

WHAT'S COOKIN'?
EXODUS 16:13-18; JOHN 21:1-25
2026-04-19

Last week we looked at Jesus' earthly time after the Resurrection, not moving away from that central pivotal event in all life. **All life is changed by the resurrection.** The earth is restored, people are redeemed; there is hope for all humanity as the central promise of God is fulfilled. It's helpful to look at how Jesus chose to reveal Himself after His death and resurrection.

An undercurrent of doubt accompanied the resurrected Jesus. The women who went to the tomb weren't expecting to see Jesus alive. They were completely disheartened, and were bringing spices to anoint Jesus' body. But what they encountered staggered them. The tomb was empty, the stone was rolled away and they were greeted by one or two angels or men whose question rings through to eternity: "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" Whenever we worship, we should remember that life-giving advisory; Jesus is alive and **never talk about Jesus in the past tense. Although He said, "It is finished" while He was on the cross and then died, He wasn't referring to His influence over all life.** It was that He had fulfilled God's requirement as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, so that all of us who will believe in Him can be saved and redeemed to new life and enjoy eternal life in God's presence.

Yet the undercurrent of doubt persisted. When the women ran from the tomb to the disciples with the message given to them there, the disciples didn't believe it. They thought it was nonsense. When Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee, Matthew reported that they worshiped Him, but some doubted. When He entered their room, though the doors were locked, Thomas, who was absent the first time this happened, refused to believe He was alive "until he touched the wounds in Jesus' hands and side himself. The two men talking on the road to Emmaus—Cleopas and Simon walked side by side with Jesus as He explained the Scriptures to them, and still did not recognize Him until He broke bread with them and gave thanks. They doubted, they **weren't looking for a living Redeemer until they tripped over Him, so to speak.**

But Jesus did return physically. What He shared during that time is important. He told the disciples to go and make other disciples of all nations. Tell others the good news of the Gospel. He told them He would be with them to the end of the age. He explained the Scriptures to them—how Christ must suffer and die and rise again. And He talked faith, telling Thomas that he believed because he had seen Jesus, but "blessed are those who have not seen Him yet have believed." That's flat out for our benefit. We haven't seen Him yet we believe and are blessed.

That's where we've been. Let's shift focus. How many of you like home cooking? How about food fresh off the grill? Fresh baked bread? How about when you've been out working before eating and you come in hankering for breakfast—"hangry" as the kids call it

today? How do you like it when someone prepares a hot breakfast for you? That's all here in this morning's story. Oh, and there's 1 more very special thing, how about sharing that with your favourite friend—or better still, with Jesus—not only your best friend but Lord and Saviour?

It's a deliciously special passage—pun intended—filled with the themes that Jesus continually spoke of during His years of ministry prior to His crucifixion. It opens with Peter deciding he was going fishing. James and John, Thomas, Nathaniel and two other unnamed disciples with him also decided to join him. You get the sense they're just hanging around and the fishing idea pops up as a way to do something so they're not just idling their jets. Like, I have nothing better to do so, yeah, let's go.

And some things in life just never change. Have you ever geared up for a big event and you go full tilt at it, but when it's over you're left feeling kind of empty, like what will you fill that void with now? Remember the same scene earlier, when the guys had come in from an overnight excursion but with nothing to show for it? **Think about times in your life when you spent considerable time and energy on something that ended up a waste of time.** On that earlier occasion, Jesus told Peter to put out into the water again and drop his net. That time, Peter reluctantly did so, because it was Jesus who said to, but **perhaps his inner rebellious side was screaming, “What in the world does a carpenter know about fishing?** After all, who's the pro here?” So, Jesus, how about You stick to building the boat and leave me to do the fishing. Am I touching any nerve with you? Do you remember a time when someone you thought knew much, much less than you about something, telling you what and how to do it? Do you remember how you felt? Then how you felt when they were right? (Everett on the roof).

