Devotional Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines to see how the Lord Jesus helps the faith of His disciples in one the times The Risen Lord Appears. The study's aim is to see how the Lord Jesus is fully capable of meeting all our needs. The study's application is to put ourselves in the way of blessing by being available to God.

Key Verse: John 21:12

Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" -- knowing that it was the Lord

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

John’s purposes in this final chapter are (a) to reveal how Jesus reinstated Peter after his great fall, and (b) to correct a serious error about the Lord’s return. The chapter also provides additional clues to the identity of the author. Some critics have argued that this chapter is anticlimactic after the great conclusion in chapter 20, and therefore was written by another (anonymous) writer. But the linguistic evidence does not support this notion. In addition, other great books of Scripture have appendixes after reaching a grand climax (cf., e.g., Rom. 16 following Rom. 15:33). Thus John 21 is neither without value nor out of harmony with other Bible books.

A. Jesus’ appearance by the lake (21:1-14)

21:1-3. An angel had promised that Jesus would meet with His disciples in Galilee (Matt. 28:7). It was significant evidence for Jesus to manifest Himself in a different location and at a later time (cf. Acts 1:3). (The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee; cf. John 6:1.) The disciples had gone to Jerusalem and had experienced a tumultuous series of events: the Triumphal Entry, the expectation of a new kingdom, a betrayal by a trusted friend, near arrest, denial of Jesus by their leader Peter, the agonizing crucifixion of Jesus, the Resurrection, and the manifestations of the risen Lord. Understandably they were confused and unsure of the future.

Peter went fishing since he may have misunderstood the Lord’s commission (20:22). Peter also had a family to support and undoubtedly had a sense of failure over his sin in denying the Lord. His leadership quality is evident in that six other disciples went with him. Their lack of success without Jesus’ aid (cf. 15:5) and their great catch with His help gave them direction for their new lives.

21:4-6. Early in the morning the disciples failed to recognize Jesus... on the shore either because of distance or lack of light. He called out to them, Friends, haven't you any fish? The word “friends” (paidia) is literally, “little children” or perhaps “lads.” In response to His authoritative voice and instruction (v. 6), they hauled in a huge catch of fish (cf. v. 11). This similarity to an earlier miracle (Luke 5:1-11) enabled the disciples to identify the Lord and to recognize His ability to do great signs after His resurrection.

21:7-9. This revelation of Jesus and His power to His disciples dawned first in the beloved disciple, who exclaimed, It is the Lord! (cf. 20:28) John had also been first to discern the significance of the grave clothes (20:8). Hearing John’s word, Peter immediately jumped into the water, and apparently swam to Jesus. This is typical of his impulsive nature (he went first into the tomb; 20:6). This psychological insight into Peter’s character reinforces the historical reliability of John’s eyewitness testimony. Peter’s action

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The Risen Lord Appears

Lesson Introduction and Background

Mention of the large fish, 153 in all, has given rise to all kinds of allegorical and symbolic interpretations. But probably John mentioned the number as a matter of historical detail. With a group of men fishing, the common procedure would be for them to count the fish they caught and then divide them equally among the fishermen. A spiritual lesson here is that great blessing comes to one’s efforts when he follows the Lord’s will.

21:12-14. When Jesus invited them to eat with Him, none of them asked who He was for they knew it was the Lord. The fact that both Mary (20:14) and the Emmaus Road disciples (Luke 24:13-35) did not immediately identify the Lord may indicate some difference in the Lord’s resurrection appearance here. Yet the identification was so certain that all the disciples knew it was Jesus. Their meal together stamped an indelible impression on their minds. Years later in his preaching Peter spoke of himself as a reliable witness who ate and drank with Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 10:41). The third time means Jesus’ third appearance to the apostles, which John narrated (cf. John 20:19, 24 for the other two appearances).

