

TITLE:

ALL THINGS NEW - JESUS IS WITH US

Today we are talking about ALL THINGS NEW - JESUS IS WITH US.

(We finally got my kids little league games kicked off this week – and with some warm weather, the trees are blooming and it does feel like all things are new.)

The last few Sundays I've mentioned I want to keep pointing us every Sunday that I'm here to Scripture and to Jesus. We are Christians because we follow Jesus, as simple as that. We know Jesus through the Bible as understood and revealed by the Holy Spirit's guiding, also simple I think. And yet that's harder to do in today's world – where our culture seems to be taking over the church.

In an article on church I read this week, one churchgoer said, “at our church, we're encouraged be nice, be kind, have a positive attitude. How is that different from everybody else? What does it have to do with the Bible or God?”

Along the same lines, here's what Christian leader Michael Horton says, many people “may not understand the things of the Spirit of God, but many understand the things of the world, and they can tell the church and the world are no longer distinguishable.” He goes on to say, “We must recover Scripture. The church has a plumb line (scripture) that transcends time and place, and we can always return to it in order to determine whether we are being faithful in our moment.” One of my goals is to study the scripture with you, and help us understand it together in our context, and to apply it to our lives - not even for just this year, but even this week.

The last few weeks we have studied near the end of Luke and John and how Jesus interacted with his disciples. We pick up the story today again in John 21.

SLIDE:

John 21:1-14 (NIV)

21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[a] It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus[b]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 “I'm going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We'll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven't you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.[c] 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. (STOP)

Let’s pray – Lord, help us to understand your Word that we may live it and apply it in today’s world – in our world, even this week. Amen.

We have our notes printed in the bulletin again today – inside cover:

Notes:

After the resurrection and before Jesus ascends to Heaven, he appears to gathered disciples for the third time in John’s gospel.

John records this miracle as an eyewitness with great detail, up close and personal. Why are the disciples fishing again and away from Jerusalem? How does Jesus use fishing to reach them?

Jesus’s words in verse 13 sound familiar. What impact do they have?

Apply:

Where have you seen Jesus and remember every detail? Specific details in John 21:1-2, 21:4, 21:7, 21:11

Where in our lives are we recognizing Jesus right now? John 21:4, 21:7

Where in our lives are we called to live intimately in Jesus’ presence? John 21:12

What is Jesus giving to you? What is the impact? John 21:13

Where can we as individuals and as a church reconnect intimately with Jesus?”

Preachers are coached to have one message, one theme.

The theme today is really that last sentence:

Where can we as individuals and as a church reconnect intimately with Jesus?

Let’s look at how the disciples did it then and how we do it today.

This is a story with great detail, told by John.

He begins by listing the fact that seven of the disciples are gathered together in vss. 1-2.

He says, “It happened this way...” It sounds like someone telling their version of the story of the bombings or the manhunt in Boston from their vantage point on CNN. Here’s how it happened, here’s where I was standing, and then this happened. Do you ever notice those eyewitness accounts are slightly different, based on the viewpoint of the eyewitness? Don’t you think that the 4 gospel writers had slightly different vantage points of history, and so their gospels have different nuances? That’s a good thing that adds to the validity of the Bible, not takes away from it.

Back to John, he gives an eyewitness account. He says there were 7 of them gathered at the Sea of Tiberias OR Galilee. Peter said, he was going fishing, and all joined him. They caught nothing that night.

A man was on shore very early in the morning – verse 4. John says they were about 100 yards off shore verse 8, that Peter when recognizing Jesus put on his outer garment, another detail, and that there were 153 large fish brought in verse 11, and the net did not break. Great detail is given by John.

Why does John include such great detail?

And why does he tell that this is the 3rd time Jesus has appeared to the disciples?

John wants us to truly know that he is serious that Jesus is alive.

In previous stories, we see Jesus saying touch my hands and feet, my side, and then eats in front of the disciples, and then here with Jesus preparing a meal with his closest friends we get evidence again from an eyewitness account that Jesus is truly risen from the dead. This story should not get old. It is the truth and it is necessary for us to know that Jesus is alive, has defeated death, and so we too can defeat death through him only. Good news!

Also, last week, John said, in verse 20:31, “But these (miracles) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John then includes with great detail this last miracle in his gospel, to put an exclamation point on Jesus. And in the next two weeks, we’ll talk about the theme of restoration, and how Jesus restores Peter to relationship with himself.

