



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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April 14, 2013

Easter 3

Sermon Text: [John 21:1-14](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Acts 9:1-19a](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 67](#)

Second Lesson: [Revelation 5:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 21:1-14](#)

It Is The Lord!

He reveals His concern

He reveals His power

In Christ, our Risen and Ruling Savior, dear Christian friends:

If our Lord appeared to you this morning, right now in the middle of this service, and told you the world is going to end tomorrow, "I'm coming back," what would your reaction be? Would there be a part of you that would be thinking to yourself, "Gee, I won't get to see my kids or grandkids grow up. I won't get to see who they would have married. I won't get to see this. I won't get to see that." Would you be thinking about things that you'd miss on this earth, or would you just be overjoyed that you are going to go be with the Lord? It's an interesting thought because I think there are times when we might struggle with that. Especially when we think about those first things of what we might not see or what might not happen.

You and I are so earthly bound in our vision, like what we talked about last week with Thomas, we are so bound on what we can see that we just can't begin to understand God and how he acts and what he does, so we maybe don't think about it as much. It's almost as though we spend a lot of our life going through something like one of those scenes you see in cop movies where the local police are there in a hostage situation. The FBI comes in and some other group comes in, and they are arguing about who is in control of this situation and who is the authority.

Sometimes you and I are arguing with God, although he's not saying anything. We are trying to act as though we are in charge and we are the authority. But in reality, it's always the same answer. It is the Lord. We just don't always see it. We don't always focus on it. We don't always live like it is the Lord who is in charge of everything, and because we don't, you and I at times suffer and miss out on the blessings our Lord has for us.

As we consider these words from John that I read to you a little while ago, I think Jesus is trying to teach his disciples that he is the one that is always going to be in charge, not them. He's teaching them that's a good thing because when he is charge, when it is the Lord who is the one that is doing everything and is in control of everything and not us, we know he is going to be there in his love and in his concern and in his power. That should be a great comfort and a great blessing to us.

It's probably a lesson the apostles needed to learn because even after he had tried to teach it to them over and over again, when he was ascending into heaven they still said "Lord, at this time are you going to establish the kingdom?" These lessons didn't all sink in fully on these guys until the Lord poured out the Holy Spirit on them at Pentecost.

But when you read the rest of the Book of Acts, I think you see that some of this sunk in because they faced great difficulty, great hardship and great suffering at times with a confidence that I just marvel at with this impetuous group of people that you see before Pentecost. They put their trust in God. So maybe the lessons like he was teaching them on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias or the Sea of Galilee this morning that we read about finally did sink in to them and they learned to rely on the Lord, not only in the big things, but also in the little things. That's what we see Jesus taking care of here.

We just spent Holy Week looking at the big things, how he's taken care of the big things. Jesus lived in our place and then carried all of our sins to the cross. His righteousness becomes ours through faith and the punishment our sins deserve was all placed on him. He has taken care of the biggest thing. He's taken away our sins. We see the love of God doesn't just extend to the big things. It's extends to the little things.

He had told his disciples to go to Galilee and wait for him there. Our text tells us that this was the third time he had appeared to a group of the disciples. There were only seven of them here. Five of them we have named for us. Two aren't named. But he had appeared first of all that Easter evening to all of them in the Upper Room, except Thomas wasn't there. Then we read about that last week, when he appeared the following week when Thomas was there. Then this has to take place later, as long as it took them to get back to Galilee and maybe longer. We're not told exactly when this happened, but it happened sometime later.

They had gone to Galilee to wait for the Lord, because that's what Jesus had told them to do. You can kind of see the nature of Peter was not content to just sit around and wait for the Lord. He always needed to be doing something, even if it was just sticking his foot in his mouth. He was always active and doing something. He said, "I'm going to go fish." Is that surprising? He and the Sons of Zebedee, James and John, had been fishermen at the Sea of Galilee before. This is what they had done when they were called to be disciples.

So they go out and fish through the night. The nation's historians tell us that's when they would go fish. They spent the night throwing their nets out, about 100 yards from shore, at least that's where they were at the end of the night. They were dragging the nets back in. You have to think they're muscles were getting a little sore because they hadn't been doing this all the time. Now they are back doing what they used to do and probably finding out they were using muscles they hadn't used for awhile. But they didn't overly tax their muscles because they didn't catch a thing. They just dragged in nets full of water. What a fun night? Do you think by morning they are a little bit cranky? Do you think their sinful nature was saying to Peter, "You dummy. Why did

you tell us to come do this? This was a waste of time.” Do you think they are a little ornery? They might be. Who knows. I know what our sinful natures are prone to, so I have to think they were capable of it too, right?

Then all of a sudden, here is some guy on the shore who they don't recognize, and he asks the question that expects a “no” answer. “You guys haven't caught any fish, have you.” You're tired, cranky and your muscles are sore and some guy on shore almost sounds like he's taunting you. How are you reacting to this? I have to think the sinful nature probably wasn't thrilled at the smart aleck on shore. “No we haven't caught any fish.”

