

Sermon Title: Seeing Is Not Believing – John 21:1–19

- **Belief vs. Sight**
 - Jesus once said, *"Believe in God, believe also in me,"* yet his disciples often equated belief with physical sight.
 - Like Philip and Thomas, we may think seeing would make belief easier—but the text challenges this.
- **Gradual Revelation, Not Instant Recognition**
 - The disciples *see* Jesus on the shore but *do not recognise him*.
 - Recognition comes not through sight alone, but through *spiritual revelation* and relationship.
- **Three Milestones on the Journey from Doubt to Belief:**
 - **Obedience to Jesus's Commands**
 - Disciples obey Jesus's instruction to cast the net—and they are blessed with abundance.
 - Trusting Jesus in daily life (prayer, generosity, forgiveness, obedience) often precedes deeper belief.
 - **Testimony of Other Believers**
 - The beloved disciple says, *"It is the Lord!"*—prompting Peter to act.
 - Faith often grows by hearing others' authentic experiences of recognising and following Christ.
 - **Communion and Shared Meal**
 - Jesus invites them to breakfast—an echo of the feeding of the 5,000 and a sign of Eucharistic presence.
 - As in Communion today, Jesus is both host and nourishment, revealing himself through shared spiritual practice.
- **Transition from the First Generation of Witnesses to the Church Today**
 - Chapter 21 continues the Easter story beyond the Upper Room, showing how belief can grow without physical sight.
 - Jesus says, *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."*
- **Faith Formation Through Practice and Presence**
 - We grow into belief by:
 - Listening to Jesus's words and keeping his commands
 - Hearing others' testimonies
 - Gathering regularly in worship and Holy Communion
- **Belief Rooted in Love and Restoration**
 - Jesus nourishes and restores Peter, showing that belief is grounded in receiving Christ's love—especially for those who feel unworthy or burdened by past failings.
- **Conclusion:**
 - *Physical seeing* may be the least important part of faith.
 - True belief is formed by *trust, relationship, community, and grace*—and it is available to all.

Questions:

1. What role does obedience to Jesus play in the disciples' recognition of him in John 21:1–19? How might obedience today lead to deeper belief, even when "seeing" isn't possible?
2. In verse 7, the beloved disciple recognises Jesus and tells Peter, "It is the Lord." How does the witness or testimony of others help us grow in faith? Can you relate this to your own experience or that of someone you know?
3. The disciples do not initially recognise Jesus, even though he is physically present. What might this suggest about the nature of spiritual revelation versus physical sight?
4. Jesus invites the disciples to share in a meal he has prepared. How does this shared meal echo the Eucharist (Holy Communion), and what does it reveal about how Jesus continues to nourish and reveal himself to his followers today?
5. In what ways does this passage show that belief is a journey rather than a single moment of clarity? How might your own faith journey reflect this pattern of gradual recognition and growing trust?
6. Jesus' final interaction with Peter involves love, forgiveness, and commissioning. How do love and restoration factor into belief and discipleship, especially for those who feel they've failed or fallen away?