**5/4/25**

**The Correct Lens and The Correct Perspective**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**John 21:1-19 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Hello, Good Morning, and Welcome to each and every one of you out there in our pews and those of you out there on our conference call. I offer you continued Easter blessings for we are indeed “Easter people. That means we live into the gift of grace through Jesus Christ every day and every day is an opportunity to be a living “Alleluia!”” (9) That is a living thank you statement for all that God has done for each and every single one of us. We are thankful for our redemption that was afforded to us in and through the very life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. So, we come together to explore the words and the message, the life and the mission of our Lord in this season, and all year round, in a continued effort to further develop and deepen our faith. We come together to explore the words and the message, the life and the mission of our Lord in this season, and all year round, in a continued preparation to be able to go and share the story with others as well. We have a lineage; we are heirs of the kingdom. We have a responsibility to grow and change; we have a responsibility to go and share. That is pretty much the essence of our Gospel Reading, and furthermore, just like the disciples, sometimes we need a reminder, or even a subtle kick in the butt, to go and do and not fall back into our old ways and patterns. We need reminded that the comfort that we find in our old ways is nothing as compared to the comfort that we will find in the Lord.

So, as we grapple with this text, we actually come to find that we have four stories tied into one here. Now, I don’t believe any one of these stories is more vital than the other. They all are truly needed to really get where we are going. So, thank you for joining me so that we can dig in a little deeper and see what we are truly dealing with here. Thank you for joining me so that we can figure out what this Gospel Reading is saying to us in this place and in this time.

Our Gospel Reading started off with a bunch of friends who just lost a friend, a loved one, their leader. As a result, they are struggling to cope, or even find their identity. Which is a rather normal response in the grief and loss process. It is a place that I am rather sure many of us have been in a time or two in ourselves. So, not sure what to do, these fellas eventually go back to what they are used to and most comfortable with. They gather together and go out into a boat overnight in an effort of hauling in a load of fish so that they have some money to pay their bills and do other things. It is almost like they had forgotten their commission, it is almost like they had forgotten their transformation. It is almost like they had forgotten their path since Jesus was no longer physically standing with and alongside of them providing an example as he had walked and worked with them. It is almost like they had forgotten their path was to continue on with the very life and the ministry of the church. So… back to fishing they go! Life as normal, and as it once was in the land of coping, but… it also is rather awkward!

Now, despite being together, it is rather awkward because we witness that they were still trying to handle things on their own in their own way. Again, it was almost like they had simply forgotten what had happened over the course of the last few years, and especially the last few days. Perhaps they were in a total state of shock, or just perhaps they were in a total state of fear. It really is hard to define, so that is why I say it is rather awkward. Whatever this response was it was it was not what they had been called to do. As a result, we hear that they find no success despite being so skilled in fishing for most of their lives. Then, just when they had given up and were going to head back into shore to go and catch some rest Jesus steps in. This is where we get introduced to part two of our story this morning. For Jesus tells them to go ahead and throw their net out one more time. He even gives them a directive to throw their net out over the right side of the boat. As if they had not already done that several times before! Yet, oddly enough, they do not reject this command from a perceived stranger on the shore. Then, all of a sudden, their net is full! The ultimate fish finder has worked his wonders yet again! Jesus has given these fellas another amazing catch. These disciples were no longer fishing and doing on their own! Jesus was back with them again and working in and through them, but in a totally different way. Jesus had not abandoned them or left them like they had thought for his word would always be with them as long as they remembered to listen. So, this load of fish could represent so many things, but it simply represented the success they would have if they truly remembered that Christ was in their hearts and alongside of them at all times.

So, as we hear in our Gospel Reading this stranger on the shore telling them precisely where to drop their net had now been identified. They excitedly hauled in their net of fish as they headed back into shore. Well, of course for that good ole Simon Peter who could not contain his excitement. So, it was like he practically forgot what they were doing and he left his friends to do the rest of the work. As they all arrived ashore, they all got the offering of a lifetime, they all got invited to breakfast around the fire. They all got to experience another meal with Jesus. This is the third part of our story here this morning, and fittingly it is the third time that Jesus had appeared to his disciples following his resurrection. These fellas got to have some true fellowship time with their friend, their leader, and their Lord once again. Oh, how simple and comforting a meal is. Oh, how simple and comforting it is to be with loved ones. Oh, how simple and comforting it is to be back to normal. Oh, how simple and comforting this occurrence and encounter would be. Well… that is until Jesus hit that proverbial reset button. That is until Jesus called back them back to the very reality of who they were, and what their true mission and true purpose in life was and would forever be. The disciples actually had the fishing part right, but they had forgotten that they were supposed to be fishing for people.