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

Several years ago, the mayor of Philadelphia made headlines when he served breakfast to a group of veterans. Many people were impressed that a high-ranking official would perform such a humble task. Almost two thousand years ago, the risen Lord of the universe served breakfast to seven men (John 21:2) in a quiet place by the Sea of Galilee, garnering no attention from the world but leaving an indelible impression on these disciples. It was several days or perhaps weeks after the momentous events of Easter, and Jesus’ disciples had made their way back to Galilee. One evening, Peter and six others decided to go out on the lake fishing. They spent all night at it but caught nothing. At daybreak an unrecognized figure on shore called to them, inquiring about their success. When they answered, the person told them to throw in their nets on the other side of the boat. They did, with immediate results—an enormous haul of fish that strained the nets. Suddenly the stranger’s identity was clear; it was unmistakably Jesus. When the men came ashore, they found that the Lord already had a small fire going with some fish frying over it (where those fish had come from is not explained), along with bread. Jesus invited the men to bring some of the fish they had just caught, which they did with some difficulty owing to their great number. It was at this point that the risen Lord of all creation invited His men to sit down and have breakfast. It was not the first time He had humbly served them. His whole ministry had illustrated the truth, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45). We might think that, having risen from the dead and accomplished His primary mission, Jesus’ time for serving would be over. Our text, however, sheds light on the character of our Lord, and it is a precious truth that we see. Serving others was not something He did out of expediency or for show; it expressed His loving heart for His people. The disciples' reaction is interesting. None "durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." It would appear that at least some of them inwardly desired to ask for a final confirmation of Jesus' identity, but none dared to voice the question. They knew all too well who was speaking to them. The question arises: If they knew it was Jesus, why would they want to ask who it was? We must remember that Jesus' physical appearance after the resurrection was different in some ways. Mary Magdalene had failed to recognize Him at first (John 20:14) as had the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-16). Just moments before, the seven disciples had not recognized the Lord until the miraculous catch of fish opened their eyes. Yet now they could not deny whose presence they were in. There are times when we know something with utter certainty even though we may not have access to ordinary ways of ascertaining facts. When God makes something clear—even especially truth regarding His Son—let us not doubt or insult Him with demands for further verification.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

One of the most widely used business slogans is “No job is too big or too small.” Business people of all kinds want potential customers to hire them regardless of the circumstances. Is there so much to be done that you cannot even think where to begin? Call us! Is your task so small you cannot imagine someone bothering with it? Call us! But in fact, however, some jobs are too big or too small. How absurd to call a plumber to drain a large swamp or an exterminator to swat one fly. Christians sometimes rule out certain matters as too big or too small for God. The evil and suffering of the world—including issues such as the inevitability of death, the terror of human existence, and the penalty for sin (Genesis 2:17)—might seem so big that some may not believe that
God can do much about it. Meanwhile, our day-to-day needs may seem so trivial that we hesitate to “bother” God with them. Today’s text reminds us that for God no matter is too big or too small. The apostle John’s account of Jesus, raised from the dead and meeting his disciples by the Sea of Galilee, is a profound reminder that by Jesus’ death and resurrection God is transforming our world to become what he always intended it to be and is overcoming the sin and death that infect our lives. In this story, Jesus surprises his disciples with a morning meal, a simple gesture that underlines his promise always to provide what they need.

Today’s text is the first part of an extended narrative detailing one of Jesus’ appearances following his resurrection, an account recorded only by John. As the text opens, John has already recounted events from the day of the resurrection itself. Mary Magdalene, finding Jesus’ tomb empty, told Simon Peter and “the other disciple” (apparently John himself) that Jesus’ body had been taken (John 20:1, 2). The two rushed to the tomb to see for themselves (20:3-10). Then Jesus appeared to Mary, confirming that he was indeed raised from the dead (20:11-18). Later that same day, the “first day of the week,” Jesus appeared to his disciples in a locked room (John 20:19-23). He appeared to them again a week later, that time addressing Thomas, who had been absent before. That man needed and received personal, tangible evidence that Jesus really was alive (20:24-28). The appearance to Thomas is, in certain ways, the climax of John’s Gospel in light of Jesus’ statement, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). John then immediately informs us of the “many other signs” (miracles) that Jesus performed (20:30). These comprise the fabric of this Gospel. Understanding the meaning of these signs, readers can put their faith in the risen Jesus whom they have not seen (20:31). That purpose statement could be a good place for this Gospel to conclude. But there is yet a bit of unfinished business with the apostles in general and Peter in particular.

