

Easter 3
April 18, 2010

Jesus Lives! Worship him.

Pastor Michael Ewart
John 21:1-14

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Would you describe your life with these terms: exciting, spontaneous, impactful, always stimulating, meaningful. Or would you describe your life with the words: routine, mundane, run of the mill, often boring? Maybe not everybody, but probably most of us would tend toward that second description of our lives, right?

Now a second question: How would you describe your daily life of worship, that is your daily walk with God: exciting, spontaneous, impactful, always stimulating, meaningful? Or routine, mundane, run of the mill, often boring... maybe even... *missing*.

Again, many would probably tend to categorize their worship lives toward the second. It's no wonder Rick Warren's "The Purpose Driven Life" sold 10's of millions of copies. We want to have an exciting, purposeful life that makes an impact as we worship and give glory to God.

In the Bible text before us today, Jesus helps us rethink a lot of things. Where do we meet Jesus/ or he us? What is worship? What meaning does he give to our daily life? Let's take a closer look.

The setting for this story is the Sea of Tiberias, which is the Roman name for the Sea of Galilee. Present are 7 of the disciples. The time: It's after Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection... but *before* his ascension into heaven. The disciples' heads are still spinning from all that's happened. The Holy Spirit has not yet been sent to them. All they had was Jesus' direction to wait in Galilee where he would appear to them. So that's apparently what they're doing... waiting. Well, Peter isn't much for sitting around and doing nothing. He's a doer... a man of action. So he comes up with a plan, "Let's go fishing." It's what he was by trade. It's what he could do... so that's what he does.

Some other disciples go with him. They go out on the sea as they had done many times before. They fish all night long... casting out the net, pulling it in... empty. Cast out the net, pulling it in... empty. All night long. Finally, it was getting toward morning, still very early. They're doing something very ordinary, aren't they? Nothing exciting about fishing all night long and catching nothing. Mundane, ordinary, run-of-the-mill. Sound familiar?

Then, in the early morning light, they see some movement on shore... a man... but they can't make out who it is. This stranger calls out to them: "**Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some fish!**" Can you imagine how ridiculous that must have sounded. You've been on the water all night. You've fished that lake your whole life. Now this stranger who is standing on shore the length of a football field away tells you that you need to throw you're net on the right side of the boat.

This strange command seems to already be triggering some recognition, at least in one disciple, John. You see, this whole scenario sounds suspiciously similar to a story

that unfolded almost the same way at the beginning of Jesus' ministry when he was calling his first disciples. Maybe they remembered that miraculous catch and started connecting the dots. In any event, for whatever reason, without objection, they do what the stranger says. And immediately their nets were full of fish.

Now, John knows for sure... enough to say it out loud. **"It is the Lord!"** Now let's pause the story there, because we're learning something about our God. Jesus was teaching something to his disciples... more than meets the eye. And he wants us to see it too. Now remember again the context. Jesus has suffered, died and rose again. They have seen that he was risen. And they were overjoyed! And they were starting to understand the significance of his resurrection. Because he rose, the battle was won. He completed what he came to do. He defeated Satan, sin and death. He declared man "not guilty" of his sin because he allowed himself to be declared "guilty." Completely, fully forgiven and with the perfect life of Jesus showing up on our account, we are fit for heaven... ready for life eternal with our God.

I really think the disciples were starting to get this. Now granted, they had a ways to go yet, but I really believe this was all starting to sink in and make sense. But it seems like they struggled with the question we sometimes struggle with... "now what." What do I do now? What about my every day, mundane ordinary life? What about my every day, mundane and ordinary problems?

With nothing better to do, Peter did what he knew how to do... he went fishing. Good for him! Now later Jesus would give him a new assignment and task... being fishers of men. But Peter did what he should have been doing. He was actively putting his gifts and abilities (fishing) to use. And it's when he's doing *that* that Jesus approaches him and the other disciples.

Now when it says, "Jesus appeared to them" there's a little more impact to that word than English conveys. It means he manifested himself to them. He revealed to them something of his majesty and glory and ways that the disciples hadn't grasped before. **Jesus makes it clear to them that he is still interested in his disciples and in his church. His power, his love and his interest are undiminished since the completion of man's salvation.** Jesus hasn't gone on a long vacation now that his work is done. Now, he's still present! He's still interested! He's still helping! Helping with what? **Helping with out mundane ordinary every day lives!** He comes to them when they are fishing and he helps them with... fishing! He gives them a miraculous catch and he wants them to learn something.

They've been dependent on him every day for about three and a half years. But now he wasn't with them daily. But he wants them to understand... actually he IS with them daily, just in a different way. And he does take an interest in their lives. And he does want them to rely upon him for their daily life just as they were learning to rely upon him for their eternal life.

