

Breakfast is Ready
John 21:3-17
 by Mag Richer Smith
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³Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' ⁶He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' ¹⁶A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' ¹⁷He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the 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.'

This past week my friend **played a song** for me that she and her husband would **sing together**, especially after his **Alzheimer's diagnoses** and throughout his illness.

I did not know this song, but maybe you do.

Lyrics were something like this:

We are going.

Heaven knows where we are going.

It will be hard we know

And the road will be muddy and rough.

But we'll get there

Heaven knows we will get there

We know we will.

It's when we lose **that** vision,
when we don't know anymore that **we'll get there**,
that we **despair**.

When there's no longer anything LARGER than the **details of our days, and the hassles of our lives**
then we are **depleted of JOY**.

Every year for decades I have prayed for a word to guide
the year's journey, and this year the Word I was given was:
"ZOOM OUT!"

Beyond the minutia lies the bigger picture of
God's dream:

"Everyone living under their vine and fig tree at PEACE and UNAFRAID"...

Zoom out to God's HOLISTIC LIBERATION
for **creation** and **eternity**...

trusting **that**

**No matter how far we fall,
God's net of love will hold us.**

This is **RESURRECTION HOPE**

& when we hold on to the **LOVE THAT WINS**,
then we can **go out with Joy and be led forth in peace**...
and sing with confidence: **"We're gonna get there."**

Today we meet the **disciples** in the **gloom of not knowing**
where they're headed...

Flickers of resurrection have *ignited* hope,
but it's been a **disappearing mirage**.

They need a **solid rock** on which to rebuild their lives.

And here they are with nothing but questions... (????)

How are we **gonna eat?**

Where's our **paycheck** coming from?

How do we **re-group** when we're falling apart"
and WHO will be **our leader** now?

The movement, on which they had staked their lives, got nailed, & they don't know how or where to go from here.

Peter suggests fishing and several of them follow.

It's back to the OLD...

the old **job,**

the old **unsatisfied hungers,**

and the old **despair.**

AND PETER, who had been **so sure** that he'd *hold on,*
so confident of his commitment to the Way of Jesus...

Well the rooster's "*COCK A DOODLE DO*" woke him up
to how he had **let go** & **let fear** take the lead.

So here they are on a **dark night,**
out to sea

with an empty net

and a **boatload** of **despairing questions**(????).

There's been so much bad news, undoing...pain & death.

But at DAYBREAK, they hear someone shouting from the shore,

"Children, have you caught any fish?

"Cast your net on the other side!"

Well, they've heard this word (offering an alternative reality)
and there was a catch, larger than they could imagine.

And here it is again that Voice (those words)~ daring them to trust in what seems impossible.

They look at each other with question marks (???)

and then **take the dare, haul in the net,**
and **fling it** on the other side, only to discover
fish are teeming & their net is full
and John knows: **"IT IS THE LORD!"**

What **joy** in lonely forsakenness,
to discover we are not abandoned!
And God isn't finished with us yet.

I remember sitting in the **seminary chapel** years ago, and a
student was **mouthng** a **theology and political ideology**
that I found deplorable. I was **scoffing** inside,
when I heard an internal whisper:

**"Guess what? I'm not finished with him yet...
just like I'm not finished with YOU!"**

And like John, I knew, **"It is the LORD!"** It's the **God of Grace**
who is **committed** to us, come what may.

The **disciples** (now with **rekindled hope**),
are **rowing expectantly** toward shore...

Except for **guilt-ridden Peter** who **puts on heavy clothes**
and **plunges** into the water,
not knowing if he will **sink or swim**.

But it's **shallow** here, so he comes **trudging** onto the shore...
where all of them are **greeted** with **waiting, outstretched
arms**.

Here is Jesus, **laughing his love** and wearing his CHEF HAT

And even with his nail-scarred hands,
 Jesus has **whipped up a picnic**,
 a **celebration** they won't forget,
 a **meal** (reminiscent of what he made for thousands out in
 the wilderness),
homemade breads, crispy fish and steaming coffee
 (likely with three different labels: regular and regular strong
 and decaf ~meeting all the needs with grace).

