

Sermon for 3rd Sunday after Easter, April 14, 2013

John 21:1-19

Blessings to you and **peace** from God the Father, our **risen** Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the **Holy** Spirit. Amen

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Homeostasis. Now **there** is a word for you. This word comes from the Greek *homoio* which means **similar or like** and *stasis* which means **state of standing or being**. Homeostasis is defined as: *a state of equilibrium obtained when tension or a drive has been reduced or eliminated*. Rather **scientific** sounding, is it not???

Homeostasis **this** is what we strive for when our world has been turned **upside down**, when our lives are **out of control or balance**. We look for some sort of **grounding** or that which is **familiar** so we can get our bearings, to **feel like** we have some **order** or can make **some sense** of our lives when we feel like **order and sense is the last thing** we are feeling at the moment. We are looking for something **familiar** which is our comfort default in the world. We seek *homeostasis* when **chaos** has set in: a **loved** one has died, when we feel **weak or vulnerable** because of illness, when we have just **lost or broken up with** “the love

of our life”, or any number of **other** reasons. When what we have come to know as “normal” no longer exists. This is when we **retreat** to those places of **comfort and safety** whether it be **spending time** with family and friends or **doing something** that we love to do or doing something we are good at: like fishing.

In our gospel reading for this morning we find the disciples returning to **their** place of homeostasis—they went back to **what they knew**-fishing at the Sea of Tiberius. This was a place that represented a **safe harbor** for the disciples—at least for **7** of the **11** that were there that day. What else would these men who were fishermen **all their lives** do now that their **Lord and Master** was no long with them? They **returned** to the work they had done for **years** before Jesus **came and called them** to “follow him” the first time.

These men were trying to get back to business as usual. But could it ever be **“business as usual”** again? The disciples had spent **3 years** with Jesus. Living with him, seeing **miracles** done—the **blind** received their sight, the **lame** were healed, the **deaf** could hear, **demons** were cast off, and the **lepers** were made clean. Could they **truly ever go back** to the way they were because **they were not the same** men now as they were when Jesus first called them. Was it not in our reading just last week when **Jesus breathed on them** and gave them the **power** of the Holy Spirit? Also, we read that Jesus gave them **his authority** to forgive sins

and pass judgment on people. Now here we find them **returning to what they know—fishing—hmm.**

I would like to talk a bit more about that “**business as usual**” idea because once **God and Jesus** have come into our lives it can **honestly** never be “business as usual” again no matter **how much** we might like to try and think it is. When we are baptized, when we are marked with the sign of the cross of Jesus Christ forever **something changes** and we can **never go back**. There is **no return** to the ordinary, there is **no easy way out** of the new reality into which—**not only** the **disciples** were called to live—but the **new reality** in which we are now called to live with **God and Jesus** in our lives. This is a way of living for **all** people who are believers no matter how **young or old** we are. There is **always something** we can do for **God and the kingdom**. Nothing is too big or too small. If you are **young** there might be someone at school **who is new** that you could make friends with or be kind to, maybe there is someone who is **not the most popular kid** in school that you could **get to know**, perhaps a **friend is struggling** with a subject you are good at, or possibly just **helping out at home** is something you could do. Even as we get older there are many opportunities to be of service to others, to lend a **listening ear** to someone in pain or suffering, to help a **coworker** who needs you, to help at a **soup kitchen**, to find a **favorite cause** to support, and the list goes

on. There is no such thing as “**business as usual**” when it comes to God, Jesus, and what we are **called to do** as believers.

On the other hand, I guess, we **could be** like the disciples in today’s reading. When faced with the choice between embarking on a **new and challenging** ministry blessed by Jesus himself they **chose to stay** where life is familiar and comfortable; they chose *homeostasis*. Doing the **same ole same ole thing** they have done for years but we know that will not last for long.

Then Jesus shows up for the **third time** since His resurrection. He gives the men a fishing lesson. In fishing, like discipleship, there are **no guarantees** of immediate success. That night they had **caught nothing** but when Jesus came to them after daybreak standing on the beach, he **simply asked** the question that a fisherman who has worked all night with nothing to show for it does not want to hear, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” Then Jesus proceeded to **tell them** what to do. Just **put the nets** over the right side of the boat and you will find some fish—153 to be exact. **Immediately** they knew who it was. There was **no** mistaking it!!!

The next offer was for Jesus to request they **come and have breakfast** together. Surely they must have been hungry after fishing all night and catching nothing. Let us have a meal together. Have some fish, have some bread. In this

sacred meal which Jesus feeds his disciples, one that is reminiscent of the Last Supper, He has drawn back into the fold those who had **abandoned him** in his hour of need and the one who **denied him 3 times** before his crucifixion.

Next it is Peter who is asked **3 times** by Jesus if he loves Him. Each of the 3 times he **says he does**. Jesus gives him the **commands** of “Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, and feed my sheep.” This is a command **for all of us** as it shows Jesus’ faithfulness to those who were not faithful to him—most **notably** the one who denied Him **3 times**. It is the **grace of God** at work in the life of Jesus’ followers—both the disciples **then and now**. If you love me—show it. To this day Jesus **continues** to call, to feed, and to empower the doubters and deniers for ministry in the world.

Here are some **questions** for us? How often is it **easier** to simply deny, deny, deny because of what it might cost us—a friendship, a relationship with someone we care about. Have we looked the other way when we could have **spoken up** for what is right? Because as I said, once **God and Jesus** are a part of our lives we can never go back. There will continue to be **something** we can do for the kingdom time after time and it is not always going to be an easy road or path to follow.

Then Jesus **simply** says to Peter, “Follow me.” just as Jesus had said to him when they first met along the beach three years before. That is it!! Nothing more—nothing less. No more homeostasis, no more life as he/we knew it, no more retreating into the background to live a life of **safety and familiarity**, no more **“business as usual”**. From now on it was going to be **anything but**.

You know what? **I believe** that when all is said and done there is some of Peter in all of us. We all want to retreat to a place of comfort when the going gets tough, we all want to have the safety of the known, and we all deny God’s call at some time or another in our lives. But it is the sheer grace and love of God through Jesus that **calls us to follow** in the face of all these things. To **follow** him, to **step out** of that comfort zone, to **love God’s people** by tending and feeding them. Oh, there is no step by step manual to assure our success that is for certain. Sometimes we will disappoint and even fall away, but with **God’s love** supporting us, with our response of “YES” when we are asked to follow for the sake of the gospel in ordinary and everyday ways we can change the world around us. Jesus does not give up on any of us—ever!!! He is **constantly** calling us to follow and love in ways that are not always glamorous or successful for that matter. Love can be repetitive, disappointing, and unrecognized but that **does not mean** we are **not** called to love and it **does not mean** we are **not** called to go to those places we may

not want to go. God **calls** us, God will **bring love to life** within us for the sake of others—there is no such thing as “**business as usual**” with God. *AMEN to that.*