

Easter 3, 2010  
Good Hope Lutheran Church  
John 21. 3 ff

The sermon text this morning is the Gospel lesson we just read, found in John chapter 21, in particular the first half of that lesson, down through around verse 11. Keep it handy, look it over; and let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, we have celebrated Easter. We believe you died and rose again to save us, and that nothing will ever be the same—only, we have to confess, there's still a lot in our lives that is still the same, and doesn't seem to change. Be merciful to us Lord. Forgive us, renew us, lead us. Plant Easter deep in our hearts and let it be that Easter not only changes the universe—it changes us here as well. We pray Lord Jesus in your name, AMEN.

Stop me if you've heard this one before. Peter and James and John and all of their business partners, decide to go fishing. They were professional fishermen, after all, and trolling the waters of the Sea of Galilee is what they did for a living, so it's really no big surprise when they decide to go out on the lake. But unfortunately, they don't catch anything. They work all night and cast their nets left and right with no luck. No, fish. A man is standing on the shore, watching them. As morning begins to dawn, the man waves at them and calls out, "Fellas! Hey fellas, no fish tonight, right? Hey fellas listen, why don't you row back out there again, try casting your nets over there this time!" Ok, why not, over there this time, and when they cast their nets where the man was pointing—Peter and his partners catch more fish

than they'd ever seen before, they catch so many fish that their little boat nearly sinks under the weight. And at that point of course, they recognize the man on the beach. "It is the Lord!" they cry. And they head back to shore to meet Him.

A remarkable miracle. An amazing turn of events! Only, we've heard it before. This story, we've heard it before, it happens to be in Luke chapter 5 and we read Luke 5 in worship, back in February. I *preached* on Luke 5 back in February—so any of this sound familiar? Maybe? Hopefully. Luke 5, John 21, in many ways it is in fact exactly the same story. Now here in John 21, I do notice Jesus cooks breakfast for the disciples, I don't believe He does that in Luke. John also tells us that the disciples caught exactly 153 fish, which Luke doesn't and that's important!—I don't know why, but I'm sure it is. Beyond that, open the two Gospels and look at the stories side by side—basically it's the same thing in each.

The same thing, with one very very important difference. The events of Luke 5 happened early on in Jesus' ministry, in fact Luke 5 was the very first time Peter and the others had ever actually met Jesus. John 21, happens after Easter. John 21 happens after Easter, so the question for us today is, What difference does Easter make? What difference does Easter make, does Jesus Christ risen from the dead matter, in daily life? In Luke 5, the

fishermen had been out on the lake all night with no luck, no fish, They were tired, hungry, cranky and mad. They were kicking things inside the boat and using language that shouldn't be repeated in polite society, they were sailors after all, that was Luke 5. Now John 21. Well, they had been out on the lake all night, no luck no fish. They were tired cranky mad kicking things throwing things cussing things, you know, I'm just not sure I notice much difference in the disciples. Three years of listening to the Lord teach and preach, three years of healing and miracles and signs and wonders; Easter! The Lord dying on a cross and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day rising again, any change in the disciples? Anything at all? What difference did Easter make for them, anyway.

What difference does Easter make, for us. Think about the behaviors in your life, think about the attitudes behind the behaviors. The things we always say, the way we always feel, the way we always treat the people around us, does Easter affect any of that? Does having a Risen Lord and Savior, make any difference? When the house is a wreck, when a friend or co-worker lets you down. When tragedy strikes. When we are bored angry frustrated indifferent, what difference does Easter make? If someone took a chapter of your life from years ago, and looked at it side by side with your life as it is today—besides thinning hair and a widening middle, would there

be any difference? Would there be any growth, spiritually, or are we literally in the same boat as those disciples?

Three quick points, then the Amen, #1. Frustration, anger, grief, despair—emotions, which the fishermen in the Gospel felt out in the boat, emotions we feel too. Emotions, are not sinful. I don't want anyone feeling guilty about having a bad day at work, or what have you, frustration anger emotion by itself, is not sin. We and the disciples of old are only human, we have emotions, that's ok, it's what you *do* with your emotions. When you are dominated and controlled by what you happen to feel at the moment, that certainly can lead quickly and easily to sin. You know that right? You've seen your own life unfold. Easter means, we are now dominated by the one who died and rose again, Jesus Christ is His name. Your emotions, like everything else about you, belong in the hands of God. And Easter means, He'll take them from you, and in return will give peace and freedom.

Two. The Christian walk is, after all, a journey. I like the image of Peter, jumping into the water, struggling to get to Jesus on the shore. That reminds me of me—struggling to get to Jesus—maybe you too. We've jumped into the water—actually, we got *thrown* into the water, we were baptized right—and now our daily struggle is to be more like Jesus, more like the one we see standing on a distant shore. We're not there yet, we're not, but we don't give

up—and we know that one on the shore *is* Jesus, and that He's going to pull us through. So swim, float, flutter kick; relax. And remember. Jesus, will pull you through.

Finally, what does Easter mean? Real simple. He died and rose again for you. Jesus knows the boat you're in. He knows you're in deep, you're in over your head and drowning in problems largely of your own making. He came to rescue you, He came to lift you up and pull you through. In a world where frustration anger and despair are constant companions, so is Jesus. Easter means the Risen Lord is here with you now, with a love that will not let you go. You are safely His, forever—I pray you know that, and believe it, and that somehow today—it makes a difference.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, AMEN.