

3rd Sunday of Easter

“It is the Lord!”

John 21:7

May 4, 2025

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 3rd Sunday of Easter Sunday is from John 21:7

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.”

“It is the Lord!” That’s such a short sentence, but so meaningful. It’s so full of excitement and joy! When we meet someone unexpected, we experience that excitement, of course, to a much lesser degree. On the way home from my visiting my family in Florida, my daughter and I were waiting to board the plane when all of a sudden she let’s out a shout, “Look who’s here! It’s my friend!” What an unexpected surprise. She got to sit with her friend and her mom for the final leg home. Have you ever run into someone you weren’t expecting to see?

Well, the disciples were looking forward to seeing Jesus...in Galilee, but they just didn’t know when that meeting was going to take place. Jesus had told them on the Mount of Olives right before He was crucified, that after He had risen, He would go before them to Galilee. Did they remember? Did they even remember that Jesus had told them many times that He would rise again?

Well, ...no. As we heard last Sunday, the disciples were behind locked doors in Jerusalem ...in fear. On Easter, we heard the story of the Emmaus disciples that walked along the road in gloom saying that the women had gone to the tomb and found it empty and even had a vision from angels who said He was alive. But did they believe? No.

The angel at the tomb in Mark 16:7 had reminded the women to tell the disciples what Jesus Himself had told them, **“But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”** They’ll see Him, because He is alive!

And Jesus Himself appeared to the women who had gone to the tomb in Matthew 28:10 and what did He say? **“Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.”**

In order, to get the disciples to Galilee, believing that He was alive, Jesus appeared a few more times. He then appeared to individuals...to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, and He also made Himself known to the Emmaus disciples at the breaking of the bread. And then, Jesus appeared to the group behind closed doors.

What was the first word that Jesus said? “Peace be with you”. There is no reason to be terrified. Jesus continues to say to them, **“Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”** He further strengthens them with the Office of the Keys to forgive and retain sins. **“Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”** It’s the Lord!

At this time Thomas wasn’t there so what did the disciples do? Now convinced, they go to Him and say, **“We have seen the Lord.”** It’s the Lord!

A week later, Jesus appears to the group a 2nd time with Thomas present. And what does Thomas say? **28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”**

What does Paul say that a believer receives in 2 Timothy 4:8?

“2 Timothy 4:8

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Have you loved Lord’s appearing? Does your heart also hear God’s Word and also believe, “It is the Lord!” He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Yes, we too are assailed with doubts and fears in this life like the apostles, but God’s Word strengthens our hearts so that we can also say in the Nicene Creed “I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ”... “He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures” That is our moment that we also say “It is the Lord!”

We don't plunge into the sea like Peter, but we are baptized in the water of our baptism sealing our faith that we are His children and heirs of the Kingdom of God through Jesus our Lord!

“29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

So, after much convincing and now believing hearts, the disciples are back in Galilee as Jesus had told them to do.

So that's where our Gospel reading takes place... on the sea of Galilee... full circle...where Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John were first called to be fishers of men. On that very sea where Jesus walked on the water and Peter sunk down because of a lack of faith...on that very sea that Jesus calmed...“Be still” and it obeyed...on that very sea that Peter cried out, “Depart from me, for I am a sinner” after that great catch of fish.

The sea of Galilee...Peter knew it well. His home was on the north shore in Capernaum where his mother-in-law was healed of her fever. Galilee...Peter knew that word well. For he was asked by a servant girl after Jesus was arrested, “you also were with Jesus of Galilee”. And Peter denied knowing Jesus of Galilee. “I don't know what you are saying”.

And as they waited, they stayed active. Jesus didn't say they had to fast while they waited. So, Peter announces “I'm going fishing.”

You know, like when you're with a group of friends, and someone says, “I'm going to go out to get a bite to eat. Anyone want to come with me?...anyone hungry? Well, we got it a little easier now a days, don't we? We don't actually have to go cast a net, or kill a fatted calf for dinner. But, Peter got 6 other takers to go with him. So, the group of 7 did some night fishing. And, they worked up an appetite with their efforts but came away even more hungry.

But Jesus didn't deny knowing these fishermen who had fished throughout the night. He loved these fishermen...died for them...In fact, He knew what they were going through for the risen Jesus was not hiding any of His powers that He hid during His state of humiliation. In great love He calls out to the fishermen and tells them to drop their nets on the right side of the boat, starboard side for the boaters. You'll find some. Who needs a fish finder with Creator of all sea life telling you where they are.

Jesus calls out to them, "Children!" What an endearing word Jesus uses! He so loves them. He has forgiven them by His death and resurrection. There is peace between God and man. Jesus loves us! He forgives us! He calls us His children!

John, who was in the boat, who wrote our Gospel picks up on this later in his epistle in 1 John 2.

1 John 2:1

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

My little children, children of the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ the righteous!

"Children, have you any food?"

The One who provides for all His creation calls them His children for they can trust Him meet their earthly needs who conquered all enemies and rose again to prove it.

The net became full of fish, so full that they could not draw it in but had to drag it to shore.

"Therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

How glad were the disciples to see Jesus again!

How often we need to hear the Lord speak to us through His Word when we go through difficult nights and days, like the disciples.

Through faith we also rejoice in our hearts by confessing over and over again "It is the Lord". It is the Lord who has created me and provided daily bread for me...as Luther says, in the explanation of the Lord's prayer, that includes my family...brothers and

sisters in the communion of saints... home, clothing, food, health, and all that I need for this body and life.

And Jesus has everything ready and waiting for the disciples on the shore. Fish and bread on the grill! Come and eat breakfast!

Jesus has everything ready for us. He stands on the shore, the risen Lord, having conquered sin, death and the devil. He's alive and has accomplished what He came to do – be our Savior and feed our souls with the words of eternal life. It is the Lord who gives us His very body and blood for our forgiveness of sins today. So our hearts rejoice!

It is the Lord who came to us humbly in a manger.

Luke 2:11

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

What does our Lord promise us in Hebrews 13?

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say:

"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

So John need not weep that no one can open the scroll as we read in our epistle from Revelation 5? For the Lamb who was slain can. It is the Lord!

"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Yes, we can take the plunge like Peter, rejoicing over and over again! "It is the Lord!"

Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)