

## All That...And Breakfast Too! ~ John 21:1-14

Pastor Colin Rieke ~ April 14, 2013

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.



Grace, mercy and peace to you from our risen Savior,

How many of you have written a letter – with a pen – in the last six months? I know that I haven't, and I doubt many of you have either, at least if you are anywhere close to my age. With the advent of computers and word processors, writing has come to mean typing away on a keyboard, not that hand written cursive stuff that many in my generation are not even able to read. I can only imagine what it would be like if I had to write out my sermons by hand, I would not be used to it. I do remember though, as a kid growing up handwriting letters to a pen-pal here in the United States. And there were times at the end of those letters, after my signature, I would add a "PS" or post script. This PS would be something that I would add at the end that never got into the body of the letter, sometimes it was only a trivial point, but there were other times that it was important.

This is what the apostle John is doing here at the end of his gospel. Chapter 21, the last chapter, is John's "PS" to us. It was in the previous chapter that John came to the climax of his gospel with the resurrection of Jesus and his visiting of Mary Magdalene, and visiting of the disciples twice. Then he wraps up chapter 20 with these words, **"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."** But now, John wants to add a "PS" something additional. This is something important that he wants to tell us. **THE RISEN LORD IS THE SAME LOVING AND CARING SAVIOR THAT HE WAS BEFORE.**

1. The risen Lord still comes
2. The risen Lord still cares

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When the risen Lord came to the women at the tomb on Easter morning, he commanded the women, **“Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”** Now Galilee was about 60 or so miles north of Jerusalem, a similar distance from here to Casa Grande. The best guess we can venture is that Jesus wanted to get away from the busyness of Jerusalem, so the disciples could focus on the times Jesus appeared to them. Likely after the second time Jesus appeared to them in the upper room (the second time with Thomas), the disciples made their way up to Galilee.

Not knowing the exact time that Jesus was to meet them, instead of twiddling their thumbs, they decided, led by Peter, to go fishing, an occupation that many of them knew well. We are told of only seven disciples who were together up in Galilee, maybe the others were still on their way. As was customary on the Sea of Galilee, they went fishing at night, dragging a fishing net behind their small boat. But as was the case earlier in Jesus’ ministry, they came up empty handed.

Early in the morning, a figure appeared on the shore, it was the risen Jesus, but he was unrecognized by his disciples. This seems to be a common theme of the risen Lord. When Mary Magdalene met Jesus at the tomb, she confused him for the gardener. When the two disciples walked with Jesus to Emmaus they saw him only as a stranger. This may have even contributed to the disciple’s fright that night in the upper room. So it appears that Jesus’ appearance may have been slightly different after his resurrection. After all, after his resurrection he was not emptying himself of his divine power and glory like he did for 33 years on earth. It is natural to assume that with all the power and glory packed into his human body, he would have looked a little different.

But even though his appearance was different, this was the same Jesus. He called out to the fishermen on the boat, **“Friends, have you caught anything?”** Jesus knew the answer already, but this was setting up his next response. Just as he had done on at least one other occasion he said, **“Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”** Now usually fishermen aren’t in the habit of taking advice from strangers. But there was something about the way Jesus said it that convinced them to do it without complaining.

Immediately, just by throwing their net to the other side of the boat, their net was full of fish. A miracle of amazing proportions. If the long night of fishing without a catch wasn’t a clue, then this miracle catch was déjà vu for the disciples. Then **“the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord.’”** Peter, ever headstrong, hikes up his fishing garb to make it easier to swim and jumps out of the boat, not even worrying about the catch, he was so excited to see Jesus. The others followed along behind, dragging the net of fish with them. They couldn’t wait to see the risen Lord who came to them.

