

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
APRIL 10, 2016

"FEED ME, JESUS"

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Our simple EASTER PRAYER for today: *FEED ME, JESUS!* After all, if we are going to be *WALKING WITH JESUS* through this Easter season, we must be fed! And how does Jesus respond? He calls us to the beach and He says, *"COME, AND HAVE BREAKFAST."* When we ask, we are fed! When we call, He answers! When we come together, He is with us! Every day is a celebration of Jesus in our lives. Every Sunday is a celebration of Jesus resurrection. Every day is a day to say: CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

BUT EASTER IS OVER! The flowers are gone. The Easter candy is down to the color of jellybeans that no one wants to eat. The Easter baskets are packed away, and we are anxiously waiting to smell the one hard-boiled egg that was hidden and never found. The only thing we can think about now is, Spring, warmer weather, sunny days, the end of the school year, getting on with the rest of our lives. Almost as if nothing happened 2 short weeks ago. Almost as if we never heard about the resurrection. Almost as if the whole thing was just another day, another service, another holiday, another event that is long gone!

Nothing has changed in 2,000 years. 2 weeks after the first resurrection, the Disciples of Jesus are sitting around wondering what to do next. Yes, they have seen Jesus, twice since the resurrection. Both times in a locked room. But they are not absolutely sure about anything at all. It was so confusing! Jesus had taken them away from everything they had known: jobs, families, homes. Jesus used the picture of going fishing for people, because the only thing most of the Disciples knew, was how to fish.

BUT NOW, Jesus is gone! At least they think He is gone. They spent every day together for the past 3 years. They listened, watched, followed and learned! They were amazed at what they found themselves able to do. Now it all seems so far away. Jesus is not here! They are not out among the people, doing miracles and turning heads. They are not going from town to town, preaching, teaching and forgiving. They are stuck with their same old boring lives. And they don't know what to do. They thought this trip with Jesus was going to be a life-long commitment, and now, they are not sure. About today, about tomorrow, about the future! So we find them, on this day, sitting around, wondering what to do next.

Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and 2 other disciples, sitting around wondering what to do with the rest of their lives, not to mention, what to do, TODAY! Three years earlier, Jesus had taken them away from their jobs as fishermen. Now, that seems to be the only place to return. Peter's line (a favorite of my own) *"I'M GOING FISHING!"* That is not just an idea to fill some empty time. It is not like we would say, *"Well, today, maybe we'll go to the mall, or a movie, or work in the yard, or just stay home and relax."*

No, this has some very definite meaning and direction. Before Jesus came along, their lives were nothing but: baiting hooks, repairing nets, rowing boats and cleaning fish. Jesus had taken them away from all that. But Jesus is gone! So it is only logical, *"We have to go back to familiar ground."* We might say, familiar waters. JOB SECURITY, SOMETHING SAFE AND FAMILIAR. The rest of the story is the lesson Jesus teaches them and the example He gives to us.

2 important things happened here. FIRST, the disciples were open to seeing Jesus where He is, rather than where they think He should be.

SECOND, they were willing to try it His way! If we can live by these 2 standards, seeing God in the familiar experiences of life, and following God's Word, all sorts of good things will happen.

Unfortunately that isn't real life. At least not as we think we should live it. We are very comfortable, looking for God in the places that we expect Him to be. It's sort of like the local zoning board deciding WHAT is going to be built WHERE. So we zone God out of some areas of our lives, and only allow Him to stay in a limited space. By doing that, we have lost the ability to see God's hand at work in everything. And we have become so dependent on doing things our own way, that we have forgotten, that in all things, God's will is our will. As we pray, Our Father in heaven... Your will be done.

Jesus suggested to the disciples, that they put the net in a different place. The rest was up to them! If there is one thing we can say about fishermen in general, it is that they are more than willing to give advice, but not always willing to take it. The best place to fish, the best time to fish, the best bait, the best equipment, and all of it guaranteed to catch the best and biggest fish. Most fishermen will listen attentively, give some advice of their own, and then turn around and do what they want to anyway. When Jesus gives advice to these unsuccessful fishermen, they follow His advice, and it turns their day of fishing into a day of catching! That's how it is with us! God invites, but He does not demand. We can stick to our own limited vision, or we can open our eyes, wide-open, to see God at work, in every area of our lives.

So what about us? Have we been fishing all night long, and caught nothing? Have we been Christians all our lives, with nothing more to show for it, than our names on the Church's mailing list? Are the nets hung out to dry, empty once again? Or have we even stopped throwing the nets over the side? Is our Christianity just for Sunday morning and nothing more? Are we waiting for the fish to come jumping into the boat? FEED ME, JESUS! That I may feed others!

Are we going anywhere, growing anywhere, doing anything? Are we open, inviting, welcoming and loving? You know "the season" is fast approaching, and we have to think about these things. When we walk out of this place, can anyone tell that there is something different about us? Are we the same as everyone else in the crowd? Or do we stand out in that crowd, as Disciples, as those who know that God can be found, and is found, in every walk of life?

We may find it strange that Jesus chose to come to His Disciples in the unlikely setting of a fishing trip and breakfast on the beach. BUT WHY? Can we see Jesus wherever we are? Not just where we want Him to be and expect Him to be?

COME, AND HAVE BREAKFAST, and then go:
FEED MY LAMBS! TEND MY SHEEP! FEED MY SHEEP!

Let us pray. Lord, feed us here – and go with us to feed everyone, everywhere.

Feed us today – that we may feed others tomorrow.

Feed us in this place – help us to feed family, friends and neighbors out there.

Feed us at Your altar – so we may feed others in the world.

Feed us here and now – so we may feed others wherever they are AND wherever we are.

Feed me, Jesus, that I may feed others.

And all God's children say,

Amen.

Sola Deo Gloria!