But then things start to get a little different, start to get a little strange, start to get a little interesting. “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and there will be some fish there.” We're not told if they debated. I kind of wonder if they debated... “Should we do it or shouldn't we?” But they did it. Then they start pulling in the net and they can't get the net into the boat. There are seven of them there and they can't get the net into the boat. John, who in his gospel always described himself as “the disciple Jesus loved,” never uses his name, just called himself the “Son of Zebedee” and didn't even use his name there, says to Peter, “It is the Lord!” He's probably flashing back to the events that were recorded for us in Luke 4, this great catch of fish that took place in the Sea of Galilee, that it's Jesus again providing them with this miraculous catch.

Again we see Peter doing what Peter does. I can understand if you are throwing nets and dragging them in all night long why you would take your outer garment off. I can understand that. It makes sense to me. I don't really understand why you throw it back on just so you can jump in the water. I don't get it. Some commentators say that greeting one another was an expression of unity, almost a religious act, so he wanted to be fully dressed. Okay, but if you waded in 100 yards into shore, you might be fully dressed, but you are going to be pretty sloppy looking by then, aren't you? So I don't know why he does it, but he does it. He felt the need to throw his cloak on, jump in the water, leave the six behind when the seven of them couldn't drag the net into the boat, and run off because he has to go see Jesus. Peter is still kind of a lot about Peter, isn't he?

But he gets there. The other six succeed in getting the boat closer to shore even though they can't get the net in. When they get there, isn't it interesting what they find? These guys fished all night and couldn't find any fish and all of a sudden they get to shore and they have breakfast waiting for them. Burning coals, roasting fish, and some bread. Do you see the concern and love of our Savior for just the little things in life?

The disciples whom he loved and he cared for, who he had taught and who he continued to teach, who he continued to be incredibly patient with were probably cold tired and hungry, and he meets them where they are. He doesn't rebuke them. He doesn't attack them. He just meets them where they are, in love, to meet their need. You see God's concern for our lives even in the little things. Things like breakfast.

I think that's amazing to think about. I wonder how often the disciples, as they went on their various ways, on their different journeys, some of which are recorded for us, some of which are not, and they faced struggles, and they faced suffering, and they faced depravation, you wonder how often they thought back to, "But my God will take care of me. He's promised to take care of me, and he took care of me even in the little things out there by the Sea of Galilee. He'll be with me. I have to trust him even if I can't see how he is going to do it. I just trust he will do it." I think they learned that lesson over time.

Think of what the means for you and for me. As we go through life, our Lord cares for us even in the little things. I don't think we fully grasp that.

Did you ever watch an athlete on television talk about Jesus after the event and think "God's got more important things to worry about than sporting events." Do you ever think that to yourself when they start talking about Jesus and their faith and all this stuff? Okay, God has more important things to worry about than a athletic contest, sure, but have you ever thought God's a little bit bigger than you and me and he can think about a lot more things at once than you and I can? Did you ever stop to think that God knows each and every person on earth intimately, down to knowing the hairs on our head? He's a wee bit bigger and capable of more than you and I can even imagine. So is it out of line to say the God who provides breakfast to seven cold, tired fishermen knows a lot more about our lives than we even think and is concerned down to the smaller details of our life than what we think? He most certainly does.

God isn't just there when we face the tragedies of life. He's there when we face breakfast. He's there when we face picking up after kids or a husband. He's there when we face sleepless nights. He's there when we face satisfied meals. He's there all the time. Do we realize that? Do we recognize that? Do we truly appreciate that? Or do we at times spend more time thinking "God, where are you? I want you to do this, this and this, now, now and a little bit ago." That's how we are, right?

Sometimes we need to learn to just sit back and trust that the God who gives breakfast to his disciples is the God who loves us enough to be with us. He certainly has the power to be with us. Don't undersell that God can't do things.

In his wisdom, God might choose not to do some things. And who am I to say, "God, you're not using the power the right way." I never would have come up with the plan of salvation. Neither would you. You and I would have come up with "We have to do something." Then we would have screwed it up and we wouldn't be going to heaven. But he came up with the plan that he takes care of all of our sins. He pays for them all. He gives us the gift of faith. We can be absolutely certain heaven is ours because it's all about what he does, not about us.

If he's got that wisdom and he has that power to take our sins and put them on Jesus, and to take Jesus' holiness and give it to us, if he's got that kind of power, and he has the power to put 153 fish into a net, he's got power to have breakfast ready when they

get to shore, he's got enough power to be with us in ways that are best for us, even if we can't see why he doesn't do some of the things we'd like him to do. I think at times God is just trying to teach us... "Just trust me. Trust my love. Trust my power. You do your job of glorifying me and living for me, and I'll do the job of running the universe."

This isn't something where we can say, "That's our job, God. We know better." It's a hard lesson to learn. I don't think we'll ever learn it fully until we're in heaven. But isn't it amazing that our God is so patient and so loving with us that as we go through life and we're wondering who is in control, who's in charge, who's got this hostage situation between us and Satan under control, it is the Lord. Who is in charge when it comes down to the little things of life, the things that we think aren't that significant maybe for God to pay attention to, it's still the Lord. He knows us through and through. He knows best how to bring us safely to our heavenly home. Our job is to be in his Word so that our trust and our love for him grows so that we can enjoy the peace he intends us to have knowing that it is the Lord who is in control.