

Living in a post-resurrection world: John 21

By Bob Young

Have you ever considered that the world after the resurrection of Jesus is significantly different than the world that existed before? Have you considered what Jesus' resurrection makes possible? Have you thought about what can be known after the resurrection that could not be known with certainty prior to the resurrection?

While John 21 may seem to stand as a complete unit—an epilogue which is disconnected from what precedes it, it can also be observed that the final chapter is introduced by the well known text of 20:30-31.

John 21 provides an overview or summary of the Gospel of John. Consider these truths.

Jesus meets our needs; he is interested in our needs. If John presents Jesus as the “Cosmic Christ” who transcends this world, he also declares the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, experiencing our life with its hurts and sorrows. Jesus is interested in the success of his disciples as they returned to fishing. He cooks them breakfast. He interacts with them in the present moment of their lives. Jesus does the same for us. He is not only interested in our spiritual life as we anticipate the future world; he is interested in our life in this world. Our response must be gratitude for his provision and presence.

Jesus reinstates us, forgives us, and blesses us with real forgiveness. The story of Peter's reinstatement is not for Peter only. It is our story. It is the reflection of our sometimes misdirected love, our twisted priorities, and our self-doubts. Our response is to accept his forgiveness and pardon.

Jesus walks beside us; he is present in our lives. The chapter concludes with the poignant invitation of Jesus repeated: Follow me. How sweet it is to know that Jesus still wants us as followers, even after our failures and frustrations. Jesus is willing to work in our lives to complete his purpose. Our response is to believe his promise.