

May 9, 2010 Mother's Day John 21:1-14

RESURRECTION NEWS

"IT'S THE LORD"

This truly is the day that the Lord has made. In fact everyday is a day that the Lord has made and we should always rejoice in each one. Every 24 hours God graces us with a new 24 hours to serve him, to watch his miracles, to give us strength, courage, wisdom and so much more. Though today my sermon is not about mothers, we salute you and say "YAHOO" to all mothers of all ages. Though we celebrate Mother's Day once a year, God remembers them every day. May you all have a blessed day.

Today we continue our Resurrection News. After all we are resurrection people for "up from the grave he arose in victory" and he walks and talks with us and tells us how much he loves us. And we live not as those who have no hope, but as those who have life, new life through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord! That's the Good News. He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart. That's the wonderful story of the resurrection that will never go away, but guides our daily lives.

7 disciples join together at the lake following Jesus' resurrection. Since the resurrection they have already seen the Lord a few times. At least John tells us that fact when he concludes this section with the words, "*This was the third time Jesus showed himself to his followers after he was raised from the dead.*" And the

beginning of this section John writes, “*Jesus showed himself to his followers....again.*”

I like those words...”*Jesus showed himself to his followers.....again.*” That tells me that he is around all the time. Though we may not feel his presence, or notice his presence, he is always there. In his devotion Max Lucado says, “It is the normality not the uniqueness of God’s miracles that causes them to be so staggering. Rather than shocking the globe with an occasional demonstration of deity, God has opted to display his power daily...Pounding waves. Prism-cast colors. Births, death, life. We are surrounded by miracles. God is throwing testimonies at us like fireworks, each one exploding, “God is! God is!”

It’s amazing for when you least expect it, Jesus arrives...again. Before his death Jesus shows up during a horrible storm and calms the wind and the sea. Jesus shows up in a town and a tax collector who is hanging from a tree limb is invited to have lunch with Jesus and finds salvation. Following his resurrection Jesus shows up in a garden to grieving women and calms their fears. He shows up on a road talking to 2 guys who were heading home discouraged because the one they pinned their hopes upon had died and he breaks open God’s word of hope concerning himself and what was to be. Then in the very room where he celebrated his last meal with his disciples he shows up and breathes the Holy Spirit into their hearts. Then a week later again in the Upper Room he speaks to a doubting

Thomas not to fear, that he is really alive. See the nail prints in his hands...see the gash in his side...see the marks on his forehead from the crown of thorns, stop doubting, but believe. In a few weeks we will see how he appeared on the road to Damascus as he transformed someone who persecuted his followers and gave him a new name, a new life, and commissions him to go preach his story to the Gentile nation.

So what do we make of today's lesson of Resurrection News? Those 7 guys did something we might be surprised with. After the resurrection they found themselves thinking about their future. This man who they had followed and spent just about every day with these past 3 years is not always with them now, at least not in person like they knew before. They might have been confused as what to do next waiting for their instructions. The seeds of faith had just been planted. The seeds were growing inside them like the seeds of corn you see as you travel around these days. A few weeks ago you could see the ground changing color as the disking took place and seeds were planted. You saw some of those seeds breaking forth from the ground. Now you begin to see not the color of dirt so much, but green...the green of the corn sprouting forth like new birth, stretching their little leaves toward heaven telling the world and the farmers, "hey, here we are world . We have life in order to give life."

Maybe that was what was happening to these disciples. Slowly things were changing. They needed to wait for that powerful push to new life of the Holy Spirit within them. So they decided to go do what they had not done in quite awhile...to join Peter for a night of fishing. They decided to get their hands dirty doing what they did before they were called to a different mission. They got all geared up, put their fishing stuff in the boat, cast off and went to the place on the Sea of Galilee that they fished for many years. They felt the sting of the waves hitting the boat, the wind filling the sails pushing them forward to their destination, the spray of the sea hitting their faces and it brought back many wonderful memories of other fishing trips and big catches, even fighting the storms at sea. They got their nets ready and their hands were getting dirty with each passing moment. They sang some songs and laughed thinking their hands were a little softer now since they hadn't done this for awhile and they laughed like they had not laughed in many months. These last 3 years with Jesus saw joys, sorrows, defeat, victories, sadness, and many more emotions. Perhaps they shared their thoughts and reminded each other about Jesus walking on the water coming to them in a storm. Peter remembers the time Jesus called him to come and walk on the water during the storm and he got out of the boat and walked to Jesus. The disciples poked fun at him because he almost drowned. But for Peter, it was an amazing trip, taking that first step out of the boat, then very carefully the other, until he was standing on the

water taking small steps toward Jesus until he lost his focus and let the wind and the rain distract and down he went, until Jesus reached down to grab him. He remembered Jesus words, not said with meanness, but with loving affection, “ oh ye of little faith.” Peter wonders how long he could have stayed walking on the water if he had not doubted or taken his eyes off Jesus. What a story he would have had to tell his grandkids and great grandkids about dancing on the waves with Jesus. Even the events of these past weeks were still on their minds. From parading into Jerusalem to cries of victory in Jesus, to that Friday when Jesus was crucified, to the women’s story of the empty tomb, to seeing their risen Lord themselves it had been a rollercoaster ride. Now it was different. They could relax, take a break and concentrate on what they knew best....fishing. They were excited as they pushed off the shore heading to their favorite fishing spot where the fish were plentiful. Others were not around so they had the whole lake to themselves. It was a good day....the weather was just perfect...it was just about dusk and they could see fish jumping... their thought was to push out to the deep and catch a few...God was good.

