



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Christ has risen. . . . He is Risen Indeed!

Our Gospel text today begins with the words, "after these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias." Jesus had already come to the disciples in the upper room the night of the day that the women found His tomb empty. For a second time, the disciples had a visit from Jesus a week later, where Doubting Thomas was with them to see the scars from the nails and the slash of the spear in His side. And now we are sometime later, not sure quite how long, but Jesus comes to them for this a third time.

Recall too, that this story is similar to the one that appears in the Luke's Gospel. But this story in John comes after Jesus' Resurrection. In fact, many think that this was the final appearance of Jesus. We don't know how long it was since His resurrection, but it suggests that it has been quite some time.

By now, the disciples had gone home to Galilee, probably discouraged. That is where Jesus had met them and where He would meet them again. Remember that these disciples had been living on a roller coaster for several weeks now. One commentary I read called it a circle of elation, deflation, elation, deflation. The ups and downs of all that they had been through had probably taken its toll on them. And so, it should not surprise us then they did what many people do, when they do not know what to do, they do what they know, turn to the comfort of familiar activities. They went home to fish.

And Jesus chooses this particular time to seek out the disciples again. They had fished for some time and caught nothing, so Jesus invites them to breakfast. "The Last Breakfast" if you will. And Jesus has to offer a suggestion as to how to catch fish. The disciples take his

lead and cast their nets on the side of the boat and the nets fill with fish, 153 to be exact. Interesting number but we will save that for another day. But we have lesson number one for the morning. Seek God's will for your life or you will come up empty handed.

Many of you have met Chaplain Jill who often fills in for me. In fact, she will be here again in two weeks. Well, she and I attended Wartburg seminary together. After a few classes Jill did not continue on the path to ordination. She heard clearly from God that she was being called to chaplaincy. And what a blessing she is to those she serves as a chaplain. She was trying to find her niche in God's kingdom, and then realized God was calling her to chaplaincy. Even though you love her and her messages, her call was all along supposed to be in serving as a chaplain. Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless God builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."

Finding our calling in life is not always an easy thing to do as it requires us to surrender our will. It was not but 15 years ago that I was able to follow the plan God had for my life. I now feel that I have satisfied what God put me on this earth to do. What is God's will for your life? And for those of you who say I am retired, finding your calling is not all about vocation. I can assure you that there is still time to find what God has in store for you and the rest of your life. Listen to the voice of God, follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and the path will be opened for you to use your God given gifts to fulfill God's plan. And don't be afraid to ask through prayer what is next.

I know when my kids were little, they were always asking for something. Whether it was a new game, a trip to see a movie or something. As a parent you really don't want to say No, so you say not now or maybe later. I had a friend that would say something like, yes, but when you really need it or when you least expect it.

Well, that is exactly what Jesus did to the disciples. They had gone home, a bit confused and voila, Jesus shows up, just when they needed it, and when they least expected it. We all need to continue to seek God's will for our lives.

Lesson number two I hear in this Gospel story is when the Lord tells you to do something, do it. No questions, no excuses, just do it. And when you don't question and "do it", you will be surprised and amazed.

A little over seven years ago, six months after the wedding, our son, and his husband, got a call from a woman who wanted to find a good home for your unborn child. She was very young and had no means to care for a child and she did not know who the father was. I remember Frank calling me and asking what they should do. I was stunned and said some pastor jibber jabbered. After I caught my breath and said a prayer, I called him back and told them that it was God's plan to care for this little child that had no one else. Emmett will be 7 in two weeks, and he has been a blessing and a joy to our whole family, because they did it.

Our disciples in the story, did as Jesus told them and let down the nets on the other side of the boat. 153 fish were in those nets. Then Jesus invited them to have breakfast with him. They brought a few of those fish to add to the meal Jesus had planned. He didn't need any

help with the menu. After all they had seen him feed 5000 men with a few fish and some bread from the sack of a little boy's lunch.

I think that we all know where the word breakfast comes from. To break the fast of our sleep, we take nourishment. And just maybe Jesus was not inviting the disciples to join in a meal, but to break the fast they had from spiritual nourishment. After Jesus had left them weeks ago in the upper room, I would guess that their spirits were running on empty.

What do you do when your spirit is dry? How do we put away the business of the world and concentrate on living the life God has given us, that abundant life we are made for?

Our third lesson today comes in the form of a warning, "watch what you eat". Have a discriminating palate. I know that my tastes have certainly changed over the years, but I still don't like kale. But seriously, take note as to what you fill your minds with. Choose your entertainment and recreation wisely. Jesus earlier in the Gospel of John said in Chapter 6, "I am the bread of life, he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst." Good to remember that we need to continue to feed out souls, with God's word so He can reign in our hearts.

Our last lesson this morning, comes when Jesus asks the disciples, Peter in particular, "Do you love me more than these", meaning the disciples. Peter confesses his love for the Lord. Jesus comes back and says that he should "Feed my lambs". What an odd response by Jesus. Or is it. Jesus continues two more times with similar responses of "Tend my sheep" and "Feed my sheep". Feed and tend are action words. Jesus is trying to give direction to these men that it is one thing to say that they love Jesus and quite another to show that they love him. All the words in the world are worth nothing if they are not put into action. Yes, these disciples say that they love Jesus, but now it the time to go out and show the world that love. Most words of endearment don't mean much unless they are reinforced by deeds of loving kindness.

James 1:22 says, "But be doers of the word, and not only hearers."

There have been many saints in this congregation over the years. Bill Ave'Lallimant comes to mind. He was always willing to do everything in his power to keep this ministry afloat. He came to Bible study, and along with Carol they read Scripture every day. He was our Thrivent representative and volunteered as a liaison for our district. He filled in for me on the spur of the moment when I fell down a flight of stairs and could hardly move for a week. Bill was a servant of the Lord and showed God's love wherever he went. He never complained, just kept bearing witness to Jesus Christ in his daily life.

There is another saint that has helped me endlessly with her wise words and encouragement over the years. She would be surprised to hear her name if I were to share

it with you. Listening to her journey has strengthened my walk with the Lord as she was gracious to share God's love with me over and over again.

In fact, I think there are many saints sitting in these pews this morning. I commend you for your commitment to our ministries here at Christ the Servant, but most of all I applaud you for showing God's love to each other, to this community and beyond.

Jesus leaves the disciples with another command and that is to follow Him. God will never leave us. He wants us to follow him and have a full and abundant life. So, to reiterate the four lessons from this morning's Gospel story.

1. Seek God's will for your life.
2. Trust the path God has planned for you.
3. Watch what you eat and feed your spirit
4. Don't just talk the talk but walk the walk.

God love each one of you so much that he gave his only Son to die for you so that you might have His gracious gifts of forgiveness, abundant life, and the promise of life eternal with Him in heaven one day. **AMEN**