

CELL NOTES
For Neil Edbrooke's talk on 23 September 2007

**Meeting Jesus when we least expect it
(and may not want it!)**

Reading: John 21:1 – 19

Psalm 30:5b Weeping may last for the night,
But a shout of joy comes in the morning.

Introduction

This is a well-known story that describes Jesus meeting with his disheartened disciples after the crucifixion. Having had their hopes of a glorious vindication with Jesus the Messiah dashed, feeling fearful for their own future, confused and let down, these disciples returned to the old and familiar paths – fishing. Jesus comes looking for them.

Discussion

Who do you identify with in this story? Jesus, the disciples – or both at the same time?

1 Are there people in your life who seem to have abandoned their faith journey or never started? Why do you think this is the case?

2 Do you have unfulfilled hopes and aspirations and does God seem far away at present? When feeling like this, what do you typically do?

Jesus' example includes the following:

- **He goes looking.** Is there anyone in your life who needs someone “looking for them?” Do you know anyone who needs hope, love, affirmation, company?
- **He called them friends.** He had good reason to call them traitors, but even though they had chosen to go back to old ways and give up on the new life, he identified with them – they were still his friends.
- **He offered to help.** Instead of telling them off for their cowardice, he offered the disciples a chance to do well in their fishing. He didn't tell them to stop fishing and get back on track with the Kingdom.
- **He served them breakfast.** Is there anything we can do for someone who has “gone fishing?”
- **He restored personal breakdown with Peter.** Sometimes we might be tempted to do everything except talk directly with someone. Jesus sets out to give Peter not only a sense of acceptance, but also a renewed purpose and calling. How do you think your gospel can be expressed to others?

The Disciples' example illustrates the following:

- **Poor recognition skills.** God is closer than we think. Is there any sign of Jesus on your "beach?" What makes it hard to know God is present, and what can really help?
- **They took Jesus' advice.** What is God saying to you to do today? (in this season of your life). Jesus was not telling them to stop fishing; he was asking them to renew trusting. Letting go and trusting God again requires perseverance, courage and faith. What do you need to let go? How can you express your trust?
- **Peter needed more than forgiveness; Jesus gave him purpose.** It is good to feel the past has been forgiven and our mistakes wiped away – it is even better, and probably far more therapeutic to find we can re-engage in our destiny and calling (probably with more humility, realism, and power).

How can we all put these things into practice in our life this autumn?

Are you on the beach or are you fishing?

What might it mean for you to have "breakfast with Jesus"?