

April 10, 2016  
John 21:1-14(15-19)

Easter 3C  
Resurrection MIRACLES

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Resurrected and Victorious King. Amen.*

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

You may not know, but I'm one that loves to sit in a boat and catch fish. I would have been right along with Peter when he said, "Guys, I'm going fishing!" They were waiting for Jesus, after all he said he was going ahead of them to Galilee. Now, I haven't fished all night long. I have been in a boat all day long. I know the feeling of not catching a fish. I do enjoy the comradery in the boat, whether it's my dad or friend. The conversation or even just listening to God's creation around you, the frogs, the birds, the water. It's peaceful.

As the disciples are in the boat that night, they had all the right equipment, they went at the right time of day, they even probably went to a spot that had success before. Yet they went all night without catching a thing. Then they here a voice from the shore, "Lads, do you have any fish?" I'm sure you've had that same conversation with someone in the neighboring boat or in the ice shack next to you if you go fishing. The disciples said, "No!" This stranger or the one they was a stranger, said to them, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." They did and they caught 153 of them. The first miracle. But wait...

How often do you try to do things in your life that doesn't seem to give you success or the results aren't what you wanted? I see this in working for the Kingdom. I come up with all sorts of ideas for ministry options. I try to do this. I try to do that! I could share with you many things that I have tried and have failed! Because I'm looking for the results. I see this also in my vocation as husband and father. I want the house run in my way. I want my kids to do exactly what I want. Are you seeing something...? Maybe I even have all the equipment, the resources, and plan something on the right weekend. Have you noticed what the pronoun is I'm using...It's I. I'm beginning to realize that if I try to do something for my own gain, for my own glory it's not going to work. It's going to fail. And it happens to you as well. Did this happen to the disciples. Quite frequently! Look at Peter, John, and the rest of the disciples. They tried to do things on their own. They wanted to be seated at the right hand in the Kingdom of God. They denied their Lord, looking out for I. You see, in this first miracle in our text that Jesus does, He blesses their fishing trip. Until Jesus blesses your discipleship journey, it won't go anywhere. I've been learning that I need to hand things over to Jesus. I can't do it on my own. I need Jesus. You can't do it on your own either, you need Jesus, and He will bless your work. By blessing your work, it may not be 153 fish, but it might that your faith is strengthened. It might be a relationship is healed or at least where you can talk with the other person without the tension. It might not be that there are 153 visitors that walk in the door and are baptized. It might be that the Lord blesses you with another dinner on the table. Or maybe one life is impacted by your prayers. It's the Lord that blesses your labors. Indeed, a great miracle. Jesus lives for the purpose of impacting and saving lives!

This wasn't the first time that Jesus did a miracle where the disciples caught fish. The first time Peter said, "Go away from me, Lord." This time when John told Peter, "It's the Lord!" Peter got out of the boat and swam towards the Resurrected Lord, knowing full well that the Lord had already forgiven Him. The relationship with Jesus had changed for Peter and it's going to change even more (more on that in a minute).

Remember what I just said, Jesus lives for the purpose of impacting and saving lives. He does it through nourishment, through compassion, through love. Jesus told the disciples to take care of the fish that they caught. The English translations really don't do this justice. In the Greek the word means something along the line of "take care of your catch and then come have breakfast." Jesus had one fish and one loaf of bread on the fire. Jesus impacts their lives by providing for their physical need here. They were hungry I'm sure. I know I get hungry in a boat when I'm fishing. I'm sure they were especially after hauling in a catch of 153 fish. Jesus feeds them again. Much like the miracle of feeding of the 5000. Jesus takes care of their physical needs.

With this second resurrection miracle in our text, Jesus shows that He has compassion on His people. He lives to help in time of need. You see the disciples in these two miracles learned that Jesus is one that provides for them, He's the one that grants them daily bread. Not just in the Cheerios you eat for breakfast, the sandwich you eat for lunch of the meat, potato, vegis that you eat for dinner. He also provides you and I with the bread of His body and the wine of his blood in the Holy Supper. He lives my hungry soul to feed.

Not only does He bless you and your labors. He also feeds you not just physically, but He also feeds your soul.

He does this through forgiving you of your sin. Which brings us to third miracle in our text. Yes, Jesus led them to 153 fish, He also fed 7 hungry men with 1 loaf of bread and 1 fish. Now, the scene on the shore gets personal. This scene where Jesus revealed Himself to the living Lord the third time to these men gets personal. He looks at Peter after breakfast and says, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Jesus asks Peter three times if Peter loves Him. Three times and then He's struck with grief, with remorse. He breaks down and cries. Peter is faced with reality. He's faced with His sin of denying Jesus. If you remember back to that incident, the Scriptures tell us that Peter went out and wept. Now Peter is weeping yet again. Peter is coming face to face with His sin.

