals stick out in my mind. One special meal was the feeding of the five thousand wherein Jesus miraculously multiplied a couple fish and a handful of loaves of bread to feed a small town. The fish and

loaves at this breakfast had to bring flashbacks to the disciples of that special meal out in the wilderness where there was no other food to eat.

Our text reads: **“Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.”** In their eating with the Lord, they recognize him in the breaking of the bread.

The second special meal is the meal that the Lord Jesus gave them the night before He was betrayed. He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, and He started something new as He took the bread and declared that it is His body, and took the cup of wine and declared that it is His blood. In that meal, He sought to connect His disciples to His death and resurrection.

Both these meals had to be on the minds of the disciples as they joined Him for that breakfast on the shore. Jesus was still there to feed and nourish them both physically and spiritually.

A lady told her personal trainer that after her workout she was going to Bible study. The trainer asked her, “You go there every week, don’t you have the Bible down pat by now?”

We, like the disciples, need to be fed and nourished again and again. We can’t know the Bible well enough! We need God’s Words fresh on our minds to help us live the way the Holy Spirit wants us to live. The Lord provides us His Word to feed and nourish us, and to guide us on our way.

In addition, the same meal that Jesus offered His disciples at Passover is what we are encouraged to partake of again and again. This meal feeds and nourishes our souls.

Finally, III. Jesus uses repetition to forgive and send us. If you’re the Apostle Peter, the smell of charcoal might make you nervous. Back when Jesus was arrested, the disciples scattered. Peter stayed in the vicinity of Jesus to watch the proceedings from afar, but he toppled like a house of cards when pressed. He denied

Jesus three times. The charcoal fire on the beach must have reminded Peter of the charcoal fire that he warmed his hands on as he denied knowing Jesus three times.

After breakfast, Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him three times. The third time Jesus asked him, “... **Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”** Despite Peter being grieved by Jesus’ repetition, the three times Jesus forgave Peter mirrors the three times Peter denied Jesus. Jesus gives a threefold forgiveness for Peter’s threefold sin. Jesus then sends Peter to serve His sheep, and to continue on Peter’s work as Jesus’ follower.

There’s a lot of repetition in Christianity. In fact, in many of our churches we come back week after week to sing many of the same songs, pray many of the same prayers, and repeat many of the same words. However, just as John 21 isn’t redundant or useless, so too, this repetition in church isn’t either.

Many times a month, we come back to worship to repeat the same words, “Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought word and deed by what we have done and by what we have left undone...” And we hear the words of forgiveness from the Pastor. Even though we say these words and others like it often, they aren’t meaningless or trite, but they form us and help us remember what Christ has done for us.

These words become part of us, and we have flashbacks to all the times the Lord has been merciful to us which are many and plentiful. We know that the Lord forgives us, loves us, and died for us, and we are empowered to share that good news with others.

As we keep on this repetition, the Lord is preparing us to minister to others in the various places He brings us, so keep coming back to be filled with these familiar things, so that we can have something good to share with anyone in need.