

**John 21:1-14**

If Peter was living today, he would probably be diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder). He wasn't one to sit still. He was easily distracted. And so it shouldn't surprise us that as Jesus' disciples wait in Galilee as they were told, for there Jesus would come to them, Peter jumps up and says, "I'm going fishing!" Enough of this waiting already! Peter had to do something with his hands to occupy his time. That sounded good to the others, and so they went with him. But the storyline was all too familiar. Three years earlier on that very same lake, the disciples fished all night long and caught nothing. And here, a few weeks after Easter, again after a long night of hard work, not even one fish comes into their nets.

You and I don't make our living by catching fish, but we can relate to these seven disciples. Like them, we're waiting for Jesus to come to us. We've lived through Lent and Holy Week. We've celebrated Easter. What's left? His coming to us on the clouds as He has promised.

Now we may not have ADHD, but all this waiting can get a little overwhelming for us. It's the same thing over and over. Go to church, go to work, go to school, go to church again, go back to work, eat, sleep, work, church... Why doesn't Jesus come already? Like Peter, we're tempted to say, "Enough of this! I'm getting tired of waiting! I'm going to do something else."

Now it wasn't wrong for them to go fishing, and it isn't wrong for us to go about the business of our daily lives. Eat, sleep, school, work, vacation, and recreation—we're out there, too, like those seven in the boat. We keep busy even while we wait for Jesus to come again. But like them, we too will find that there are days and nights when all that we do seems to leave our nets empty. We may find ourselves like Solomon in his old age, looking back and crying, "Vanity of vanities!" Everything in his life was a "striving after the wind." After all his years, there were really no fish at all in his empty nets.

That may be how we see things in life...one disappointment after another. Things break. Successes don't come. Just when the pay raise arrives, the gas prices jump again. Sickness takes its toll. News of murders and massacres make us sad. Day after day we look into our nets, and we also may come to the same conclusion as those disciples—there isn't anything of substance in there. Our lives are busy. We work hard. But at the end of each day, after so many frustrations and disappointments, we wonder why our lives are so empty.

Early in the morning Jesus called out to His frustrated disciples, "How's fishing?" He then told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. When they did, they caught 153 large fish. Wouldn't it be nice if Jesus would fill our nets today in the same way? Perhaps He could tell us which stocks to invest our money in, or which job opportunity to take. But if we're waiting for Jesus to tell us where to cast our nets, it will only add to our disappointments. For that's not the purpose of the Christian Faith, nor is it the point of this story.

As exciting as it is to see the disciples hit it big; to watch them drag all those large fish to shore; and to see Peter, as compulsive as always, jump in and swim the 100 yards of water—there's something greater going on in our text. Do you know what that is? Verses

12 and 13 tell us: Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast”... (And He) took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

I didn't say this is more exciting than the large catch of fish; I said it is greater. Jesus had breakfast with His disciples. Always the Host, He served them food for their hungry stomachs, and no miracle catch of fish can ever top this picture of Christ in service to us.

Looking back on your life, there are certain events which stand out. And quite often a meal was connected to those events: a particular birthday party and meal, an anniversary banquet, a wedding reception, a retirement dinner. And yet, you and I have eaten pretty much every day of our life. It's just that certain meals stand out from all the rest. But where would we be if we had not had all those other meals in between? We wouldn't be, would we? We would be dead from starvation. Though not as exciting and memorable, the same food over and over, day after day, is that which keeps us alive.

The picture of Christ serving a meal to His disciples is greater than the miracle catch of fish, because miracles as exciting as they may be, do not give faith, forgiveness, and life. Jesus does this every time He serves us in His Word and Sacraments.

I think Peter was finally starting to catch on. After they caught that mother-lode of fish, he thought, “Forget this...I'm going to the shore to be with Jesus!” Now you didn't swim 100 yards to be here this morning, but hopefully your attitude is like that of Peter: Even though going to church is not like going to the amusement park...even though I may not remember today's church service as a memorable event in my life...the meal of forgiveness, life, and salvation which Jesus serves me here is far better than anything else in my life.

If you believe that, and I pray that you do, then God's Holy Spirit has opened your eyes like He opened Saul's, to understand the real meaning of Easter...life is all about Jesus, and what He gives to us and for us in His Word: the gifts of eternal life. He's giving you these gifts right now, just as He served breakfast to His disciples on the shore.

And so let me ask this question of you this morning: How's living? Are your nets a little empty? There is more to life than just “living,” even if you're making a good living. There is Christ for you. And He calls out to you, “Come and have breakfast.” His Word may not be as entertaining as a spy-action thriller. The time spent in His House may not leave us breathless with excitement. But through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus fills your nets as only He can. He meets life's disappointments for you and gives you real joy—the joy of knowing that you are God's dear child through baptism. He takes on your frustrations and gives you real peace—the peace of knowing that He will see you through all of your troubles.

Easter means that Jesus lives for you, friend. He came to Galilee to serve His disciples, and He comes here to serve you. It's the same meal over and over, but it's the meal of His grace and mercy. It's the meal that opens heaven's door to you and for you. It's the meal of forgiveness. Even though you may get impatient with Him, He forgives you. Even though you may get bored with His Word, He forgives you. He forgives you for casting your nets into things which are sinful. He forgives you for putting other things in life ahead of Him.

His promise to you is certain. Every time you hear His Word of Grace and receive His body and blood, you will not leave with your nets empty. He fills you with all good things. He gives you faith. He gives you life that is eternal. He is always the Host, and you are always His guest. Here Christ serves you breakfast, and though His meals may not stand out in your memory, they are what life is all about. For they are life itself—life in Christ and with Christ. Amen.