

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church

Shobonier, Illinois

Easter 3C

May 4, 2025

John 21:1-14

It Is the Lord

That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" (John 21:7 ESV)

Dearly Beloved in Christ, the only Savior of the world:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

What a group those disciples were! They had followed Jesus for three years, listening to Him preach and teach and do miracles of many kinds. They'd now seen Him slaughtered for the sin of the world as He shed His blood on the cross. They knew that He'd been buried in Joseph's virgin tomb. They'd heard reports that Jesus had risen from the dead and had even seen Him when He twice appeared to them as they cowered behind closed doors. Jesus had chosen them to make them fishers of men, and commissioned them to be His apostles, or "sent ones," to exercise the binding and loosing keys of the Kingdom of God (John 20.21-23).

So, what do they do? They go fishing. Seven of our Lord's disciples had returned to Galilee according to His words (Mat. 28:10, 16). So, while they were waiting for Jesus to come to them, Peter said, "I'm going fishing." Now this isn't really so strange because Peter, James, and John had been fishermen before Jesus had called them to follow Him. They were simply doing what they knew to do while they waited for Jesus. Yet, like another occasion, they had labored all night and caught nothing. They were professionals. They had the right equipment, went to the right place at the right time. They did everything right, humanly speaking. Yet, they had

caught nothing. And isn't that the way life often is? You work and work, doing all the right things, and nothing good comes from it.

These disciples were soon to learn, however, that "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it." (Psalm 127:1). Therefore, unless the Lord Jesus Himself builds His Church, everything the disciples do is in vain. And so it remains with the Church today.

Jesus knows His disciples and chooses this time to manifest Himself to them. He reveals Himself to them for the strengthening of their faith. When Jesus called to them and asked if they have any fish, they didn't realize that it was the Lord. When they answered "No," He tells them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."

Now one would think that they would have remembered another time when Jesus had told them how to do their job and where to let down their nets. One would think that they would remember the marvelous catch of fish they had taken in, a catch so large that their nets began to tear, another boat had to be called to help, and both boats almost sank with the size of the catch.

This time they have another miraculous catch of fish. At this, John realized who was standing on the shore. By the grace of God, he remembered that earlier time and that other miraculous catch. Thus, he declared, "It is the Lord!" What great news! So great, that Peter couldn't wait to see Him and jumps in the water.

And why would Peter and those disciples be so eager to see the Lord? Because they loved Him and wanted to be in His presence. They knew Him to be a loving and forgiving Lord. After all, He hadn't chastised them when He appeared to them in the room on those two other occasions. Rather, He forgave them and appointed them to be His apostles, to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins. In so doing, they would proclaim Jesus crucified, dead, buried, and risen from the dead. Jesus had chosen them, taught them, died for them, risen for them, and forgiven them of all their sins.

When they arrived on shore, they found “a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.” This too should have reminded them of Jesus feeding 5,000 with a couple of fish and a few loaves of bread (John 6), especially when Jesus “took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.” Yes, Jesus had revealed Himself to them this third time “after He was raised from the dead.”

So, what does this have to do with us? Well, so often we get caught up in the things of this world. We depend on “our own reason or strength” to get through life as we do things our own way. We labor but don’t seem to get ahead. We become weary as we sometimes doubt, or more likely ignore, our Lord’s resurrection, His Word, and His presence and His work in our lives.

Yet, He comes to us and reveals Himself to us. In Baptism, we were caught in the net of eternal life, which is cast out by the Church Jesus established on Easter evening, when He commissioned His disciples to forgive sins. Thus, we too are eager to see Him, as were the disciples. For with Him, our hope is revived, and our life renewed. He comes to reveal Himself to us for the strengthening of our faith. Through the forgiveness of sins, He strengthens us to live our daily lives and for the work He has given us to do. And as we live in the sure and certain hope of eternal life, we trust in Him and His Word and follow His directions and do things the way He tells us to do them. And what He tells us to do is to preach the Gospel in its truth and purity and administer the Sacraments according to our Lord’s institution. Through the preaching of the Gospel, in all its forms, God creates and sustains saving faith, and adds to His Church.

Indeed, it is this very Gospel which reveals our risen Lord to us. Jesus declared, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” (John 10:11). And then He went out and did just that. He gave His life for the sheep, all of them, whether they would listen to His voice or not, whether they would trust Him and in Him or not. Jesus’ death atoned for the sins of the whole world, and that most certainly includes each of you. His resurrection guarantees His victory over sin, death, and hell. ““O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:55-57). Did you hear that? God gives **us** the victory “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Yes, the risen Lord has manifested Himself to us. He does so each Lord’s Day and each time we gather to receive His gifts. For He invites us here to reveal Himself to us through Word

and Sacrament. He invites us here to forgive our sins through the Holy Absolution, the Holy Gospel, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion. By the grace of God, we are thrilled to say with John, "It is the Lord." He is with us. Therefore, we live in humble dependence, grateful for the blessings He daily gives, and trusting Him to provide also for the future, here in time and for eternity in heaven.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener