

# The Right Side

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commands and the transformative power of repentance in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:17:21

**Scripture:** John 21:1-22

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who used to manage workers in sugarcane fields. The workers would purposely avoid certain areas and not follow his instructions. However, after the man got converted and changed his thinking, he noticed a significant change in the workers' behavior. They started doing their work diligently and even went above and beyond. The speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking the kingdom of God first and how it can lead to miraculous results. The sermon also encourages listeners to change their mindset and behavior in order to experience the transformative power of God.

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## Transcript

We thank you, O God, for this opportunity to gather together and to search your word. We thank you, Lord, that your word is sweeter than the honeycomb. It is so full of riches, there's so much wealth in it.

Like a rich and abundant diamond or gold mine where, as we dig, we find such treasures. We ask you, Lord, to be with us and bless everyone who is here. Amen.

In John chapter 21, from verse 1, We ask you, Lord, to be with us and bless everyone who is here. Amen. Brother Michael put me in a spot when he was announcing that today is the International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians, and it came to me about Acts chapter 4, how they were persecuted and what their reaction was.

But I thought, no, I've prepared this, and I just felt, let me continue with this which I've prepared. Perhaps we can look at that subject another day. But remember the persecuted Christians.

Pray for them. That the Lord would enable them not to be discouraged, but to go forward with courage. John 21, from verse 1. Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

It happened this way. Simon Peter, Thomas, Caldidamus, Nathaniel from Canaan, Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 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. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, friends, have you any fish? No, they answered.

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. 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. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from the shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there, with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish you have just caught. Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three, but even with so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. None of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples, after he was raised from the dead. Now let's have a closer look at this matter. Peter said to the disciples, I'm going fishing.

Thomas, Nathaniel, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples all said, we're going with you. It was evening, and so they fished the whole night, not catching even one fish. It was in vain, and as it was about to dawn, before the light was fully there, there stood a man on the shore.

He called out, children, have you caught anything? Now in my translation it says children, but in Greek it can also be interpreted as young men. Some translators have used the word friends. Now, whether it was children or speaking of young men, he called out to them and said, tell me, have you caught some fish? They probably took him as an older person than they were, who was shouting from the shore.

Now it was the custom that people who would buy fish would call out to the fishing boat. The disciples might have taken him for a wholesaler, a person who wanted to buy the fish. Have you any food? Maybe he had wanted some for breakfast.

They said, not a thing. Now I'm the same as well. If I see boats coming from a trip, and I go to the ski boat and I ask, have you caught any fish? Because I'd also like to buy some fish, to have food.

But they answered and said, we haven't caught anything. They didn't understand who this man was. And then this man proceeded to instruct them.

Saying to them, throw your nets on the right hand side of the boat and you'll get a real catch. And so they threw the nets where he had said, and they were not able to pull in the nets, so many were the fish. And it was Jesus who had instructed them.

He was telling them, look, remove the nets from the left hand side, throw them on the right hand side, on the other side of the boat. And when they did as he said, they weren't able to pull the nets because of the many fish. This contains a great lesson.

They were fishing on the wrong side. They were fishing on the left hand side. Why is that? He said to them, no, remove the nets from there and throw them on the right hand side.

In English it is a double meaning. In other words, throw it on the right or the correct side. Now let me give a quick lesson for the white people who don't know about Zulu custom regarding the pagan men who would have a number of wives.

Now to make it short, some South Africans that don't even know something of the black custom. When a heathen man has got many wives, the first wife is they, the hut. The second wife, if he's got a dozen wives, is on the left side.

And the left, the second wife, is the kosho, the left one. If he gets the third wife, she'll be on the right hand side. The fourth one, on the left hand side.

The fifth one, on the right hand side. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, on the right hand side. Even numbers, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, on the left hand side.

Because you don't count those, they are on the left. You just count those on the right hand side. Now with them it's like in the Old Testament, only the eldest, the first born, gets the inheritance.

So if the first wife should just have daughters, and the second wife has got a son, and then after many years he gets the third wife, and she gets a son, then the son of the second wife isn't counted, the young son of the third wife. Because she's on the left. They don't count them.