So they fished all night. But every time they brought in the nets they were empty. They tried again and again, but no luck. Sunrise was coming and they decided they wouldn’t catch any fish so they headed home disappointed that the night seemed so wasted. As they got near the shore it was a bright day. They

prepared their boat to land, worked putting their nets away. Then they noticed someone on the hillside, and saw some smoke rising from a fire. The stranger yells out, “How big was your catch boys?” Sheepishly one yelled back, “Bad night. The fish weren’t biting.” “Listen, before you dock take your net and throw it on the right side of your boat.” These experienced fishermen knew there weren’t any fish this close to shore or they could have spotted them. But perhaps they remembered another time when Jesus was with them and they had a bad night fishing that he told them the same thing and lo and behold they got so many fish that their boats almost sank. Maybe something within them made them look for a miracle, so they prepared their net and over the side it went. It wasn’t more than 2 seconds before the fish began jumping into their net. They worked hard to corral all the fish and secure them in the net. The stranger on the shore was smiling. The men kept feverishly working to bring the net in and secure it. John stops to wipe his brow and looks toward the shore and shades his eyes from the sun and stares in the direction of the stranger. When his eyes were finally focused correctly, he said to himself, “Why that’s Jesus. Yes I’m sure that’s Jesus.” Meanwhile Peter and the others yelled at John to stop gazing into space and give a hand. And John looks one more time at the stranger and blurts out, “Fellows, that man on the shore, it’s the Lord.” They all stopped what they were doing, looked toward the shore, recognized the Lord maybe when Jesus opened his arms to welcome them. Peter,

naked, because that's how he fished, threw a towel around his body jumped into the water and swam to shore while the others finished their chores. And when the boat was docked they all ran to see Jesus and have breakfast with him for he was already cooking breakfast for them. They were truly blessed.

What an amazing story. You see Jesus came to them again. Now folks there is a lesson here for us as well. Maybe one lesson might be **listen to Jesus**. What if those guys decided that they knew better than Jesus and they did not throw their nets overboard? They would have lost out. I think this was a test of their faith. Why should these experienced fishermen believe a total stranger standing on the shore? I believe it was a heart thing. The very presence of the stranger brought them peace. Even from the shore they felt an awesome presence that led them to follow his instruction. "Throw your nets on the right side." WOW! He knew where the fish were. The disciples couldn't see them, but Jesus knew where they were.

Isn't that the case in our lives as well? We don't know the future. Oh we might make plans for the future but they may not always turn out that way. I always thought I would be working in a factory until it was time to retire. Being in ministry was not one of my dreams. I believed we would live in the same house until we died, just like my mom and dad. But God led us into ministry and to this land. Who knew? God did! I read a sad story in the paper the other day about the Nashville storms. An aged retired couple who had saved for years to enjoy going

out to dinner often were swept away by the rising water as they headed to their favorite spot to eat. Another retired couple were heading for church on Sunday perhaps to help pray for those who felt the blunt of this storm but their car was washed away by the rushing waters. One couple looking forward to a wonderful meal,

another heading to feast on God's glorious word not knowing that God was preparing a place for them at the great banquet table in Heaven. Homes lost, property lost, jobs lost. They have to put it all back together again like Humpty Dumpty. But in all of this God is there....Jesus has come again and again to be with these people who have stores to tell of his presence and though there are the sad stories there are also the miracle stories.

God is the only one who knows our future. No horoscope, nor palm reading, nor physic knows what lies ahead, for if they did, they would be taking God's place.

Second thing I would say is this, **Jesus is always near.** John makes sure we understand that when he wrote "*Jesus showed himself to his followers again.*" Many of you know the story of how Jonah tried to run away from God's call to ministry in the mission field. How he hightailed it out of town in the opposite direction. Jonah left God in Jerusalem, in the Temple so he thought. But the one thing he found out was God was where he was. He was with him on the boat in his

rebellion to listen to God when the storm hit. He was with him in the belly of the big fish that swallowed him when he was thrown overboard and he heard Jonah's prayer of repentance and he was with him in Nineveh where he finally preached God's message of salvation. He couldn't escape God. Those words ring true "I will be with you always to the very end of time." Jesus is always near!

Some of you have felt his presence in operating rooms, emergency room, visiting rooms, at funeral parlors, and many more places. God is always there. He comes to you again and again and again. Like those disciples sometimes we don't see it's the Lord, but he invites us to join with him. He speaks words of hope and words we need to hear. As I've said many times he is in a hymn we sing, or in the music we listen to, or in a sermon, or in the Scripture lesson, in a handshake or a hug. He is in the face of a new baby, or a small child, or even in a mother who cares for her children. When you least expect him, he is there...again with you in your struggles, in your triumphs.

A third thing I might say is when the Lord comes again and again you can **expect a miracle**. You want to know how big a miracle the disciples received that day? First they had breakfast with Jesus. Second they had a big catch. How big? 153 BIG fish. How do we know the count? Because someone counted them....1-2-3-75-80-100-125 smelly fish-150-151-152-153 glorious blessed fish. "Fellows, we got 153 fish today. What a catch!" Jesus smiles. Such a miracle. Jesus thinks to

himself, “This is only the beginning fellows. Only the beginning. Next your nets will be filled with lost people.”

The Resurrection News continues with stories such as this as life after life becomes transformed by the story of the empty tomb. For over 2,000 years the story touches lives that have believed the story and followed the Savior. The three things we need to remember is this....listen to Jesus, try the best you can to be still and hear his voice....he comes again and again to you, in the storms of your live, in the joys of your life, in the sorrows of your life...look for him, trust he is there with you; then expect a blessing and even a miracle. For you see, he loves and cares for you.

So may it be for us today who celebrate the Risen Lord. May you experience John’s beginning words when he wrote “Jesus appeared to his disciples...again.”
So may it be for all of us.

Hear now God’s word for him people. Be blessed through this story of the faithful **read 1-14**