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Empowered: Bringing My Routine to New Life

John 21:1-14

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Stop and think about what you're going to be doing tomorrow morning. Going to work? Getting the kids off to school? Sitting in math class? Cleaning the house? Weeding the garden? Going to the gym? Most of us have patterns in our lives, and we live by routines. Most of us will be doing on Monday morning what we do every Monday morning.

What about Tuesday morning? Wednesday morning? Thursday? Friday? Going to work? Getting the kids off to school? Sitting in math class? Cleaning the house? Weeding the garden? Going to the gym? Not everybody is, but most of us are creatures of habit. Most of us have responsibilities and obligations that are there before us day after day after day. And sometimes the routines of life get boring. Some people love their everyday routines; but lots of people feel stifled, worn down, even trapped by the routines of everyday life.

Today's Bible reading is a story about routines. In the story, though, Jesus Christ infiltrates the hum-drum. He invigorates the day-to-day. The resurrected Christ blows up the predictable routine of his disciples, and brings it to new life.

As we talk about this story, though, I also want to challenge you to consider how the living Christ can empower your day-to-day routine, whatever it may be.

Go back to the Bible story with me. It's a couple weeks after Easter. The crucified Jesus has risen from the dead. He has been killed, but now is alive again. He has appeared twice to

his closest disciples, and a couple of more times to some other followers. But the disciples are still trying to figure all this out. Is Jesus back for good? Is he going back to heaven? What are they supposed to do now?

Peter and six other of the disciples decide to leave Jerusalem, and go back home to Galilee. They had been fishermen before Jesus called them to follow him as disciples. So they decide to go back to being fishermen. They know the routines of the boats, the nets, the tides, the weather.

So they hop in their boat. They head out at night to their normal fishing spots. They lower the nets, and they do all the normal, routine things that they normally, routinely do. And, as sometimes happens for fishermen, the fish are hiding. That night, they don't catch any fish.

But then, just as the sun starts to rise, some guy shows up, standing on the shore. He calls out to them. He tells them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, and says they'll find the fish there. The fishermen no doubt roll their eyes at this suggestion. But when they give it a try, they immediately catch a huge pile of fish, too many for the nets to hold. It's a miracle! Their fishing routine has been blown up by something that only God could do.

And, suddenly, they realize that the guy standing on the shore is Jesus. So they head into shore. They have breakfast with Jesus. They drop their routine, and and they spend every precious second they can with Jesus, their resurrected Savior.

I asked you before to think about your routine. What are you going to be doing Monday morning, and Tuesday, and Wednesday?

What if Monday morning Jesus stands on the shore of your life, and calls out to you to cast your nets on the other side of your boat? If Jesus does some miracle, and shakes up your routine, that would be pretty cool, wouldn't it? If Jesus takes over your math class ... if Jesus replaces your boss Monday morning ... if Jesus does the grocery shopping for you Monday afternoon, or cooks dinner Monday night ... that would be awesome, wouldn't it?

Well, here's the thing. We Christians say we believe in the resurrection of Christ, right? We say, "The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed." That means that Jesus is alive! He is living! He is with us! He is present! And he's not some wimpy, pathetic religious figurehead that we all just need to think about and reflect upon once a week. Jesus is the all-powerful Son of God. He has the capability and the authority to blow up your routine, and to change your life, in all sorts of ways.

And I believe, friends, with all my heart, that that is exactly what Jesus wants to do for you. I'm not suggesting that Jesus is going to come into your life and do miracles on Monday morning. I'm not proposing that Jesus is going to give you a new job, and provide some much-needed entertainment or diversions in your routine.

But Jesus can infiltrate your routine, and make it more meaningful. Jesus can invigorate your routine, and breathe new life into it.

Here's how it works. Three steps. First, notice that Jesus is there. The disciples saw some guy standing on the beach, but they didn't realize who it was. Do you know that Christ is alive today, and that he's going to be right there with you tomorrow morning? He's coming to work with you. He'll be there at school with you. He'll be right by your side, at the senior center, at the doctor's office, wherever you'll be. The

risen Christ is with you in your routine. Step one – notice that he’s there with you.

Second step – listen to what he tells you to do. The disciples were told to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. What is Jesus telling you to do? Maybe it’s that Golden Rule thing. “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*” Maybe it’s “*Speak the truth in love,*” or “*Love your enemies,*” or “*Forgive those who sin against you,*” or “*Pray for those in authority over you,*” or “*Love your spouse,*” or “*Don’t exasperate your children,*” or “*Share your faith,*” or “*Be kind to strangers.*” Jesus, in his Word, tells us many things that he wants us to do – simple things that can really change our relationships, simple directives that can invigorate and bring new meaning to the way we interact with others. In your daily routine this week, start listening to what he tells you to do.

And step three – spend some time, in your routine, with Jesus. The disciples had breakfast with Jesus. They cooked fish and ate with him. Maybe you can’t do that. But can you find five minutes a day for prayer? Ten minutes a day for Bible reading? One hour a week for small group study and conversation? Two hours a month for some fellowship or service activity with fellow Christians? Spend some intentional time with Jesus; and you’ll be amazed at how the living Christ will bring new life into your routine.

Give it a try, and be ready to be empowered! Christ is risen, and his power is alive in you! Amen.