Only liberals count the parties on the left side. But according to the Zulu custom, you don't count those. You just count those on the right hand side.

So you see, it's not so easy to have many wives. You'll have to know something of the custom. So if you serve the Lord, You serve the Lord.

Serve Him in the correct way. Not on the left hand side, the incorrect way. Do it on the right, the correct side.

Right side. There are many who are in the service of the Lord, but fruitlessly so. There is no results, there is no fruit to their work, and all they do is just as nothing comes about, and they spend their lives doing things on the wrong side, on the left hand side, instead of doing it where the Lord says, on the right hand side.

May I repeat that in English? Maybe you wonder, why is it that there's so little result in my ministry? Why is it that I'm not prosperous in the Lord? Ask yourself, Are you on the right side? Or maybe on the wrong side? You may serve and struggle and sweat, and have no results, there's no prosperity with what you are doing, because you're not doing it at the place where the Lord wants you to do it. You're not doing it on the right hand side. On the other side, the other way, the opposite way.

All the prophets of God, their first message, the first words they uttered was, repent. Remember too John the Baptist, he started with repent. Jesus too, which means doing it the correct way.

To repent in Greek, it describes a change of mind, a turnaround, thinking in the opposite direction. Don't think in the wrong way, now you think in the correct way. Certain person I know, I won't mention his name, got converted.

It was during that time when the Holy Spirit had been poured out, the Lord met with him, and said, this person said, I want to follow your way. I want to receive your blessings. Now this person was accustomed to dealing with people in a habitual way of telling them what to do, and should they not listen, he would be irritated, and give them a telling off.

He was very abrupt, and said, what are you doing? When he repented, he said, when he understood the meaning of repentance being a changed mind, he would then remind himself, when he would meet with a circumstance that would be similar to the way it used to be, he would tell himself, how did I used to react? I used to scold, I used to get upset, no longer, I must be different. Now this person was accustomed to dealing with people in a habitual way of telling them what to do, and should they not listen, he would be irritated, and give them a telling off. He was very abrupt, Now this person was accustomed to dealing with people in a habitual way of telling them what to do, and should they not listen, had been in the habit of, when people, neighbours would allow their cattle to roam into a sugar cane, he would scold them furiously, and impound them, and say, do you see what's happened? I'm going to take them now at a price.

Now, these animals were goats. Then I asked him, what do you do? We came and asked, what should I do? The neighbours allow their goats to come and feed there in my fields, and they destroy the crop. How should my new reaction be? And so I asked him, what do you think? He said, I used to find them and I used to try and punish them like that, teach them a lesson.

But I've repented. I've repented. And that is what he did.

He went to that person, gave them a rope, and money to pay a herdsman so that you can look after them. And that neighbor said, what you, it shows that you've really got converted. And so they came to an amicable agreement whereby the neighbor was so impressed with this change of behavior that even after the month which was paid for by the neighbor, by the person and said to pay your herd boy, he said after a while, no, I can't allow that to continue.

I'll see to it. And then that was the end of cattle and goats feeding on his crops. People used to trouble him when they would cut sugarcane.

Now, previously, the people that used to do the hoeing in the sugarcane fields would hoe to remove the weeds and purposely avoid some spots and not the places where he had told them to be. Now, he had to get up early in the morning and give them piecework and he would say, now you, you see to this section, you to that section. And then in the afternoon he would have to come around to check that they've done it.

But now he got converted and he changed his way of thinking. Now, on the way to the fields in the morning, an old granny stopped him. He stopped his car and said, what's the matter? And this old lady said, I want to get right with God.

I want to become a Christian. I want to confess my sins. Now, his first reaction was, well, I'm busy.

I've got to see to this other thing. But then he said, no, I've repented. There's a change of mind.

And he allowed her to continue. And she spoke her heart. I'm just cutting.

I'm touching them. I come on. Now he looked at his watch.

It was past eight o'clock. He knew he was late. And as he drove off, there was the next person saying, I also want to get right with the Lord.

