

## Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

## Sermon Reflection Notes

The scripture this week brings us a resurrected Jesus who shows us the miraculous mystery of life that exists even in the mundane. The disciples, having had a stressful couple of weeks, reverted back to the familiar, the comforting; they chose to do something predictable and common and therapeutic: they chose to go fishing.

They spent the entire night out in the boat catching nothing. Casting their nets over and over in endless futile attempts. It must have been frustrating, and yet, still familiar. Sometimes that's how fishing trips go. But very early in the morning, they heard someone yelling advice to them from the bank. "Throw your nets on the other side!" he yells, and rather than ignoring him, they tried it. They threw their nets over the other side of the boat, and the fish overwhelmed the nets, so many they couldn't haul the nets in.

That was their sign...only Jesus could bring so much abundance from nothing. Only Jesus could provide so much from scarcity. They had heard and seen this type of miracle before: at a wedding that ran out of wine, at a well from an outsider who was promised living water that brings eternal life, on a mountain where 5000 people needed to eat and only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish were available. The disciples knew it must be Jesus. Peter, unable to control his joy and excitement, jumped right into the sea to swim ashore. The rest took the boat and found Jesus waiting for them, fixing breakfast over a charcoal fire on the bank.

Jesus was doing the mundane, making food, preparing a table, for the disciples and for us. There is beauty in the mundane, a group of friends sharing a meal, telling stories, laughing together. It is beautiful that this breakfast, this meal, happened after the resurrection. The timing of this story lets us know that the gospel of abundance, of big tables, of eating together and always having enough room for more, does not die with Jesus. It lives on through us—the church.

And then Jesus drew Peter aside and asked him a question. "Do you love me?" Jesus asked. Peter of course answered, "Yes Lord, you know I love you." But Jesus asked again. And again. Three times in all. We hear the echo of a different story in the asking. Three times Peter denied knowing Jesus outside the temple, standing around a charcoal fire. Three times he denied loving Jesus. And then on the banks of the sea, Peter was given the chance to amend, to reconcile, to redeem his denials. "Do you love me?" Jesus asked. "Yes Lord, I do love you." Jesus responded to each affirmation of love: feed my sheep, tend my lambs, feed my sheep.

The message is clear; if you want to love Jesus, then you care for the people that Jesus loved. Loving God is about loving your neighbor. And to love your neighbor is to love God. It is that beautiful, and mysterious, and mundane, all at the same time.

There is a world fishing for something all night long, only to come up empty. When people filled with stress find scarcity, loneliness, and meaninglessness, WE, the church, have a story to share. A meal to invite them to. More than enough love to go around. A place at the table for everyone.

There's the story of God who shows us, and the world, that there is beauty in the big things—like resurrection. But there's also the story of cooking breakfast, sharing a simple meal. There is wonder and beauty and awe in both types of stories. Stories of abundance. Stories that we are called to share with the world.

## Scripture

John 21:1-19 (NRSVUE)

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <sup>3</sup>Simon 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.

<sup>4</sup>Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup>He 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. <sup>7</sup>That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the sea. <sup>8</sup>But 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.

<sup>9</sup>When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." <sup>11</sup>So 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. <sup>12</sup>Jesus 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. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. <sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup>A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." <sup>18</sup>Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." <sup>19</sup>(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

## Discussion Questions

1. The story of John 21 moves beyond Jesus' resurrection toward the future for Jesus' disciples and the future of the new community called the church. How does the fishing story inform what the future of Jesus' disciples would be?
2. How does the question-and-answer time between Jesus and Peter inform the future of Jesus' disciples?
3. What does it mean (look like/sound like) to see the future through the lens of scarcity?

What does it mean (look like/sound like) to see the future through the lens of abundance?

4. What role does the Church play in a world drowning in injustice?
5. In a world where we can become overwhelmed and feel helpless when no one seems to listen and big things don't change, how do we continue to follow Jesus' command to 'feed his lambs and tend his sheep'?
6. Pastor Ron talked quite a bit about finding awe and wonder in the ordinary and mundane this week. What are the ordinary and mundane ways we follow the teachings of Jesus?

## Closing Prayer

O God, you are the One who feeds us and nourishes us. You assure us that we have more than enough. We do not doubt that you have given us enough to satisfy the needs of every living thing. Easter, new life, resurrection, all proclaim that creation is on its way to completion. And that means that you call us to share our bread and feed the hungry. By your Holy Spirit, move us beyond our fearful accumulation, and lead us toward outrageous generosity. Give us the courage to stand up for justice and push back against systems born of scarcity instead of abundance, systems that deny your children what is needed for life. We pray always in the name of Jesus, who leads the way for us. Amen.

*"Do you love me? Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep."*