

RESTORATION FOR BREAKFAST

Series: Encounters
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Pentecost
John 21: 1-19

After the resurrection, Jesus hang around for 40 days and showed up to hundreds of people, healing the sick and performing miracles. These encounters are what launched Jesus movement. Encounters with the risen Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit became the lens through which the apostles saw their hum history and the Kingdom of God. SO much so, that they gave up their lives for this.

And because Jesus is encountering people even today, it is these encounters that will change people's lives. Now a great degree or a great economy or political system or ideology but an encounter with Jesus.

We saw Jesus appear to comfort his friends, appearing at the table of gratitude to cast out fear, we have seen Jesus appearing to deal with doubt and false confession. Today we will see his appearance again for yet another reason. And guess what, all these appearances were so important because there was a coming future that the disciples needed to be ready for.

I say this because as a society, there is a new way fo life that is coming and even more, the world will need the church. Even more, the church will need to be ready to take its place.

Let's pray

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. 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.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on 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 of the quantity of fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved, therefore, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the

boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

John 21:1-21

Some of his disciples have gotten a bit of boldness to now get out of rooms with closed doors but they have no idea what to do next. They had their lives kinda mapped out, but they have no idea what to do with the new reality. They are still trying to wrap their heads around this new thing. What are their new identities? What are their new roles?

And in this crisis of identity, Peter decides to go back to what he knew best, fishing. Before his life was interrupted, he was a fisherman. He understood that. You go to the sea, catch some fish if you are lucky and sell them in the market. Then Jesus said, he would make him start fishing for human beings instead.

He has seen Jesus raise from the dead, but things look a bit different. Now, he realises that everything Jesus had been saying is true. Now he realises that Jesus was messiah and God. So now he sees his yes is a bit in a different light especially because he is struggling with a bit of shame. So he decides to go back fishing.

Some of you might not remember this, but early in the story, Jesus said to Peter that he would deny Him three times before people. Peter was adamant that he would not. And in a few hours after that prophecy, he actually had denied Jesus 3 times. So this could also be part of what Peter is trying to compute in this new reality. He did not just deny his friend, he denied God and everyone knew about it. He did not fit in.

Quite like some of you who have accepted Jesus in this period. As you have encountered him and become aware that He is God, the enemy is bringing into your mind all those times you denied and rejected him. So you are trying to find the place you can be of the lowest profile as possible.

But what were these 4 others doing with him? You know, we may be unique but our stories are quite similar. In this season, some of the movements of your heart will be very similar to those of others.

Some of the fears and the struggle of this season came very similar and the lie of the enemy would be to pull away because no one else understands, I encourage you that now, more than ever, plug into the community and move towards compassion.

Anyway as they are fishing, Jesus appears to them. And he does some familiar things. Asking them if they have got any fish and directing them where to throw their nets and catch way more fish. And they catch a lot of fish. John (who in a lot of humility) lets us know that he was Jesus' favourite immediately recognises the pattern and immediately realises that it is Jesus with them.

Peter on hearing this jumps into the sea. I don't know why these guys stripped down to fish but what I know is if you are stripped down you do not put your clothes on to jump into the sea, no you just do it. I think there was something else going on that made Peter jump into the sea and not his now covered body.

Maybe the sheer surprise of seeing Jesus with them again and maybe the shame that he is dealing with feeling like he has really disappointed Jesus. When people we have hurt or disappointed appear in the room we walk the other way, we do not want to catch their gaze and if there is some water there, I guess we go swimming fully clothed.

Anyway, they keep hauling in the fish and they get to land and they find Jesus has made breakfast for them. Eating together was such a big deal for this culture. I can't wait for this to be over to have meals with some of the people I love.

And just a few things to think about, as I have said a couple of times now. It is a big deal that Jesus is always hosting. Even when he goes into people's houses. Even now. They have been fishing but he hosts them for breakfast.

The fish they caught was a blessing from Jesus and now it seems Jesus was not dependent on that for their provision. The beautiful things God invites us to do and empowers us to do, they are not what he provides his provisions and care for us on.