But he resisted his impulsiveness. And he said, Lord, I do want to do the right thing. And that my mind is completely changed.

And he was able to pray with that person. The next thing it was ten, eleven o'clock. And when had the laborers come at seven in the morning? He thought, well, I've got to pay them and now they won't have done their work.

They'll be sitting around holding their hose and just waiting, not having done any work. When he got to the place where the laborers would wait, there wasn't a soul. He looked at the field.

And he noticed that weeding had taken place. He went in to further into the field. And he discovered he discovered as he walked further into the field, that it was all weeded properly.

And then they were right at the end of the field. And he marveled at how much more work they had done since he had changed his mind, since he had repented. Now that is the secret of seeking first the kingdom of God.

And then all these other things get added unto you. A neighbouring farmer I was in a real mess and I scolded the boys and I said you'll get a proper hiding if you do this. Never do it again.

I'll give you a good threshing. And they just stood at the end of my bed and they just gazed at me and then dance started. And said, Granddad, you say you'll give us a hiding, do you know how to give a proper hiding? I said yes, I know.

He said, do you know how to give a real hiding? I said, indeed, a proper one at that. And they said, alright, we understand and then they turned around and off they went. Now when the Prophet said, repent, they were saying, change your mind.

Let there be a turnaround. Don't act in the way you used to act. Don't think in the way you used to think.

Look now from the other side. Now a long time ago when I first began to pitch tents for preaching at Tribini, there were some rural traditional people and girls who came and sat down. And they said to me, I'm going to tell you a story.

I'm going to tell you a story. And they said to me, I'm going to tell you a story. And they said to me, I'm going to tell you a story.

And they said, Now those were different days. The people weren't used to it. And when I said, if you don't believe in the Lord Jesus, you're going to die.

But if you become a Christian, you will live forever. They said among each other, no, this man, this white man is lying. Even Christians die.

And I said to them in my message, repent. Turn around is the literal Zulu meaning. Turn around.

And they said to each other, what does he mean? Must we change our seating arrangement and look in the other direction? Do you want us to look backwards? And also down there in Porcheptin on the south coast, I was also to explain the very basics of repentance, meaning a turnaround, to think differently, a change of heart. meaning a turnaround, to think differently, a change of heart. If you have been known for certain habits and getting upset, and doing things which are part of your character, you have got to live in a completely opposite direction As a young person, if you had a bad reputation, let the reputation be changed.

Now the whole night the disciples had fished, not catching a thing. And here is this man on the shore saying, take your nets and throw them on the right side of the boat. It could be that they were in the habit of taking their nets and throwing them out and that was just the customary way to do it.

But Jesus said no, don't do it in the old way, do it in the new way. Turn around and throw the net on the other side. It's a change of behavior, it's like if you play cricket and you are right handed then you handle the bat in a certain way.

Now if you get told to do it in the opposite way, it means a complete change of your game. And so one who doesn't understand what repentance means, that change of mind doesn't understand and has never experienced repentance. Now they didn't yet know who the man was instructing them like this.

But there was a weightiness about his voice. It came with authority and they obeyed, threw it on the right side and the nets were full. Now when John witnessed this event, that the fish were so many that they couldn't pull up the nets into the boat.

Here he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. We don't know if Jesus ever said words like I love you especially. But John just felt for himself that the Lord had a special love, he loved him more than the others.

In John's experience the Lord loved him more, gave him more grace. Do you know what that is? Or are you a murmurer, a complainer who says well it seems like God himself doesn't even notice me. Jesus can't love me and little old me I'm just ignored.

No, John had exactly the opposite attitude. He felt that Jesus loved him more. Is that your experience? Can you say Jesus loves me more, he shows me more grace.

Every one of us should feel what John felt, that Jesus loved him in a special way. And if you don't know that, you are not where you're supposed to be. Most probably you're still on the wrong side.

Your net is not on the right side. The love of Jesus should be so genuine, so great, so loving, so warm to you. That you say I don't think there's anybody else in the world who is loved the way I am loved.