I remember as **a teenager** arriving home late after a long
motorcycle journey with my brother, a trip our **mother had**
asked us NOT to make. We'd **gone too far** and it had
gotten stormy, and by the time we arrived home,
 we were **soaked and shivering** to the bone...
 Immediately **Mom opened the oven door**, inviting us to
come close and get warm, while she **covered us with**
blankets, and then made us **hot chocolate**.
 Even though she had reason to be **angry and frustrated**,
 here she was...**serving up grace**.

Theologian **Lewis Smedes** says that in **the church** every child
 needs BLANKET COVERAGE, needs the care and feeding of
 Jesus the cook embodied in us!
*"No matter if he is genetically unlucky,
 or she is destined to be a pain in the neck.*

*No matter that the best of parents end up murmuring at
 some moments that our children are not exactly what we
 had in mind when we prayed for some fruit from the family
 tree.*

*Our daughters may choose values we despise.
 Our sons may worship strange deities.*

They may fail at things they try
 or not try much of anything.
 We may almost die of fear for them,
 choke in anger at them,
 weep at the pain they suffer,
 go broke trying to pay their way.

NO matter our commitment is for the **kind of forever-love**
 that gives a child **permanent membership** in the **FAMILY.**"

So here is Jesus calling the disciples "**CHILDREN**" and offering
 blanket coverage,
dishing up a **comforting breakfast** to his **doubtful,**
despairing friends...
 (and especially to Peter~ **dripping** with guilt).

The same Jesus, who taught them to "**take up the cross and**
boldly confront the powers"...

The same Jesus, who called them to **radical discipleship**
and taught them to "be last"
 The **same Jesus** who **died to liberate** this aching world...

This Jesus, is feeding them NOW with **grace upon grace..**

Not a **bland, syrupy** grace,
not a **laissez-faire** grace where anything goes...
 But a grace they can **sink their teeth into...**
 served around a **glowing charcoal fire.**

But for Peter the **charcoal** reminds him of **failure.**

The last time he was in front of a charcoal fire he was denying Jesus, 3 TIMES!

So here at the picnic...when Jesus says,

“Bring me more of your fish”...

Peter uses this as an excuse to **retreat in his shame** and **preoccupy himself** with counting fish: ***“1, 2, 49, 50, 152, 153!”***

Peter is **stalling & avoiding** the gaze of this Jesus who offers an **enormously welcoming table**,

this Jesus who often sat at TABLE with those deemed unworthy....

offering **living water, blanket coverage**, & the **bread of life**.

And now he's set the table for his **bumbling, broken & most beloved** friends to: ***“Come and have breakfast!”***

This is the beginning of A NEW DAY!

Jesus is reminding wandering ones, that **after the nails** and the **struggle**,

the **Alzheimer's** and the **cancer**, the **divorce** and the **heartache...**

and after all the **enslavement** and **addiction...**

and the ways we've **let each other down**,

We're gonna get there!

Because we have a Savior who serves the **grace of new beginnings**.

Jesus is not a **crucifix** to hang on the wall.

The **story** does not end with the LAST SUPPER.

The Gospel of John ends with a **FIRST BREAKFAST**,

the **dawning of a new day**,

and a **reminder of mercy upon mercy upon mercy**.

3 TIMES (once for each denial).

Jesus offers Peter **forgiveness, reconciliation & restoration** as he looks him in the eye and asks:

“Do you LOVE me?”

“Do you love me more than THESE **fears, doubts, regrets?**

Well then **receive the JOY!**

The sun has risen!

The SON has risen!

It is a **NEW day!**”

Tend the sheep!

Feed the lambs!

and and embody the love!

“Do you love me? “

Then know ***I am NOT finished with this world yet,***
just like I am not finished with you.

Come and eat **BREAKFAST...**

Taste the Grace...

The **net of love** is underneath everything,
everlasting JOY is on our heads.

Jesus is here leading the way.

and “We ARE gonna get there.

Heaven knows we’re gonna get there!”