And he is caring for his friends who are struggling with what the new reality is and found it easier to go back to fishing. It's not a fix-it-first for you to experience my grace attitude, rather it is an I will meet you where you are.

The honest truth is, this season has been a set back for so many people. Even as others heal and regenerate some have gone back to addictions that they had overcome. There are the whose relationships have gotten worse in the lockdown. Some had made such huge steps in their journey with Jesus thanks to the warmth of community and now it feels like it is sliding back.

Even for you, Jesus wants to show up. Right there in your shame, in your running away and in figuring out what the new normal is. It is not a fix-it-first attitude, rather an I will meet you where you are. So without laying any conditions, Jesus hosts breakfast for his friends.

Some of you are trying to figure out whether you can still follow Jesus outside of public gatherings. Because this was it for you. Your only expression of faith. It is not that you do not believe it's just that you never had to trust and share your faith as long as you ticked your

Sunday register. So now you are finding ways of just being anonymous online and in your family.

But Jesus meets them there, and I can picture the awkward silence. As they eat the fish, the elephant in the room cannot be ignored. So Jesus brings it up, of course, he did.

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.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved 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. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

I like that Jesus at least waited until after breakfast. Because some conversations are too hard that once you start them you cannot eat. So for all those fighting couples, do have a good deal together. Tables are a great place to heal and forgive. Just wait though, until the meal is over.

And guess who reached out first? It's the one who was hurt. Human beings have this toxic habit of pouting and closing down so that the other person can see how bad they hurt you and come say sorry. Here Jesus reaches out to Peter who feels he has no moral standing to even be with Jesus, offers breakfast and offers forgiveness, So I hope I have helped you sort out, who is supposed to cook the next meal.

And it's not this cuddly teddy bear thing. Peter is made to feel sorry for himself and being made to feel like what he did was alright. Instead, it is him being called to his identity, to his calling. To what really matters. I think it matters that Jesus does this with Peter after he had gone fishing. He could have done it anywhere else in the previous 2 appearances. But fishing matters to Peter. It is at the shores that he first believed and Jesus called him to follow him and become a fisher of human beings. This was his new identity.

And some of you, as Jesus is appearing to you, He is doing the same thing. Taking you back to where you first believed and reminding you of your true identity and calling. Without guilt or shaming you.

Unfortunately, sometimes in the church to preach grace, we welcome people at the table and let them wallow in their sin. We let them blame everyone else and pat them at the back. Unfortunately sometimes in the church to preach truth after people eat at our tables we bash them over the head with every failure they have and have ever had.

But Jesus was full of grace and truth. Not some good mix of both. But 100% Grace and 100% truth. And so Jesus does not waste time showing Peter Grace and showing him he is welcome at the table, Jesus immediately reminds Peter what he was made for. He immediately makes the same invitation. Follow me.

And for me, this is reminiscent of the time Peter was walking on water and he began to sink and Jesus caught him again and the question was, “Why did you take your eyes off me”

You see shame loses it’s power when we keep our eyes focused on Jesus. Sin loses its power when we keep our eyes focused on Jesus. Fear loses it’s power when we keep our eyes focused on Jesus.

Is the storm raging? Yes. Are there questions about what the Church looks like in this new reality? Yes. Is the enemy constantly reminding you of the life you lived before you accepted Jesus? Yes. Are there things from your past screaming for your attention and sometimes they seem to have the day? Yes.

But just like for Peter, Jesus looks at us and asks, “Do you love me!” And he will ask this question enough times for it to dawn on us that he knows we love him. He will ask enough times for it to dawn on us that he knows everything even the things we have never said to anyone that made us go back fishing in the first place and then he must know we love him.

Because what shame does, is it does not let you realize who you are in God’s Kingdom. And Peter needed to know who he was. Because of the coming season, he was supposed to lead the church. So Jesus made this very important appearance to deal with shame.

Jesus will be appearing to some of you in this season to deal with the shame that you wear and as it falls to the ground. And as your shame falls to the ground he saying, “Look at what is coming, look at the work I have prepared for you since the beginning of time.”

“Follow me and do not take your eyes off me”

Let’s pray