

The Third Sunday of Easter  
May 5, 2019

Text: John 21:1-14

Theme: “Jesus—Here?”

People and places, we often associate particular people with particular places. We expect to see our coworkers in the workplace, our neighbors in our neighborhood, and our brothers and sisters in Christ here. But people can be out of place, or so it would appear at first glance. Maybe you see one of the associates from Walmart in Kroger and you think, “now, I’ve seen this person somewhere.” Sometimes Nancy and I run into CCA children out in the community and they are surprised to see us. We are out of place and maybe not dressed as they are accustomed to seeing us. There could also be the situation of being seen where one would rather that not happen. “Oh, no, not \_\_\_\_\_, here?”

“It is the Lord!” so cried out John. His appearing was a surprise to the apostles. They were expecting Jesus, yet not expecting Jesus, ‘Jesus, here?’ Waiting for our Lord is part of our Christian calling, a big part, it should be an expectant wait. In our wait we can forget just how near He is. Jesus—here?

Yes, Jesus is here. Are we not expecting Him to be here? He has promised to be in the midst of those gathered in His Name, like we are right now. We have a regular place and a regular time for our gathering. It’s on Sunday morning. This is the first day of the week. Remember, Jesus rose on the first day as we observed just two weeks ago. Every Sunday morning is a time to remember. This first day has become known as the Lord’s Day. In the Third Commandment God tells us, “Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.” It is God who makes us holy, a kingdom of priests as we read in our lesson from Revelation 5 (v. 10). We keep the Sabbath by gathering as the people of God to be in the

presence of God. It would not have to be this particular day, but often, most often, it is. It's a cycle, an ongoing one. Why would we not want to spent this time with God? We set a time and place aside. It's on our calendar, valued.

We came, take a seat, and dine with our Lord. We feed on His Word and we even receive Him bodily as we take in His body and His blood. It is a satisfying time. We receive forgiveness because God's justice has been satisfied in Jesus. We leave being informed, given the path that God would have us walk on.

We receive and we give back from what we have received. When those six fishers of our text make their way to shore, breakfast is ready when they arrive. Jesus has fish and bread prepared. Yet He asks them to bring of the fish they have caught, some from those 153 whoppers. Jesus doesn't need anything, yet He calls us to give back from what He has entrusted to us.

Jesus—here? Yes, we expect it. It's no surprise, but the ongoing amazement is our Lord is so gracious to do it. So, yes, Jesus is on our calendar here. We may see Him in a few other spots on our schedule, like before meals. We do so in our homes, and we are not ashamed to do so in public, not as a show, but as a remembrance that He gives us all we need to support this body and life. We may well, do well, to have Jesus penciled in some other spots, a daily time of hearing Him from His word and speaking to Him in prayer.

We look at our text, and yes, the apostles were expecting Jesus. In Matthew 28 we learn they were told that He would be going ahead of them into Galilee (Matthew 28:8, angels to women, 28:10, Jesus to women to tell His brothers to meet Him there). We have the big Galilean appearance at the end of Matthew 28, those words of commissioning, words for disciples to be making disciples by baptizing and teaching. So here in our text

they are in Galilee. We also know they will be instructed to wait in Jerusalem to be empowered from on high, but now they are in Galilee. As we learn from verse 14 of our text this is the third time Jesus has appeared to His disciples (the other two in John 20). He has not made an appearance in Galilee yet, but that is about to change.

So they are waiting, what to do while you wait? Peter says, 'I don't know about you guys, but I'm going fishing.' That seemed reasonable. He had not forgotten how. Maybe he thought he could bring in a good catch. His fishing idea quickly catches on. He will have some partners. Those of Zebedee would be James and John. As fishermen they would be good help, knew how to handle a boat and to cast out and haul in nets. Of the others we don't know so much as far as their fishing résumés. We have Thomas, and Nathanael named for us, then two more who are unnamed, a fishing party of seven. This would be plenty of bodies in a small boat. We could imagine this as a good man thing to do.

