

April 14, 2013

Easter 3

Text: John 21:1-14

Theme: "And Still He Feeds Us"

**Peter was miserable. He had thought that he would be the one to stand by the Lord no matter what. They may abandon you Lord, but I will NEVER abandon you! But then three different times during the night Jesus was being tried, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. Then Jesus died and while Peter missed his friend, at least maybe no one would ever know what he had done. But then Jesus rose from the dead.**

**Remember that Peter was in the room last week when Jesus appeared to the disciples twice. Imagine how uncomfortable that was.**

**"Hey there. It's doubting Thomas and Denying Peter. How are you boys doing? Didn't believe I would really do it did you?" But Jesus did none of that. In fact, he said nothing at all to Peter, which in reality was probably worse. Peter must have kept expecting to be chastised, or even kicked out for his cowardice and yet the Lord just treated him like one of the group. Later on, Jesus formally reinstated Peter, but for today, he just fed him some breakfast.**

**Time and time again, we fail the Lord. We are originally sinful to be sure. That is to say, we ARE sin regardless of the sin we DO. But beyond our original sin, we willfully and spitefully sin as well.**

**We break the 10 Commandments as though they were just suggestions from the Farmer's Almanac and willfully do and say whatever we like to whomever we like destroying people's reputations, hurting their feelings and trampling on their self worth as though other human beings were just decorations for our world. We say we love God and then choose to sleep in or work extra hours instead of worshipping him. We confess our faith in him and then use his name as though it were a bathroom-wall expletive. For all of this, we deserve nothing but pain and punishment.**

**Sometimes we are a great deal like Peter. We cower around God or even avoid the places where we know God dwells because we are ashamed of the way we have treated him, but God does not hold a grudge against us. He cannot. That would be unjust and illogical – two things God never is.**

**I have never been a fan of punishments that are either unjust or illogical. When my boys were in elementary school, kids, when they misbehave in class, had to sit against the wall during recess while the other kids played. I'm pretty sure Noah had spent so much time sitting on the wall that he was starting to decorate his spot and turn it into his own little office. Does it make sense to you to prevent a kid from releasing his normal "kid-energy" and then expect him to better control himself later in the day with extra pent**

**up energy in his system? Why not offer him some candy and a pop too? Let's make this a real challenge.**

**I have known some parents who send their children to bed without supper as a punishment. What is the logic there? Did the kid get caught hoarding food? It always seemed to me that food, clothing, shelter and exercise are the most basic needs of life and that none of those should ever be withheld because a kid did something wrong. So these punishments seem unjust to me, but beyond that, I really prefer for all consequences for poor behavior to be logical as well.**

**For instance, if a person is caught selling an illegal substance, it is illogical to lock him up in a system where he can contribute nothing to society but he will have many opportunities to learn from other people who are locked up for the same reason. I think he should have to clean the bathrooms in the local jail for a few months so that he can give back to the place where his former customers will eventually be housed. If a kid violates curfew, maybe he should have to check in every half hour next time so that he can get some practice with time management and he can gain some sense of the anxiety a parent feels when their kid is late.**

**We sin against the Lord moment by moment and he never applies illogical or vindictive consequences. He only gives us**

**consequences that help us to learn and grow. Even when we are as rotten as we can be, still he feeds us. Not only does he continue to provide air to breathe and food to eat but there he is as well, speaking to us words of forgiveness, washing us in Baptismal water and nourishing us with His body and blood. He is always there for us.**

**Why? Why would one whom we have treated so abysmally still care for us and love us? That is what Peter asked as well. Peter was ready to be ignored, cast out, or at least dismissed from the inner circle and when he arrived on shore, not only had the Lord cooked breakfast for him, feeding his physical need, later in the same chapter, the Lord explicitly forgives him and reinstates him thus feeding his spiritual need as well.**

**Jesus knows that the only way for us to overcome the sin in our lives is to have the tools we need to overcome it – Word and Sacraments. If you want that kid to behave in class, work on getting him proper nutrition and run his fanny ragged at recess. If you want that person to obey the laws of the community, teach him why it is important and apply consequences that fix what he broke. But don't take away the tools that enable him to change. Jesus would never do that. No matter what we do, he speaks his loving Word to us. He gently washes away our sin with Baptismal water and he nourishes us with his own body and blood...this on top of giving us air to**

**breathe and water to drink and food to eat. All of this so that we can grow in faith and learn to cherish the many blessings we have. All of this so that we know and believe with all our hearts that no matter what we say or do or think – no matter what kind of evil we get up to – he died on the cross to pay for every one of our sins and still he loves us...and still he feeds us.**