

John 21:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

Analysis

The other disciples came in a little ship (τῷ πλοιαρίῳ/tō ploiariō)—John uses the diminutive form, emphasizing the small fishing boat contrasted with the enormous catch. While Peter swims impetuously to Jesus, the other disciples fulfill their responsibility: **dragging the net with fishes** (σύροντες τὸ δίκτυον τῶν ἰχθύων/syrontes to diktyon tōn ichthyōn). This presents complementary discipleship: Peter's passionate personal devotion and the others' faithful completion of assigned tasks.

The distance **as it were two hundred cubits** (ὥς ἀπὸ πηχῶν διακοσίων/hōs apo pēchōn diakosiōn)—approximately 100 yards or 300 feet—was swimmable yet far enough that dragging a net full of large fish required substantial effort. The disciples don't abandon the catch to follow Peter; they bring the fruit of Christ's command to shore. This illustrates the church's mission: faithful laborers bringing the harvest to Christ, not for their own glory but to present it to Him.

Historical Context

The 'little ship' was likely a 20-30 foot wooden fishing boat typical of Galilee, propelled by oars or small sail. Dragging a net full of 153 large fish (verse 11) over 100 yards would require significant physical effort, even with multiple men. The shallow shoreline allowed them to drag the net rather than attempting to haul it aboard, which would have swamped the small vessel.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do Peter's swimming to Jesus and the other disciples' dragging the catch illustrate different but equally valid expressions of devotion and service?
2. What does their faithful completion of the task (bringing the full net) teach about perseverance in ministry even when the work is difficult?
3. In your spiritual life, when are you called to 'swim to Jesus' in passionate personal devotion, and when are you called to 'drag the net' in steady, faithful labor?

Interlinear Text

οἱ G3588	δὲ G1161	ἄλλοι G243	μαθηταὶ G3101	τῷ G3588	πλοιαρίῳ G4142	ἦλθον G2064	οὐ G3756	γὰρ G1063
	And	the other	disciples		in a little ship	came	not	(for
ἦσαν G2258	μακρὰν G3112	ἀπὸ G575	τῆς G3588	γῆς G1093	ἀλλ' G235	ὥς G5613	ἀπὸ G575	πηχῶν G4083
	they were	far	from	land	but	as it were	from	cubits
διακοσίων G1250	σύροντες G4951	τὸ G3588	δίκτυον G1350	τῶν G3588	ἰχθύων G2486			
	two hundred	dragging	the net		with fishes			