



Do You Love Me?

John 21: 1-19

Jesus said to Simon Peter,

“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

April 10, 2016

Thoughts for the Week

Scriptures: Acts 5: 27-32 • Revelation 5: 11-14 • John 21: 1-19

I can still remember a sage bit of advice shared with me in my early years as Minister, “Always remember, your best theology and your best sermons will always come from your own personal experience; people appreciate hearing stories that come from the heart of the preacher.” Over the years, whether in success or failure, I have always appreciated that advice.

As I read the gospel for this Third Sunday of Easter, I notice a little story that I might title: Breakfast after a Long Night on the Water. I think it’s all about hospitality. So, first, let me tell you a little story of my own about hospitality. It took place on a hot summer day in August. My friends and I were on a Boy Scout Campout endeavoring to complete some of our requirements to become the next rank in Scouting. Despite our thirst, the drinking fountain and rest rooms were at the other end of the field, too far away to go running back for it now. Soon, however, we spotted one of our favorite scoutmasters driving his 1953 Chevrolet station wagon down the road toward us. As he drew abreast of us, he shouted, “You guys thirsty?” “You kidding?” we reply. “Take a look in the back seat of the car,” he said. There on the seat was a large tub with ice and a dozen bottles of Orange Crush drink. “Have at it,” he said. We lost no time quenching our thirst. I don’t think Orange Crush ever tasted so good, better even than iced tea on a hot day. That best loved scoutmaster is now long deceased, but I will always remember him for that common gesture of hospitality on a hot August day.

When you hear the gospel for today you will immediately notice a similarity between this story and the one following. In this instance, Jesus’ disciples were not in the fields but on the water; they were fishermen and had been working hard all night; at dawn no doubt they were exhausted. When they reached the shoreline they noticed Jesus standing near a charcoal fire, heating up some bread and fish. “Come and have your breakfast,” he said. I am sure they lost no time washing their hands and gathering around the fire.

Obviously, once again, we may notice something more: this was a moment of recognition. It suddenly became clear to the disciples that it was Jesus raised up again and still with them. But even beyond that initial recognition, they noticed something about the breakfast that reminded them of a certain supper they had shared with him some weeks earlier. In that instance he did something similar: he took bread, broke it and gave it to them, and so likewise with the cup. In other words, it was the Last Supper all over again, the sign of hospitality from the Master himself.

It would not be too much to say that meals of hospitality have been happening all around this planet for

millions of years, from the time of our earliest ancestors who must have shared with each other something from the forest, fields or streams. I would also make the claim that meals of hospitality happen around our modern kitchen tables practically every day. Perhaps, however, we do not interpret them as hospitality; we are too busy getting off to work in the morning or to a meeting after supper.

The same situation also must occur to us on many Sundays when we are gathered around the Communion Table. If we are able to discern the signs, we are being fed. Unfortunately, however, we have been doing all this for so long that we have lost sight of the sign value of Christ's hospitality; nonetheless, that is what it is, nothing more, nothing less. It just takes a little more attention to realize what is going on before us.

Once a long time ago, Orange Crush was a thirst quencher for my friends and I; even longer ago, some bread and fish and perhaps a cup of wine satisfied the hunger of some of Jesus' disciples; yes, hospitality will continue to happen weekdays and Sundays if we have the time just to notice.

Happy Birthday - Ardice (4/13)

Prayer Thought – Malaysia

Gracious God, we thank you for your gift of unbounded love which seeks us and redeems us. Open our hearts to your healing love so we can generously share your love of neighbor, love of enemy, and love of self.

We seek your forgiveness for the times we fall short of being the persons of light and love you created us to be. As we respond to your grace in our lives, guide us in reflecting your love for all creation.

We remember Indonesia this day. May its citizens and leaders be open to light which gives counsel and Spirit, which brings comfort. Help them to find ways to heal wounds of injustice.

We pray the light of your love will radiate in the hearts of all who work tirelessly for communities of joy, hope, love and peace in all the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, we pray. Amen.

Stewardship Thought

*“Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time,
‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘
Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’
Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’” JOHN 21:17*

All of us are challenged to show our love for Jesus by “feeding His sheep.” Through prayer ask God how you should best use your time, talent and treasure to assist those who are in need. Remember that giving is an act of worship and helps advance the mission of our congregation and greater Church.

Quote for the Week

One who has been touched by grace will no longer look on those who stray as “those evil people” or “those poor people who need our help.” Nor must we search for signs of “loveworthiness.” Grace teaches us that God loves because of who God is, not because of who we are.

Philip Yancy

God is completely sovereign. God is infinite in wisdom. God is perfect in love. God in His love always wills what is best for us. In His wisdom He always knows what is best, and in His sovereignty He has the power to bring it about.

Jerry Bridges