And the PS that John adds at the end of his gospel is that the risen Lord still comes to people. In the first lesson we read this morning from God’s word we saw how the Lord came to another person, Saul, on the road to Damascus. And in many ways we might consider ourselves similar to Saul. He was born and raised in the church, taught Scripture from early on. He went to church grade-school and high school. He prayed and gave generously to the Lord, he loved traditions and didn’t want anything to

change, he thought he was serving God by opposing this group of people with their new ideas. But on the road to Damascus, Jesus did not come to Saul to congratulate him on how good of a person he was, quite the opposite, he had to give him a swift kick in the butt. Because Saul was thinking his ways were the Lord's ways, when in fact they were quite different.

We might think how could a man like Saul, who read his Bible and went to church could get it so wrong? It goes back to an often overlooked teaching in the Bible, the reason the risen Lord came. That it isn't just what we do or don't do that makes us sinful in God's eyes. It isn't just what we say or don't say that makes us sinful in God's eyes. It isn't just what we think or don't think that makes us sinful in God's eyes. No, Scripture teaches that we were born with a sinful nature, one that we can never get rid of. Paul, after his eyes had been opened wrote about it this way, **"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, my sinful nature."**

That's why, when we begin our service with a confession of sins we don't start with, "For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do," but, "I confess that I am by nature dead in sin." Do you understand the difference? Even if we are able to do what God wants, say what God wants, and think what God wants, that is only a thin shell covering over what's underneath. And no, it's not like an M&M where there's a layer of chocolaty goodness underneath. It's our sinful nature, a stinking pile of manure. Sinful – it's not just what we do, it's who we are.

And that's why it's so amazing that the risen Lord still comes to us, and covers us with his holy and precious blood. He is the lamb in the book of Revelation whom all heaven and earth bow down to. And he came to us, covering over our sins, so that when God looks at us, he no longer sees us for who we are, but for who Jesus is – perfect. But we know that every breath that we take on this earth, we have the sinful nature standing there right beside us. As Martin Luther put it, we are at the same time a sinner and a saint.

And so we are not only thankful for the covering that he has given us, but we also look forward to when the risen Lord will come again, at the end of time. For on that day, he will raise our bodies from the grave, minus the sinful nature. We will be more like his glorious body. Right now, we only experience a portion of Christ's redemption, on that day he will raise us from the dead, we will experience it in full.

This is the PS that John wanted to share with us at the end of his gospel. That the risen Lord still comes, still comes to us stinking piles of manure, to cover us with his blood, to take away God's wrath. But the disciple whom Jesus loved had another purpose in mind with his PS.

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He wanted to let us know the risen Lord still cares. Jesus not only gave them a miraculous haul of fish, 153 large fish by John's recollection. It was all that...and breakfast too. Perhaps the catch of fish would have reminded the disciples of another such time that Jesus instructed them how to fish. He provided them with another monster haul of fish and had followed up with, **"I will make you fishers of men."** But this time, Jesus words were a little different. **"Come and have breakfast."**

Jesus provided them with a broiled fish and some fresh baked bread for breakfast. After all the meals that Jesus provided, this ranked right up there with his feeding of the 5,000, his feeding of the

4,000. And it ranked right up there, because this meal showed that if Jesus cared enough to provide the disciples with a simple meal of breakfast after a night of fishing, he would care enough to take care of the greatest needs. It's like the airline that offers free snacks and beverages on their flights, the restaurant that leaves you a chocolate or mint with the bill, the hotel that offers to take your luggage to the room. These are all little things (reflective of the big things), but they leave a lasting impression.

And it was this little thing from Jesus, providing breakfast, that left a lasting impression, a lasting impression of Easter joy. It led the disciples to love, to serve, to go out with the message that Jesus is **“the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him.”** And it is that same Easter joy that infects us also. Not just on a Sundays but throughout the week. Not just here in church, but at work, at home, in school. It's how we spend our time, how we spend our money, how we spend our lives.

In the last stanza of Samuel Medley's great Easter hymn *I Know That My Redeemer Lives*, he closes with the verse: “He lives, all glory to his name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same.” That's what John was writing out in chapter 21, the P.S. to his book. The Risen Redeemer is still the same – he still comes, he still cares. And that is why we too can sing, “Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” Amen!