**Major Theme Analysis**

* (Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

**Missing Jesus (John 21:1-3)**

1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:
2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.
3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

**Together, but sheep without a Shepherd (1-2)**

* Jesus has compassion for those who are like sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34)
34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

* Usually God appoints someone to become a leader for those who are like sheep without a shepherd (Num 27:16-17)
16 "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community 17 to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

* Those who are like sheep without a shepherd are thirsting for God (Ps 42:2)
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

* The Good News is that Jesus knows His sheep and they know Him (John 10:14,27)
14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
Unproductive in work (3)

Unproductive because of not remaining in and with Jesus (John 15:4-6)

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Unproductive because God’s Word not taking root (Mark 4:16-18)

16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

Unproductive because only God can make us grow and be productive (1 Cor 3:6-7)

6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

Unproductive because our competency comes from God (2 Cor 3:5)

5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

Realizing Jesus is Always Around (John 21:4-8)

4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?” They answered Him, “No.” 6 And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

Conviction that without Jesus work is fruitless (4-5)

Work is fruitless if God is not in the center of it (Ps 127:1)

127 Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

Work is fruitless unless God provides the ability (Deut 8:18)

18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Work is fruitless unless we remain in Jesus (John 15:4)

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Work is fruitless because of not giving ourselves fully to the work of God (1 Cor 15:58)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
Guidance by Jesus (6)

Guidance from Jesus to follow Him (Matt 16:24-25)

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

Guidance from Jesus, the good Shepherd (John 10:3-4, 14-16)

3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

Guidance from Jesus into a spirit of unity (Rom 15:5-6)

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Guidance from Jesus who makes all things grow and work (1 Cor 3:4-9)

4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Giving God the glory of successes (7-8)

Give God the glory as part of our thanksgiving (2 Cor 4:15)

15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Give God the glory because in all things God should be praised (1 Peter 4:11)

11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Give God the glory because we are owned by Him (1 Cor 6:20)

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Give God the glory because we are to give God the glory in all things that we do (1 Cor 10:31)

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
Fellowship with Jesus (John 21:9-14)

9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.
10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”
11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.
12 Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” --
knowing that it was the Lord.
13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.
14 This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Bringing offerings (9-11)

An offering that is done willingly (2 Cor 8:12)

12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he
does not have.

An offering that is offered right (Gen 4:2-7)

2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course
of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 But Abel brought fat
portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but
on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6
Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right,
will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have
you, but you must master it."

An offering that is given out of love (Eph 5:1-2)

2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and
sacrifice to God.

An offering that is sacrificial (Phil 4:16-18)

16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I
am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited
to your account. 18 I have received full
payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you
sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Sharing bread of life (12-13)

Bread that represents Jesus' body (1 Cor 11:23-25)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed,
took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do
this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new
covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Bread from heaven that provides eternal life (John 6:50-51)

50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living
bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my
flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Bread that is good for the soul (Isa 55:2)

2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and
eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.


_Bread that gives life to the world (John 6:32-35)_

32 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.” 35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

**Faith strengthened (14)**

**Faith strengthened by God to dispel fear (Isaiah 41:10)**

10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Faith strengthened by threatening events (Matt 8:23-26)**

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” 26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

**Faith strengthened through suffering (1 Peter 1:6-7)**

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

**Faith strengthened through maturing in it (2 Peter 1:5-8)**

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

**Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh**

**Jesus and the Catch of Fish (21:1-14)**

Our passage in John chapter 21 reveals the frustration of the disciples better than any other. It was in response to the dismay of the disciples that our Lord came to them and clarified the nature of discipleship in the light of His completed work on the cross.

Put yourself in the disciples’ place for a moment. Jesus had called you to be a disciple, and you had left all to follow Him (Matthew 19:27). You had hoped for the promised Kingdom to be immediately established by the Lord (cf. Acts 1:6). You had even hoped for a prominent place in that Kingdom (cf. Matthew 20:20-21). Instead, He was put to death. Three days later Jesus was raised from the dead which was demonstrated by many convincing proofs (Acts 1:3), appeared to you and many others. In some of these appearances Jesus explained from the Scriptures that His death was necessary to forgive the sins of those who believe.