If not, if you don't know that, then I can understand why you are such a flop in your spiritual life. Like women baking cakes, then some things turn out to flop. And then most probably that's the reason why you are such a flop spiritually.

If the love of Jesus is warm in you, burns in you, you can say with John, beloved of the Lord. He who experienced the love of Jesus so realistically, he said Peter, it is the Lord. Peter, hearing that, took his garment, wrapped it around himself and threw himself into the water to swim to the Lord.

Do you take note of the little change when they behaved just a little bit differently? It was just on the other side, everything changed, the whole scenario was new. There were immediate, immediate results. And the miraculous draft of fish, immediately, it didn't take time.

Just try in your life. If you haven't won people, just do it the other way. You'll be surprised.

And then you'll see it is the Lord. And then you'll see it is the Lord. I don't know why it is that John believed that it was the Lord, he was first to experience it, what was it that he noticed? Maybe the mists of unbelief were cleared up and he was not blinded like the others.

Or the mists of doubt. The fog of doubt. Now, regarding the fishing, it wasn't the first time that they caught fish in this manner.

Remember in the beginning, how the Lord was with them in the boat. And how he said, throw out your nets into the water. Throw your nets out there.

And Peter said, but Lord, we've been fishing all night and haven't caught a thing. But at your command, we will do it. And then Peter and the others threw out their nets and it seemed like all the fish swam into his net.

To such an extent that the nets began to tear. And the boats looked like they were going to sink. They had to call on other boats close by, come and help us, we are sinking.

And our nets are tearing. And then there was a second boat which came by to assist them. When Peter experienced that, he came and cast himself at the feet of the Lord and said, Depart from me, O Lord, for I am an unclean man, I am sinful.

He cried like a person who finds repentance and who comes to the Lord with this repentance. He cried like a person who finds repentance and who comes to the Lord with this repentance. Not the type of repentance where a person just comes forward at an altar call grinning and looking about him, not being aware of the Lord, but looking at the others.

That's not real repentance. But one who casts himself down before the Lord, cries before the Lord and is aware of his sins says, Lord, I'm not worthy of your presence. Undoubtedly John remembered that.

But this was so different. The many fish the same. But the nets went tearing.

The boat didn't sink, want to sink. It's so different this time. But when Peter saw it's Jesus, he didn't say depart from me, he jumped into the water and swam to the Lord.

It wasn't like the first time. Now maybe John thought of that incident and then he uttered the words, Peter, it is the Lord. Now Jesus was also teaching his disciples, teaching his church what it is like in the body, in the church of how to serve him, how to grow and advance in serving the Lord.

They were entering a new life with the risen Christ, fellowship with the living Christ after his resurrection. My, what a different life it was. The nets didn't tear.

The ships didn't sink, want to sink. They're having fellowship with the resurrected Christ. What a different life.

Jesus has taught them a lesson. On to higher ground. Jesus has taught them a lesson.

As I share these points only briefly, I'm only highlighting a few things. I pray that you would have revelation from the Lord, that you would be seeking the Lord even now saying, Lord, what are you saying to me through this? That the nets went tearing. What does that mean spiritually in your life? What does that mean? You can say, I can't anymore.

It's enough. I'm at breaking point now. You see? I'm just touching the fringe of things.

But I pray while I speak, Lord, please reveal to these people what these things mean. Do you get that? Maybe your experience is, I'm sunk. Or I'm just going down.

I can't handle it. It's too much. I can't bear it.

But look at the difference here. The nets were not torn. They were experiencing now the resurrection life.

You see, you're still on that plane. But there's a higher plane. You're learning a higher lesson.

Living life on a higher plane. If only all of us could enter into fellowship with the risen Christ, how different things would be. And then Peter threw himself to be with Jesus.

He disregarded the fish. And there were many that were very big fish. But no longer were the fish important to him.

It was Jesus to cast himself down before him. Does Jesus mean more to you than 153 big fish? Does he mean more to you than anything else in the world? More than Dachau, nearest dwellings. More than drink.

