

Hope for the hurting:disillusioned

discussion guide



Disillusioned?

based on **John 21:1-14** (Linked to sermon of 18/04/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

This was part of a series: Hope for the hurting

Intro: Have you ever felt disillusioned, either with a person or a situation? Most of us have and it's a horrible feeling isn't it? That sense of being let down, of wondering what all our effort was for. Is that how the disciples were feeling on this day? Uncertain of the way forward? Fed up that they had spent all night fishing with nothing to show for it? Jesus, however, meets them in their disillusionment and provides what they need, just as he promises to do for us.

How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (Go deeper with God):

Begin with a short time of worship. Read Psalm 105:1-6 together a few times. Spend a few moments meditating on the words and allow God's Spirit to remind you of "the wonderful works he has done". Now spend some time giving thanks to God in prayer.

Read through John 21:1-14 a few times together. Before looking at the text in more depth, discuss what first strikes about the passage. Perhaps write down one or two questions you have and save them for later. If you are a large group, it may help to split into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- 1. Where does this passage take place? (you might like to look on a map to locate it). N.B The sea of Tiberias is otherwise known as the sea of Galilee. Tiberias was a town on the shore.*
- 2. Where had the disciples been when Jesus first appeared to them? (Luke 24:33-36)*
- 3. Why do you think they are back in Galilee?*
- 4. Who is in the group gathered together? What do you think they were doing?*
- 5. Simon decides to go fishing in verse 3 and the others say they will join him. Do you think this was planned? Why do you think they decide to fish?*
- 6. How long do they spend fishing?*
- 7. Why do you think Jesus calls them children in verse 5?*
- 8. Jesus' question in verse 5 to them assumes they have caught no fish, "you have no fish, have you?" so why do you think he asks the question?*
- 9. What tone do you think the disciples use in their reply? (they don't realise it is Jesus yet!)*

10. *Jesus' instructions to them lead to a miraculous catch, which must surely have reminded the disciples of their first encounter with Jesus (Luke 5:1-11). How are the two accounts similar or different? Why do you think Jesus is reminding them of this?*
11. *What do you make of Peter's reaction in verse 7? When else had Peter leapt out of a boat to go to Jesus? (Matthew 14:22-33) What might Peter have learnt from that experience?*
12. *In verses 12-13 Jesus feeds his disciples. What do you think is significant about this? How does Jesus feed you?*

If you have split, come back together as a group and share your thoughts as well as any questions you jotted down at the beginning.

In (Grow closer to each other):

The theme of this passage is disillusionment: the disillusionment of not being able to catch any fish (something that they were trained to do and had done all their lives) but perhaps also a disillusionment with Jesus (they had assumed he would stay with them and help them in their new calling as "fishers of men").

Think about a time when you have been disillusioned (it could be recent or some time ago). How did it make you feel? Did it change the way you behave(d)/interact(ed) with others? Has it changed the way you view life? Has it changed your relationship with God?

You may find nothing comes to mind but I'd urge you to hold the questions prayerfully and allow God to show you things which may seem insignificant but may well have had more impact than you imagine. You may feel comfortable sharing these things or you may just like to write them down and bring them to God later.

Disillusionment can powerfully affect the way we interact with others and even our relationship with God. The psalms are full of disillusionment, mixed with hope. Look at Psalm 22:1-5. Jesus quoted this psalm as he hung on the cross. A powerful reminder that Jesus can identify with our feelings of abandonment and loss. However, verse 3 "yet." holds hope as the Psalmist reminds himself of God's historic salvation. How can we move on from disillusionment, do you think?

Out (Reach further with the good news):

While as Christians we have hope that Jesus meets us in our disillusionment and need, many of our friends, colleagues and neighbours do not have this assurance. Spend some time together lifting up people you know who are feeling disillusioned, asking God to bring light and hope in their situations.