The questions in your mind, if you are thinking as the disciples were, would be numerous. What is going to happen next? Is the Kingdom to begin now? What is the nature of discipleship? What does the Lord want me to do now? If I were to go out and preach, what would my message be? If I am not to preach, what shall I do?

It was out of this frustration, I believe, that Peter decided to go fishing. What else was there to do? Several of the other disciples must have felt the same way. Going fishing surely was better than sitting around wondering what to do next.
Some have criticized this fishing venture as though it evidenced a lack of faith. They suppose that Peter and the others were toying with a return to their former occupation, and giving up full-time service. Peter and the others, due to their lack of direction, were simply trying to use their time profitably until the Lord gave them guidance as to what direction their lives and ministry might take.

In those days men usually fished at night, but after a long night of effort, there were no fish caught. Our Lord, unrecognized by the disciples laboring in the boat, stood on shore about 100 yards distant and called to them, “Children, you do not have any fish do you?” (John 21:5). They had to admit that they were empty-handed. The Savior authoritatively instructed them to cast their nets to the other side of the ship, promising an abundance of fish (verse 6). Without question they obeyed, still unaware of the identity of the One giving the instructions.

When the nets became so full of fish that they could not be lifted on board, John, always the first to perceive the true nature of things before Peter, said to his companion, “It is the Lord” (verse 7).

Peter, true to his character, put on an outer garment and plunged into the water, not willing to delay his meeting with the Lord. The others, more sensibly, waited the few moments it took to beach the ship. It is evident from Peter’s intense desire to be with His Lord, that the Savior had already met privately with Peter over the matter of his denials, and that full forgiveness and restoration had been given (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:5).

On shore, the large catch of fish was sorted and counted. Jesus had a meal prepared for the seven, which He shared with them. The disciples puzzled over this appearance, and yet they knew for certain that it was, indeed, the Lord (verse 12).

A few have dared to suggest that this event is the same as that recorded in Luke chapter five. While there are many reasons for rejecting such a suggestion, there is certainly a relationship between the two, as well as marked differences. The correspondence seems to be this: Luke’s account in chapter five of his gospel describes the incident whereby Jesus called His disciples to leave their employment and follow Him to become ‘fishers of men’ (Luke 5:10-11). The incident recorded by John is our Lord’s reaffirmation of that call, after His death, burial and resurrection.

The disciples faced a puzzling dilemma after the resurrection: What is implied by our discipleship now? Shall we return to our old occupations? If not, what is our task? In answer to this dilemma, our Lord reassured His followers that they were to understand one aspect of discipleship as that of continuing what Jesus had begun and what they had been formerly called to do, the seeking of men with the good news of the gospel.

This miraculous event did more than reaffirm the calling of the disciples to be ‘fishers of men.’ It also assured them that their Lord would be present with them in this endeavor, though not in His former physical manifestation. It promised them divine guidance and power to accomplish the task of the evangelization of the world.

Jesus’ death and resurrection did not change the calling of the disciples to be seekers after the souls of men. But this was not enough. In the remaining verses, the Lord informed His followers of yet another duty of discipleship.

(Adapted from URL:https://bible.org/seriespage/40-duties-discipleship-john-211-25)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Christ’s presence with and provision for Christians are constant. Whether our lives are easy, hard, or somewhere in between, he is with us. Whether our faith feels strong, shaken, or somewhere in between, he never fails or forsakes us. Jesus is not present in the flesh as he was for the disciples. But as he rules from Heaven and empowers by his Spirit, he is no less present with us than he was with them. Are we ready to acknowledge these facts, ready to receive what he gives, and ready to testify to his constant provision?
Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Jesus’ presence is with those who follow Him (John 21:1-3)
2. Do not become discouraged when it seems that your efforts are futile (vs. 4)
3. When you follow Jesus’ directions, you will find what you need (vs. 5)
4. A good follower recognizes and appreciates the wisdom of his leader (vss. 6-7)
5. Jesus brings abundance where there was lack (vss. 8-9)
6. Jesus makes preparation for His children and provides for them (vss. 10-14)