Back to the story....

At first in this story the disciples don’t recognize Jesus from the boat, a hundred yards from shore, in the early morning. Maybe disappointed with a night catching no fish. Jesus gives them a sign. He says, “friends, have you caught any fish?” when they say no, he tells them to cast on the other side of the boat. They catch a huge number of fish. John now says, “It is the Lord!” and Peter pulls on his outer garment, he had taken it off to fish. He puts it back on, to be more presentable to Jesus, but then jumps in and starts swimming.

We see the disciple recognize Jesus.

When do you recognize Jesus?

Does God show himself to you in some familiar ways as he did here with the disciples? When God does show up very obviously, what is your response?

John speaks up, “It is the Lord!” Peter gets out of the boat, and jumps in the water to swim.

John Ortberg wrote a book called, “If you want to walk on water, you’ve got to get out of the boat.” I’d like to relate some of what Ortberg said to getting out of the boat when recognizing and seeing Jesus. He says, “Put yourself in Peter’s position... The Lord is passing by. He’s inviting you to go on the adventure of your life. But at the same time, you’re scared to death. What would you choose – the water or the boat? The boat is safe, secure, and comfortable. On the other hand, the water is rough, the waves are high. The wind is strong. There’s a storm out there.”

Do you recognize Jesus in your storms? Do you look for Jesus when times are very normal?

For many of us, Jesus is hard to recognize. Look for his reality in Scripture you read, in the devotionals you are using, in the creation around you, in trusted friends, and in the Holy Spirit as he speaks to your heart. When God speaks, test it to match with scripture and ask trusted friends if they see him too.

Look for Jesus, he’s here in our midst, and he’s recognizable.

Now we see in John’s story, the water is not rough right now.

Why are the disciples fishing again and away from Jerusalem? How does Jesus use fishing to reach them?

Jesus uses fishing because his disciples know fishing. He uses it to show himself and then to remind them of their call – to be fishers of men.

But why is it the disciples are fishing now? Shouldn’t they be in Jerusalem waiting on someone, something?

Scholars believe it has been at least a few weeks since Jesus has been resurrected, and some of the disciples have returned home.

Jesus himself had said, in John 16:32, “You will believe at last, but a time is coming, when you will be scattered, each to his own home.”

So, apparently the disciples who grew up or lived around Galilee went back. Here they were doing what they knew to do. There is no blame from Jesus that they are doing wrong, they are just doing what they know.

But it is not their ultimate destination or their ultimate call. There’s more to life. Here’s what author John Ortberg says,

“I believe there is something – Someone – inside us who tells us that there is more to life than sitting in the boat. You were made for more than merely avoiding failure. There’s something inside you that wants to...leave the comfort zone of routine existence and abandon yourself to the high adventure of following God.”

Jesus is re-engaging, re-connecting with the disciples to leave it all behind again. Just three years ago, they went on an incredible adventure with him that ended in Jesus’ death and now his resurrection. It can be a confusing time for them, they may be disoriented.

This time may be confusing for ZPC as well. We’ve been on Mr.Toad’s Wild Ride at Disney World and we just got off and are a little dizzy, a bit disoriented. I like Disney World and other amusement parks, but no spinning in circles rides - they make me feel sick to my stomach. And we have had enough of spinning rides here at church too. And yet there is more change to come - a new Sr. Pastor somewhere down the road.

God is calling us back to him right now to do what we can to re-connect with him, so that we can go forward again with him.
We need to look for Jesus in our midst and see him at work, and draw ourselves close to him again.

In the story, Jesus is restoring relationship with the disciples. He is bringing us back too. Just a few short years ago, Jesus told these men that they would be not just fishermen, but fishers of men. What about now? Now that he will be leaving soon, it will be time to fulfill that radical call.

Jesus uses fishing to show himself in the miracle catch – so that the disciples recognize him.
And uses fishing as a metaphor. That they can be closely connected to him, restored to him, so that they will be fishers of men or him.

When these 7 friends arrive on shore, they see another detail, Jesus has a fire of burning coals with fish on it, and some bread. He invites them to bring some of their own fish and add to it. He invites them to come close and have breakfast.

Now, this was not the Lord’s Supper being celebrated, but look at the words, they sound familiar.

Jesus’s words in verse 13 sound familiar. What impact do they have?