Here it is, déjà vu, ‘all over again’! But this time it's even worse. **Jesus asks the most embarrassing of questions, “Friends, haven't you caught any fish?”** Come on Jesus, that's true, but did you have to shout it so the whole world would know? They haven't figured it out yet, but when Jesus told them to put their nets down on the right side of the boat and they caught 153 “keepers”, the elevator (an anachronism) finally made it to the top floor and John figured out it was Jesus on the shore. Peter, in his usual relaxed manner jumped overboard to get to Jesus.

So what's going on here? What's with the 153 fish? Let's just put it in the same category as Peter asking Jesus how many times we should forgive another person. The understood Jewish answer was 3 times, and Peter, trying to be extraordinarily gracious, suggested 7 times. But Jesus' answer was “not 7 but 77 times—or it may even mean 70 X 7. The bottom line is way more than you can count or remember.

This was as straight a message as you can get. Jesus is saying, **“Do you remember when I first found you? What were you doing?** Fishing, Lord. And what did I promise you? Uh, that you would make us fishers of men. Right, and what are you doing now? Uh, I guess you could say we're back to fishing again. Right again. And what do you think I want you to be about? Let me guess. You'd still like us to be fishers of men. Bullseye! And how many men do you think you might catch or harvest? I'm guessing 153? No wait, I think I'm getting this. This is really a trick question, right? Like how many times we should forgive someone. Can I change my final answer? Sure. I'd say you will make the harvest so plentiful we won't be able to count it.

Bingo. This is still at the centre of Jesus' heart. **The other obvious piece is He is the One who feeds us.** God fed the Israelites during their forty year journey in the wilderness with manna from heaven. He added quail, but that was more to quiet their bellyaching about not having any meat and their getting tired of a manna diet without reprieve. In the next chapter of Exodus, He also provided them with water that came gushing out of a rock. God is Jehovah Jirah—our provider. Back to John's account, breakfast was all ready when the disciples arrived. They didn't have to ask Him to prepare or provide it. It was all done—God's grace. **But get this.** Even though He had it ready, He invited them to bring the fish "they'd" caught—remember He led them right to the right spot—and make the breakfast even better. **Jesus is always eager for you to cooperate with Him and to help multiply the blessing to others, even though He can do it to perfection Himself.** He's just that loving, gracious and generous. Think about when your child wants to "help" you make, bake or build something. Of course you can do it better yourself and they might actually mess it up and make it worse but it's your delight to teach them how and encourage their growth and excellence. And on top of that, Jesus is just delighted to sup with you, to fellowship with you. "I stand at the door and knock. Whoever opens the door, I will come in and sup with him and he/she with Me." (Revelation 3:20) Jesus wants that intimate relationship with you more than anything. Then He wants you to have that kind of intimacy with one another. **Practise hospitality with one another; especially with those who can't return the favour.** God blesses those who exercise hospitality—even if you don't have the gift of hospitality as some do.

There's more. Jesus loves you just the way you are. You don't have to wait until you're good enough to come to Him. You'll never be good enough. He loves you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you that way. And when you shrink back or relapse into former ways, it's never too much trouble, in fact it's His delight to draw you, to lift you up and encourage you forward, to be what He intended you to be, to do what He intended you to do.

There was more on Jesus' heart. He went one on one with Peter and asked him three times if he loved Him. Three times Peter said yes and on the third time he got pretty upset and said, "Lord, you know all things; you know I love you." Every time Peter affirmed his love for Jesus, Jesus told him: "Feed My sheep". The three times of asking about Peter's real heart, lined up with the three times that Peter denied even "know[ing] the man" the night Jesus was betrayed. Jesus didn't leave Peter in jail. He came back to Peter personally and recommissioned him to feed Jesus' flock. He cared too much to leave Peter as He was and revived him, reestablished him, repurposed him to be what He intended Peter to be all along. Jesus is intent on fashioning your character into His form. Though we sometimes resist Jesus' intervention, it's a good idea to work with Him on His agenda, not yours!

Do you leave others in jail when they disappoint you or don't do what you expected them to do or when they fall short of your standards? "He came to love, heal and forgive; He lived and died to by my pardon." Because He lives..." Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

The other question: Are you feeding Jesus' sheep, or are you starving them? Feed His sheep this week!