Out they go and out go the nets, and in they come and it happens again and again and again. But it's the same result, disappointing result, no fish. It turns into an all-night activity. They just keep coming up empty. Then early in the morning, the day was just breaking, a voice from the shore. Close enough to hear, but not so close as to recognize the face, about 100 yards out, "Do you have any fish?" (v. 5) Things are about to change.

So where will Jesus show up? It is not always where we have Him scheduled. We can be very occupied, even preoccupied. As you can see from this, we can fill up our week so quickly. So we look at Tuesday afternoon. I don't remember putting Jesus there, but what's that voice? I'm having a hard time, a very hard time, that old burn out thing again, but then the voice, "Cast all your anxieties on Him for He cares for you." Or maybe there is a brother in Christ who is having a hard time. I could drop by Dairy Queen and bring

him a Blizzard, but there's a repeat of the 5<sup>th</sup> round of the NFL draft on, but then I hear, "Carry one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ." Maybe I'm in front of my computer or just have my phone or pad in hand. You can see most anything on the Internet, plenty of stuff out there to encourage you to think bad about other folks, and plenty out there that will give you a real eyeful, but those words, maybe a little faint or fuzzy, but they are there, "And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. <sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup> Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving." (Ephesians 5:2-4) Jesus—here, now?

But back to the shore. The voice must be familiar. He speaks endearing words, "Children." They have heard words like this before, not that long ago. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. (though it's a different word in the Greek, in 13, *tekni*, a ( in our text, *Paidi*, a--John 13:13). What He now speaks will be familiar to at least Peter. He gives fishing instructions. The answer to His question is, "no," no, they have not caught a thing. He tells them what to do. "Cast the net on the right side...and you will find some." (v. 6) So they do and they do; they really find as the net is filled with what has been found. They are not able to haul it back into the boat. They just drag it along.

And they know, at least one. He cries out, "It is the Lord." This is John calling. It had to be a cry of joy. Peter reacts too, quite different from the other time Jesus had given him fishing instructions. On that occasion he had said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." (Luke 5:8) Now Peter can't wait to close that 100 yard distance that separated them. He jumps into the water to swim to the Lord.

They should not be surprised at what has happened. The Lord is doing those things they were accustomed to Him doing, mighty deeds! He healed the sick, cast out demons, cleansed the lepers, and multiplied fish and loaves. So providing the 153 fish should not have been surprising. This is the only miracle of Jesus we have recorded during the 40 days after His resurrection. But He was doing more than mighty deeds. He was serving, had come for that very thing.

As they see Jesus has their meal all prepared and invites them for breakfast, they could remember that it was their Lord who had taken upon Himself to wash their feet at the last meal before His death. But of course the biggest service was the giving of Himself as sacrifice. It was just as He had said would happen. Just as it was written in the law and the prophets. He was a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep before its shearers He was silent (Isaiah 53:7) His sacrifice was redemption, no, it was not with gold or silver but His precious blood like a lamb without spot of blemish (1 Peter 1:18, 19). “And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:9-10) He was slain, but now He lives. He holds the keys of death and Hades. He is the Lord of life.

This is the One who has breakfast for them. He appears to His disciples over this period of 40 days preparing them for the time when they will be apart from His appearing. They must have coveted that time with Him. We are here today to hear. Like Peter we take it upon ourselves to be near our Lord. We make our way to where the Lord has promised to be found. We have time with our Lord here like we have it nowhere else.

But we don't live in this space in this place. We go out to serve. The apostle would go forth to be fishers of men like the world had never seen. They had the keys of the kingdom and they were eager to open up the kingdom to more with that freeing forgiveness Jesus had won. We, you and I, we go out. Yes, we have this time that we do set aside, but Jesus is much more than a block on our calendar. It is not that we fit Jesus in, no, we are built on Jesus! He is the foundation. We are the living stones. He guides us and equips us and does fit us together as a holy temple, His body to do His work.

We are expecting Jesus, yes, here! He expects us to expect Him and walk in His light all the time. One day He returns. Those who do not know him will know it's Him and may cry out, "Jesus, here? No, no, no!" But for those who know Him it will be, "Jesus—Here!!! Yes, yes, yes!" For Jesus' sake. Amen