

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Today is Thursday, June 6 and we are completing our study of the Gospel of John.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I come to this quiet space at the dawn of a new day and seek your presence. I quiet my mind, center my thoughts and slow my breath. As I inhale, I breathe in your love, joy and peace and as I exhale I release any negative thoughts, worries or concerns. Come, show me how to live the Resurrection life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

“Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!” John 21:18-19

REFLECTION

The Risen Christ serves his grieving disciples breakfast on the beach. Peter denied Jesus three times on the night of his betrayal, now at his restoration, Jesus asks Peter three questions. Around one charcoal fire, Peter denied Jesus; around another charcoal fire, Peter is restored into right relationship with Jesus. In the same way, we encounter the Risen Christ in a holy meal. Like Peter, in the presence of Jesus we are forgiven and restored. When we come to Jesus in repentance, we are cleansed of our sin, renewed, given a fresh start and empowered over our sin. Jesus asks us alongside Peter on the rocky Galilean coastline, “Do you love me?”

The spread of the Gospel in the first century was unstoppable. Despite many challenges, setbacks, obstacles and dangers the truth of Christ spread like a fire. Peter became the leader of the disciples in this mission and the leader of the Church for all time. That work did not begin until after this beach breakfast encounter. Peter first had to be restored into right relationship with Jesus and then he was sent. Jesus fed Peter and the disciples delicious fresh-caught broiled fish and then he sent Peter out to feed others. “Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep,” he commanded.

Jesus offered the restored Peter a fresh challenge, a new commission and a life-long purpose. He was sent out into the world to love others in the name of Jesus. Peter’s love and devotion were called into action. He gave himself completely in service to Christ. He offered himself a living sacrifice for the Kingdom and so do we. We lay our lives on the altar and say, “Here I am, Lord, send me!” Jesus warned Peter that he would give his life in service and die a violent death. History reveals that Peter was put to death in Rome by the Emperor Nero in 64 A.D. Many Christians were executed that same year. Nero falsely blamed them for the great fire that ravaged the city and caused much destruction. Tradition holds that Peter requested to be crucified upside down because he did not count himself worthy to be crucified in the same manner as Christ. Jesus predicted Peter’s violent death after he restored him on the beach.

Regardless, Peter was told, "Follow me." Peter did and so do we. Like Peter, we are sent to love, care for and feed others as Christ loved and nourished us.

Ask: What do I need to bring before Jesus Christ today? How might I need to be forgiven, restored, cleansed, nourished and sent?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord Jesus, thank you for your kindness and consideration despite my continual disobedience, idleness and lack of faith. Restore me gently in your love, nourish me with the food of your holy presence, fill me with good things, prepare me for the work you call me to do, erase the burden of fear, inspire me to share your good news, and give me a heart of compassion for the lost and needy. I go to bear witness to your love. Amen.