Friends, our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to learn the same thing. Jesus is with you, is interested in you, he speaks to you, he helps you... not just on Sunday morning, but every minute of every day. Even when you're doing the most ordinary thing, Jesus is there, and Jesus is fascinated, because he loves you.

And not only is he with you when you're doing the ordinary, he speaks to you also through the ordinary. Some people claim to get visions directly to God. Some claim

God spoke to them in their heart. I can't confirm or deny such claims. I can tell you that that has never happened to me. "So you're saying God has never spoken to you Pastor?!" No! That's not what I'm saying at all. God speaks to me every day. But he does so in a very ordinary way. **Through his Word.** In this book made of regular paper with regular ink and a binding that falling apart... in this book that's not glowing, but looks remarkably similar to other books, God is speaking. Jesus is confronting us and approaching us. And when a fellow believer shares with us a loving word of rebuke based on what God says, that's God speaking to us. And when they share a word of encouragement patterned after God's revealed Word, that is God speaking to us. And it's all very ordinary. No clouds of smoke. No supernatural experience. God speaking through the ordinary.

And when a person comes to the baptismal font, although we make it a formal rite, nevertheless, it is God conferring his gifts, his love, his salvation, his forgiveness, his LIFE... through a simple promise connected to plain water. Nothing fancy here!

And when a person comes to the Lord's Supper, we make it formal with the white cloths and shiny silver settings and our solemn mannerisms. But understand that this is Jesus coming to you in bread and wine which is his real body and real blood to assure you that his forgiveness is for you personally. Miraculous? Yes? And yet this is plain bread and plain wine... that is connected with a promise of Lord and Savior. Finally, it's quite simple and rather ordinary.

Praise God that he talks to us through what is ordinary. Thank God that is with us when we are doing what is ordinary. Because when he does, this transforms whatever we are doing that is ordinary and regular into something divine and heavenly and eternal.

What happened when Peter and the other disciples realized this was Jesus stepping in on their ordinary, mundane lives? It made a huge difference didn't it? Peter, being impetuous and action-oriented, threw on his fishing jacket, tied the belt and jumped in the water. He swam to shore to meet Jesus. The others stayed in the boat and lugged the huge catch of fish to shore. This ordinary fishing trip became so memorable, John remembers exactly how many fish were caught that day. Not "over 150" but *exactly* 153. This day was crystal clear to him.

Back on shore, Jesus had some breakfast ready for them. Fish and bread. An ordinary breakfast... but a breakfast they shared with their Lord. And that made it anything but ordinary.

Friends, when you recognize that the Lord Jesus has stepped into your every day life, the ordinary things turn into memorable, spectacular, special events... because it's time shared with Jesus. The ordinary things you do... even something so ordinary as eating a meal... become treasured moments with Jesus. Every ordinary thing in our lives become moments of worship and praise to our risen Savior and King.

That changes everything in your life, doesn't it? You go to work in the morning, not as a part of a dull routine, but as an opportunity to work for Jesus and to help people for Jesus who is right there with you. If you wash the kitchen floor, you are doing it as an act of worship for your Savior Jesus who is right there with you as you do the ordinary. But it's not so ordinary are you do it to worship and praise him!

Friends, do you realize this: What you are doing in your every day life... every minute of every day, is your act of worship and praise giving glory and honor to our resurrected Savior. As such, your every “ordinary” act of every day is something that takes on divine, eternal, heavenly significance and meaning!

In our second reading today from the book of Revelation we were privileged to get a glimpse at what’s happening in heaven even as we speak. There are angels and archangels and believers who died in the Lord and all creation too, all gathered around Jesus saying, **“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”** Your faithful, ordinary work, when done for Jesus adds your life and voice to that majestic, heavenly choir. When you work, give an offering, help another person, do your chores at home, you are saying, Worthy is the Lamb to receive... all of what you’re doing and all of who you are. Your every day, ordinary life is continuous worship and praise to Jesus.

So if you’re life is feeling routine, mundane, run of the mill, and boring, it’s time for a change. Not a change in what you’re doing, just a change in who you’re doing it for. The Lord Jesus is with you. He’s blessing your daily work. He’s providing for your daily needs. ...Even as he has provided for our spiritual and eternal needs through his holy life, death on the cross, and resurrection? Your life is ordinary? Since you’re a believer in Christ, I’ll have to disagree. Your life is extraordinary, divine, impactful and exciting, because every moment of ever day is lived with Jesus and for Jesus. May God make us mindful of this each and every day. Amen.