

Breakfast on the Beach with Jesus

May 5, 2019 ~ Easter 3C

Rev. Rebekah Sweet

John 21:1-14

¹⁻³ After this, Jesus appeared again to the disciples, this time at the Tiberias Sea (the Sea of Galilee). This is how he did it: Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed “Twin”), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the brothers Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. Simon Peter announced, “I’m going fishing.” ³⁻⁴ The rest of them replied, “We’re going with you.” They went out and got in the boat. They caught nothing that night. When the sun came up, Jesus was standing on the beach, but they didn’t recognize him. ⁵ Jesus spoke to them: “Good morning! Did you catch anything for breakfast?” They answered, “No.”

⁶ He said, “Throw the net off the right side of the boat and see what happens.” They did what he said. All of a sudden there were so many fish in it, they weren’t strong enough to pull it in. ⁷⁻⁹ Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Master!”

When Simon Peter realized that it was the Master, he threw on some clothes, for he was stripped for work, and dove into the sea. The other disciples came in by boat for they weren’t far from land, a hundred yards or so, pulling along the net full of fish. When they got out of the boat, they saw a fire laid, with fish and bread cooking on it. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ Jesus said, “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught.” Simon Peter joined them and pulled the net to shore—153 big fish! And even with all those fish, the net didn’t rip. ¹² Jesus said, “Breakfast is ready.” Not one of the disciples dared ask, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Master.

¹³⁻¹⁴ Jesus then took the bread and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus had shown himself alive to the disciples since being raised from the dead.



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In John’s account of the events following Jesus’ resurrection, we find some of the disciples back home at the Sea of Galilee. After the risen Christ had appeared to the disciples in a closed room in Jerusalem, they made the 75 mile journey back to familiar territory, to the place where Jesus first invited them to “follow,” and there they try to return to their former profession of fishing. You see, the disciples are still struggling, despite the overwhelmingly wonderful experience of the resurrection. What do they do with a risen Lord? Who will believe their witness? How do they support themselves? How do they deal with their guilt and shame over betraying and abandoning Jesus in his hour of need?

Jesus meets the disciples right where they are (physically and spiritually), creates an environment with an abundance of provision, and invites them to breakfast on the beach. Friends, this mealtime encounter with Jesus, like so many other examples in the Scriptures, is an opportunity for the mending of broken relationships, the restoration of healthy self-esteem, and the clarification of a divine calling. Breakfast on the beach with Jesus was yet another example of the transformative power of feasting with Jesus, the Risen Christ. How simply and sensitively Jesus deals with the disciples in their struggle. He knows their needs and their hungers. There is an abundant table ready, not only providing food, but also with a spread of love, warmth, and great joy. ***Here, at Jesus’ table, every broken soul is***

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welcome, fractured relationships are healed, sins are forgiven, second chances are the norm. We, too, stand in the lineup of desertion and denial at one level or another. *But, here, at Jesus' table, every broken soul is welcome, fractured relationships are healed, sins are forgiven, second chances are the norm.* Here, at Jesus table, an intervention of the most gracious kind, is the special every day, and transformation of heart and soul may nourish each person. For the life of resurrection is meant to begin now! A life of faith in the risen Christ is one where we come together at one table, proclaim Jesus as our Savior, and turn the world upside down. This is the place where grace is received rather than retribution; where collaboration replaces competition; where fellowship heals wounds of isolation; where hope supersedes despair; and where hospitality covers over judgment.

Jesus invites us: "Breakfast is ready!" Jesus seeks to meet and feed us on the beach of our ordinary lives ~ in familiar or unknown locations. Jesus accepts us lovingly, encourages us boldly, provides a feast of love and grace feeding us. Nourished by the food of the Word, warmed by the fire of Christ's unfailing love, may we, in turn, nourish, heal, and love those we meet today. Amen.