When Jesus puts our sin back in our face, it hurts and we cry. Perhaps not shedding tears, but we feel it in our hearts and stomachs. There's a physical reaction. Peter is grieving. Jesus shows Peter that Jesus loves Peter. He loves Peter very much. This portion of the Gospel reading shows the reinstatement of Peter to His office, but it's so much more. It's the love of Jesus that prevails here.

Peter learned a valuable lesson. Sometimes love isn't fun. Sometimes love is hard. It's easy to love an inanimate object isn't it? Your TV, computer, or iPhone gives you the information you

need. Sometimes it's hard to love your child...they are sinfully selfish. Sometimes it's hard to love your pet...they don't always listen. Sometimes it's hard to love your spouse, he or she doesn't always see eye to eye with you. Sometimes it's hard to love your neighbors, the things they say sometimes are just rude. Sometimes it's hard to love your pastor, he may say things that are hurtful, even when he doesn't mean them or they come off in a tone that isn't polite. Sometimes it's hard to love your fellow parishioners, because they don't always like your ideas or they talk down at you. What do you do to those that are hard to love, do you make up excuses for not talking to them or avoiding them at all costs. I'm just as guilty as the rest of you! For those of you that I have erred and made it hard to love me, please forgive me!

Peter learned not just a valuable lesson, or he learned that He is a forgiven child of God, one of Christ's lambs that He died and rose for. Peter learned that Jesus loved Him with everything. There's a children's book with a little nutbrown hare and big nutbrown hare that say how much they love the other. But yet, Christ's love for Peter, Christ's love for you can't be completely expressed on paper. It's expressed in His actions in the way He lived, in the way He suffered, in the way He died, and in the way He rose from the dead. Jesus' love for you is shown through His Words and actions. His compassion and taking of your physical and spiritual needs.

What does Jesus tell Peter when Peter responds, you know that I love you, you know everything. Jesus says, "Feed my sheep." Jesus doesn't say, "Feed me." He says, "Feed my sheep." Jesus is telling Peter, show me that you love me by taking care of my sheep. Love your children, take care of them, change their diapers, take them to practice, pick them up after school. Love your spouse, even when there is a disagreement. When you get mad and angry? Jesus says, "I thought you loved me." Sometimes it shows that we don't always love Jesus. Sometimes we love ourselves more. Sometimes we love our TV, computer, tablet, or iPhone more. Sometimes we love our sports, our recreation more.

Peter also learns this, and so do we. He learns about Jesus' love. He learns that "Greater love has no man than this, that he lays down His life for His friends." That's what Jesus did for Peter, for you and for me. That's what Peter is going to do...He is ultimately going to die for His friend. He's going to die for Jesus. For Jesus, love is based on sacrifice. His love is never selfish. Thank God for that.

Thank God for this last miracle of our text, this miracle of reconciliation, this miracle of forgiveness, this miracle of Jesus' love for a cantankerous sheep. It shows that Jesus even loves you and me, to the point of death on the cross, and the point of His glorious resurrection. You know, God doesn't base His love for you on how much you love God. He bases His love for you solely on Himself. No matter how often you find it difficult to love others, Christ will always love you. He will continually love you even when you don't love Him back.

Even with that learning experience that Peter had, that Jesus is indeed His gracious and loving Savior. Jesus says, "Follow me." Since Jesus loves us, we are able to love others. The first miracle shows that Jesus will bless our labors. Jesus will bless our loving labors with His love. Jesus will bless you when you love your kids, when you love your spouse, when you obey your

boss, when you respect your teachers, when you obey your parents, when you show genuine care and concern for your pastor and fellow parishoners. Jesus will bless your relationships. Jesus calls us to "Follow him." Follow Him to all those that are screaming for help in our community and world. There are many that are stuck in the ditch and are in need of help. It takes time to talk with them, it may even mean getting down and dirty in love to help them out of their pit of despair. You may even get hurt as you proclaim to them the love of Jesus, but know that God will always love you in Christ. He will take the hurts and messiness unto himself.

Christ's love is amazing. And Remember He lives for your benefit, to calm your fears, to give you daily breath, to hear your soul's complaint and so much more. He lives for you, it's for your benefit and it's a benefit that we want all people to have. Peter experienced it, He shared it. As you and I experience Christ's love, let's go out and love others, because Jesus Christ is alive.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, our Resurrected King, the one who loves you. Amen.*