

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

You Should Eat Something

Gospel Lesson

John 20:19-23 (NRSV)

¹After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. ⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Bible/Sermon Focus

I'm not sure quite where we get the notion that deeply extraordinary experiences in life are meant to take place somewhere other than our everyday living. In a collection of short stories, novelist Douglas Coupland writes, "We were trained to believe our world wasn't magic simply because it was ours. Why were we taught that magic was something that happened someplace else to other people? Why couldn't they just have told us, 'Kids, this is as good as it gets. So soak it all up while you can'?"

To learn later in life that holy, charismatic, mystical encounters with God would and could be accessible among the average and normal peers I shared my life with, occupying the same space where I did mundane things like, brush my teeth, go on walks, or eat a meal, took me by surprise. It took me so by surprise that for a brief moment I almost felt lied to, a twinge of resentment, that my teachers and my parents hadn't stopped to point out the mystical to me before the encounters began.

But then again, these experiences are so personal and difficult to explain, I'm not sure I would have had a clue what was being told to me, had they even attempted.

I wonder if this is what it was like for the disciples in the post resurrection encounters they had with Jesus? They find themselves in the midst of their grief and perhaps disbelief about what had happened to their beloved teacher and leader. The expectations they had on what the "Kingdom of God" that Jesus had taught about was turned on its head. They were in new territory.

And in the middle of all of the strange encounters, Peter decides to do something wholly normal. "I'm going fishing," he says. Peter goes back to living his life and the most wondrous thing happens, Jesus meets him right there, right in the ordinary encounters of Peter's morning.

In this series, *Encountering Christ: The Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus*, we have been considering the task of evangelism and how to introduce the *Risen Lord & Savior* to others, by looking at how the *Risen Lord & Savior* introduced himself in the post-resurrection accounts found in the Gospel.

What we don't have to do is keep the God we know and love boxed in to some set apart space in our lives. By meeting people where they are in the ordinary, by sharing our lives with each other in the day-to-day, the *Risen Lord & Savior* will find us. We don't need bells and whistles to introduce Jesus to others. By offering simple things, like table fellowship, we will come to find that Jesus has been hosting us, perhaps all along.

As Pastor Andy said in this week's sermon, "The ordinary moments of our day become acts of evangelism when they are shared with others in the presence of Christ...The ordinary experiences of life, when they are filtered through the Risen Christ, become divine. And when we share those ordinary experiences with others, Christ removes our filters - pride, pretentiousness, prejudice - and enables us to see the world as it truly is." A place where the extraordinary, divine experiences of this world, are not found somewhere else, but are found here, together.

Discussion Questions

1. What parts of evangelism do we do? What parts of evangelism does God do?
2. Share an experience where you witnessed God doing extraordinary things in the life of another Christian that you know.
3. Have you ever tried to chase after God or force an encounter with God? What was your experience with that?
4. Describe a moment where you met God and were surprised by the encounter.
5. Reflect on this quote from Douglas Coupland, "We were trained to believe our world wasn't magic simply because it was ours. Why were we taught that magic was something that happened someplace else to other people?"

Prayer

Risen Savior, you whose presence meets us in our everyday encounters, encourage us that this life is enough. That you will meet us in our everyday moments and transform them into the Kingdom of God on earth. Teach us how to be present with each other, as you are present with us. Use us to show our neighbors just how wondrous your love can be, though our every day encounters with community. Amen.

"The opposition between sacred and secular is naive. Contrary to what we think we know, we have never entered into a secular era. The very idea of the secular is religious through and through — Christian really." - Jacques Derrida