Now, we transition to our fourth and final story of the morning. Now, we get to the good stuff. Now, we get to what we have been waiting for… or do we?!?! This is the very part of the story that is very uncomfortable or even disheartening for so many at times… and that is because we may temporarily be looking at it through the wrong lens or from the wrong perspective. Every story this morning had the disciples recalling other parts of their life and ministry at earlier times, and this one did the same exact thing. However, here “we have a (total) reversal of Peter’s denial and shame as Jesus prompts a triple confession of Peter’s love set at a charcoal fire like the first.” (4) Yes, Peter is revisiting that time that he was not so proud of himself and his actions whether he liked it or not. However, Jesus is doing it in a respectful and loving manner. Jesus is doing it because he wants to lift that guilt and shame off of Peter’s shoulders and take it upon himself. Jesus is providing total forgiveness and even recommissioning, recharging, or reinstating Peter into the very mission and purpose of his life. He is to lead his brothers just like he did out onto that boat. He is to lead his brothers to a far greater catch than fish, for there are people out there to catch. Peter is to lead his brothers to a continued meal and fellowship with one another, and everyone they invite. He is to lead his brothers out into the mission field of life. However, he cannot do that if he does not get over his past guilt and shame. He cannot do that if he does not truly accept his new identity of who he truly is called to be in the transformative powers of Christ. Peter needs to accept his role to the very point that he will die an earthly death in the full honor and glory that he is called to when the very last words of this Gospel Reading are lived out by him when he truly submits everything and all to Follow Christ.

When we look at this very last part of our Gospel Reading this morning from the correct lens and the correct perspective, we no longer find it uncomfortable or even disheartening. When we look at this very last part of our Gospel Reading this morning from the correct lens and the correct perspective, we come to find that our grief and our sorrow need to be transformed into living our lives out in a total honor and blessing to all those that have gone on before us following their commitment to Christ and the mission. When we look at this very last part of our Gospel Reading this morning from the correct lens and the correct perspective, we actually come to know and realize that each and every one of us is indeed Peter. We get questioned, we get called, we get told to care for and love one another, we have guilt and shame, we get recommissioned time and time again each and every day. That happens as we remember our baptisms. When we fully submit to Christ and we die to ourselves and find ourselves water washed, cleansed, reborn, and reclothed in the very ministry and life of Christ that we are called to. We are blessed to have one more meal together here at this table with one another later this morning as we fellowship together. We are all called to follow Christ and receive the undeserved forgiveness and grace that he provides. When our time and hour is up, just like Peter’s, then and only then will we share in the fully resurrected life of our very Lord and Savior. We are thankful, we are blessed, we are transformed, and that is why we announce together time and time again with complete joy during this continued season of Easter that Jesus Christ is Risen… **He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia****!**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 May 4th, 2025

 Third Sunday of Easter

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

 © 2018

 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Third Sunday of Easter

 The fishing (or Jesus-following) in this story is better done together

 May 4, 2025

 Commentary on John 21:1-19

 Jennifer Garcia Bashaw

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Third Sunday of Easter

 Details are important. The writer of the good news as recorded in John holds to

 details to the very end.

 May 5, 2019

 Commentary on John 21:1-19

 Joy J. Moore

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Third Sunday of Easter

 Profound risk-taking benevolence

 May 1, 2022

 Commentary on John 21:1-19

 René Such Schreiner

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Third Sunday of Easter

 When I saw him, his jet-black hair coiffed, swooped up and slicked up, the dark

 glasses, white leather jacket with tassels and beads, largish belt buckle, turquoise,

 and all the rest, I just knew he had to be an Elvis impersonator.

 April 10, 2016

 Commentary on John 21:1-19

 Robert P. Hoch-Yidokodiltona

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Third Sunday of Easter

 Killing worms did not sound fun.

 April 14, 2013

 Commentary on John 21:1-19

 Karyn Wiseman

(9) Here We Stand

 The Resurrection Leader Guide

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 Augsburg Fortress

**John 21:1-19 (NRSVUE)**

The risen Christ appears again to his disciples by the sea where they were first called. After echoes of the fishing and feeding miracles, he gives a final reminder of the cost of a disciple’s love and obedience.

1 After [he appeared to his followers in Jerusalem,] Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. 2 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. 3 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.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” 6 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. 7 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. 8 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.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” 11 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. 12 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. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

15 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.” 16 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.” 17 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. 18 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.” 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”