More than girls. More than women. That he means more.

And off you go to him. And when they looked, there was a fire already had prepared a fire. And he was busy grilling fish.

Now, I haven't got time to speak about that. It's one o'clock already. I'm sorry.

Where did he get the fish? Where did he fish? Where did he fish? Did he go to a fish shop? Was he in a store where it rained cats and dogs and fish? Where do those fish come from? We asked Bigelowanga. We asked his team. We asked who did Jesus call up here.

When they were going to call. And it's not for us to speculate. It's enough.

And you'll find in your life as well that Jesus does things for you where you cannot logically discern what it or understand how it was possible. But he'll do it anyway. But breakfast was ready.

But then he said, and bring the fish that you have with you and let's continue barbecuing the fish. and there Jesus gave them the chance then to bring in the fish and so they pulled the nets in with all that came with it and they counted only the big fish were 153 and Jesus wanted to show them and that and that was without torn nets to show them the difference of the resurrection life. This was just an example to them, an illustration.

Jesus was illustrating what was going to happen spiritually soon at Pentecost they were going to throw out their nets into a sea of sinners full of anger and rage and drunkenness and immorality and all sorts of

things and they would be able to throw in the nets and catch sinners and bring them to the Lord and that was literally what was going to happen they were also going to count those who came to the Lord on that day of Pentecost 3,000 of them. Jesus was teaching them. They were being schooled, they were being skilled to know that when the time had come what they ought to do.

But because of time let me get now to the last point. He teaches them. Now Peter was no stranger to fishing.

He had been a professional fisherman. He didn't know Peter. So Peter knew exactly that turf.

Fishing was his domain. And now Jesus is teaching them. All our earthly thinking, all our carnal things that we can organize and do in our minds are utterly useless in the kingdom of God.

They have to be cast aside. It is stupidity in his sight. Remember Peter as a professional was now being taught that things are different now.

In the spiritual realm you can't do things the way you were used to as a professional fisherman. All you need to do is to seek his wisdom, to hear from him. Be like a little dog that follows its master just waiting and looking for any sign from him.

Don't do things in the way that you know and say well I can lead the church because I'm clever, I'm intelligent, I can use my own intellect. No, all that is utterly in vain. Don't say well I'm intellectually superior to these others.

I ought to do it and I know how to handle the ministry better than so-and-so. All that is utterly in vain. It doesn't work.

That is part of the old life. You can't serve the resurrected Lord in your own wisdom. You must use his wisdom and his strength, his power.

In other words, where are you spiritually? Where Peter was before the cooked croak. He denied him thrice. He looked down on his colleagues.

I can do things better. I am stronger. You can expect more from me than from these poor men.

You're still there, far away, sitting by the fire, ready to deny your Lord thrice. You're still there, far away, sitting by the fire, ready to deny your Lord thrice. You're still there, far away, sitting by the fire, ready to deny your Lord thrice.

You're still there, far away, sitting by the fire, ready to deny your Lord thrice. You're still there, far away, sitting by the fire, ready to deny your Lord thrice. So if Jesus says to you, throw your nets on the right side of the boat.

Don't throw it on the wrong side. Do exactly as he tells you. Don't say but I'm constrained by our tradition.

This isn't the way we used to doing it. Throw all the tradition overboard and do what he tells you and the fruit of it will prove to you that the Lord has spoken you'll experience that love where you say the disciple whom Jesus loved most the way you personally experience that love with which he loves you and you'll experience things that you've never ever met up with before and you'll realize and admit that what Jesus does is totally new it's this is a new experience as you as he teaches you so be available and listen to you

what your master says don't lean on your own understanding I would be so glad if you've been blessed by this message if just these few points and really we've left a lot out that the Lord would reveal himself and that it would bring you into a new relationship with the resurrected one Let's stand to our feet. Lord as your people stand on their feet, help them.

That they won't just stand up or arise on their physical feet but spiritually would arise. and that what we've heard about how it was before you appeared on the scene and then what happened when you arrived on the scene, Lord make it to be a life changing experience for us. Amen.

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