Verse 13 says,
“Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.”

In John 6:11,

At the miracle of the loaves and fishes, he said, “Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, distributed to those seated – and did the same with the fish.”

And at the last supper, Jesus “took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them.”
Luke 22:19

At the last supper just days or weeks before this meal on the beach with his disciples, Jesus compared the bread to his body and the cup to his blood, he was willing to give it all to them – and to us – that we might know his love. I bet, that on that beach, these disciples remembered that love and felt incredibly close to him.

Jesus also calls us to come close to him.

The disciples were regular people like us. They had lives and jobs, and needed to go fishing to probably eat, it’s what they knew. We are ordinary too in that way – we need to go to jobs to earn a living to eat – we do what we know. That encourages me that God can use me too, a guy who doesn’t know how to fix things very well around my house or on my car or on my lawnmower. I’m a little more on the introvert side than the extrovert, I worry how I’ll put my kids through college – but God can use me too. He’s calling me as he called the disciples to something more than fishing, to go on an adventure with him.

But we can’t do anything of great value to God in our own strength.

Jesus said, stay connected to him, abide in him. Earlier, in John 15, he said “apart from me you can do nothing.” He is calling us to be close, we must answer the call.

So...

Apply:

Where have you seen Jesus and remember every detail? Specific details in John 21:1-2, 21:4, 21:7, 21:11

There’s an old song called, “Have you seen Jesus my Lord?” Here are some of the lyrics:

Have you seen Jesus my Lord?

He's here in plain view.

Take a look, open your eyes,

He'll show it to you.

When the disciples trust not in themselves to catch fish, but throw their nets on the side that the voice from the shore says to do, they have success. They then see Jesus. When we release control and listen carefully for God’s voice, and let him lead, great things happen outside of our control.

If we look we will recognize Jesus, see him in our lives, and in the faces of those who follow him around us.

Where have you seen Jesus? Lean into that memory and use that to strengthen your faith.

Where in our lives are we recognizing Jesus right now? John 21:4, 21:7

I'm seeing Jesus here at ZPC in some of you being the church right now. That is exhilarating. On Thursday, I was experience a dry spot writing this message, as I pulled up some worship songs at random on my computer, these are the first lyrics that appeared – a song by Mercy Me called Word of God Speak:

I'm finding myself at a loss for words
And the funny thing is it's okay
The last thing I need is to be heard
But to hear what You would say...
Word of God speak
Would You pour down like rain
Washing my eyes to see
Your majesty
To be still and know
That You're in this place

Word of God Speak, Mercy Me
I believe God was speaking to me telling me to depend on him – and he wants you to ask him as well – Word of God speak – open your eyes to see and know him right now.

John has seen Jesus and tells his story with great detail and excitement. What story do you need to share?

Where in our lives are we called to live intimately in Jesus' presence? John 21:12

Where are those places for you right now? As we get out of the boat, and lay down our nets to follow Jesus, we ask:

Are you being called to live intimately with Jesus in your vocation?
Are you called to grow closer in a relationships with family – or a friend?
What about walking closely with Jesus in an area of confrontation – where you are called to walk towards it – not away from it.
Maybe Jesus is calling you out of an area of failure into his loving arms.
Maybe Jesus is calling you to walk out of an area of success into a deeper more meaningful relationship with Him.
Jesus is calling us to reconnect in the Gathering Space, at Neighborhood Fellowship Dinners this year, in finding ways to be there for each other and to serve each other.

What is Jesus giving to you? What is the impact? John 21:13
Jesus gives the disciples basic food and a close relationship. He reminds them of the past in a good way, as he shares a warm fire, some fish and bread – and some conversation.

What is Jesus giving to you?
What is Jesus giving you for your mission? For your calling? How is he showing that to you? Pray and ask God to show himself to you and to guide you.

Where can we as individuals and as a church reconnect intimately with Jesus?

Where do you need to reconnect? Are there places you've gone back to the old way of doing things. Turn back to Jesus, he is waiting for you on the shore, just as he was waiting for the disciples. When I feel disconnected, I stop and pray. I go to a quiet place in my house early in the morning or sneak into the chapel here at church. I get on my knees or try to get quiet. I listen for God's still small voice. If you listen, he will speak.

He wants to connect with you closely and with our church to help us begin again.
Let's look for those places as individuals and as a church family. Let's pray.