MESSAGE NOTES
Soul Friends
Friends Bring Friends to Jesus

John 21:1–14 (NIV)

21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.
It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus),
Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other
disciples were together. 3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them,
and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat,
but that night they caught nothing.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not
realize that it was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered.

6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find
some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the
large number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon
as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment
around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other
disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not
far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire
of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." 11 So
Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was
full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus
said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask
him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the
bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now
the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the
dead.

Morning

V. 4 *Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.*

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. John 20:1

A New Beginning: The morning setting signals a reset. Just as the resurrection itself on Sunday morning inaugurated the "new creation," this early morning encounter at the Sea of Galilee provides a new day for the disciples.

Fishing

V. 6 *He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

Jesus' way is better.

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me, watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. Matthew 11:28–30

Campfire

V. 9 *When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

The word translated as "fire of burning coals" in verse 9 is *anthrakia*. This exact word appears only twice in the entire New Testament, both in the Gospel of John:

1. John 18:18 — The charcoal fire where Peter stood in the high priest's courtyard warming himself when he denied Jesus three times.
2. John 21:9 — The charcoal fire prepared by Jesus on the shore. The deliberate choice of this rare word acts as a sensory link, re-invoking the smell and sight of the night Peter denied Christ. Right beside this second charcoal fire, Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?", directly restoring him from his three denials. -Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary.* Vol. 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003, pp. 1228–1235.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

November 1, 2026
Soul Friends
Friends Bring Friends to Jesus
John 21:1–14

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message notes, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the passage this week, consider sharing how the week has been for each one of you.

CONNECT WITH GOD

Hints on How to Pray: "A Simple Regimen of Private Prayer" from George Buttrick. This week, we focus on the section called "Its Heart Entreaty." We continue in the practice of intercession but we prioritize praying for our enemies and we also name the broader needs and concerns of our country and the world. It takes courage to pray in this way.

"Whose name should come first? Perhaps the name of our enemies. The injunction of Jesus is plain: "Pray for them which despitefully use you." He told us that worship is vain if we are embittered; that we should be wise to leave our gift before the altar, go to make peace with our neighbor, and then worship.

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CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together:** Pray in expectation of the passage being read. Read John 21:1-14.
- **Alone:** Read the passage a second time, in the same version or a different one.
    - Reflect/journal on one of the following prompts:
        - Can you remember a time in your life where you "fished all night" and came up empty?
        - How have you experienced the deep mercy and grace of God at times when you were at your lowest?
- **Together:** in pairs or smaller groups: Share your reflections with one another.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage once more as a whole group. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the sermon notes.
- How do themes of friendship show up in this passage?
- What details or imagery do you notice? Why did those catch your attention?
- Where are the disciples emotionally at the start of this passage?
- Why do you think Peter and his friends go back out to fish?
- Read John 20:1 and 21:4. What do these two "early morning" scenes have in common? Why would John want us to connect them?
- What do you notice about when and how the disciples recognized Jesus?
- Why do you think it can be so hard to recognize Jesus when he shows up in our lives?
- How does the landscape and imagery of this early morning draw out themes of resurrection and new creation for you?
- Why do you think the net was not torn (v. 11)?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

This section is a launching point for deeper conversation, allowing for flexibility in conversation and diversity of perspective while exploring what it means to be faithful in our lives today. **Together:** Read the question and quote below.

"I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us. -- Anne Lamott

Which part of this quote is harder for you to believe: that God meets you as you are, or that God won't leave you there?

PRAYER

As you close your time in prayer, read aloud this prayer excerpt from the Upper Room (solanabeach.church/110126):

"God, inhabit our seeing.
Live in our looking.
Be our vision and our sight.
Illumine us, that we may perceive you,
know you, welcome you
in all the ways you go hiding
in this world."