Topic: Breakfast with Jesus (Season of Easter 2, Lectionary C)
Scripture: Psalm 30, John 21:1-19
Hymns: BB108 Come Children Join to Sing, Vu362 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing, BB371 Have Thine Own Way Lord

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Let’s take a moment to pray…

Lord, before this world's days even began, your Word was in the beginning, and it was with you and it was you. The mystery of that brings us to our knees. Yet today you allow us to open your Word and know you better. So, we ask that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Give us hearts open to your Spirit as we seek you. AMEN.

(SLIDE)
(ASK) Anyone here ever feel like you've let someone down before? (ASK) Let me get a little deeper here... have you ever felt like you've blown it with God?
...yea... like you've messed up so bad that there's no WAY God still has plans for you? What do you do when you feel like that... I think the natural human response is to head back to a place of safety and comfort. Well, this is where we find Peter this morning in John 21.

You all know the story up until this point. Jesus had already risen... tomb was empty... Mary saw Jesus, so too did the Disciples. Thomas touched Him. Jesus ate with them and He's appearing to people everywhere. Hope was alive and well. But Peter... Peter was a different story.

We have to infer a little bit, Scripture doesn't outright tell us this, but I think it's safe to say Peter was still haunted by the smoke of a different fire and I think that because of where we find Peter here in John 21.

You'd think, after all that had happened Peter would be out in the streets, telling everyone and anyone he could about what he's seen... WHO he has seen! But he isn't out in the streets proclaiming the resurrection... in fact he isn't telling a single soul about the Saviour. He's fishing. (PAUSE) Remember back before Easter morning... remember back to Good Friday...

Remember when Peter denies Jesus. Jesus foretold this to Peter long before it would happen, and Peter got up in a huff about it. (EM commanding) "Peter, you're going to deny me". (EM low scot) "No Lord, I'd never". (EM commanding) And Jesus says, "Oh yes, you will". (EM low scot) "Perish the thought, my Lord!"

But we know... Jesus is never wrong... Jesus is carrying on with God's plan for the cross and people are asking Peter who is standing by a fire to keep warm. "That Jesus guy... you know Him, right Peter?" (PAUSE, EM frightened) "Oh... oh no". There's one. And Peter kept moving about town, and another person calls to Peter, "Oh, you're one of them disciples of Jesus, aren't you?"

And Peter looks around, "Me? Surely not". (SLOW) That's two.
And again, before the rooster crows Peter is asked again. (STERN AND STRONG) "DOOOO YOU KNOOOOW THAT MAN!" (point to cross) and Peter screams "No!". (PAUSE) And the rooster crows...

Even after all that's gone on with the resurrection, seeing this wonderous miraculous thing, Peter is haunted by his actions... how could he ever possibly hope to serve the Kingdom after denying Christ three times?

So, he goes back to what he knows... back to the boat, back to the lines, back to the smell of water and fish - to the life he had before Jesus came in with all his talk about miracles, calling, and crosses to bear. Peter goes and takes a step backwards. And what comes of this? (SLIDE animated) "**Friends, haven't you any fish? [...] No.**".

Nothing but empty nets and hungry Disciples. It's a very human thing to do... our mothers might know this best of us, their children. When the wayward child goes out to try something new, and inevitably runs into failure, our first thought is usually to return to form. Such a thing is on full display in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

We return to where we last had success, where it was profitable, or comfortable... lick our wounds, and go back to our old life. So, here's Peter back in his old life and guess what? No blessing there, either. Just his old life... as empty as it was when he left it.

And here's Jesus, popping up at daybreak, asking a very Jesus question. It's not a question for information, it's not a question about success or even failure... what Jesus is actually looking for here is a confession. And when they confess that they've turned up entirely empty, that there was not abundance here... Jesus comes in with his usual weird way of handling the situation.

"**Try on the other side!**". Now, they don't know it's Jesus on the shore here... (EM t-try...what). Can you imagine!? You've just done the one terrible thing you swore you'd never do, and its eating away at your soul, so you go back to fishing which you're supposed to be good at and you're catching WHAT? (EM TO AUDIENCE) NOTHING...

And here's some guy off the shore like, (EM hands) "Have you tried the right side"? Man, Id' be fit to be tied, wouldn't you? But they do it... and wouldn't you know it... BAM. Near net-breaking blessing. And isn't that just like Jesus to show up and turn emptiness into abundance, failure into triumph?

Here's the kicker, you're gonna love this... the miracle wasn't even the point... it's just the cherry on top. As soon as the nets fill up, John leans over to Peter and says, "Eh, you know it's the Lord, don't you?!" And Peter breaks wreck, he leaps from the boat and swims to shore without a second thought.

If you've ever needed a picture, a framework for how to return to God after you think you've screwed it all up so bad - this moment with Peter is a good starting point. Just stop whatever you're doing and run to Him.

Getting back to God is so important, so critical that you shouldn't wait for the boat to get to shore... you should just dive into the water, get wet, and scramble back to God as fast as you are able.

And when Peter gets to shore, there's a little something waiting for him... a fire of burning coals. (PAUSE) Now, I don't hear anyone gasping... so let me draw you in close here. Morning... fire... colossal failure. Remember back to what's haunting Peter. That morning, before the rooster crowed... fire... failure to acknowledge the Lord.

Jesus has just symbolically taken Peter back to his worst failure - back to the moment where he denied the Lord three times. And it's not to traumatize Peter, it's not even to shame him. Jesus is not about to make an example of him before the other Disciples - perish the thought. Jesus is going to redeem Peter.

Jesus doesn't start with a "Told you so", He doesn't lecture Peter on the ins and outs of following His word. Jesus starts with a meal - breakfast. The Son of God is here on the beach flipping and grilling fish for the very men who abandoned Him. The picture of grace is this: nail-scarred hands passing you bread when you're hungry.

And after they all get settled and take their fill and are laughing and talking about the haul they just received... Jesus takes Peter aside for a little heart-to-heart. Now you and I if we did this, we probably would have started here with a stern (SLIDE OF) "What did I tell you, eh?" or a "What were you THINKING denying me three times!?"

But listen to how Jesus starts this (SLIDE cross out before then add)... "**Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?**". Notice Jesus isn't interested in Peter's performance. Jesus wants Peter's heart. Three questions, three affirmations, three wounds healed.

Each time Jesus says "Do you love me?", it replaces one of Peter's "I don't know the man". And Jesus doesn't just say, "Ok, good stuff Peter. I forgive you." Jesus' response is profoundly different. Jesus recommission's Peter. "Feed my sheep", He says to Peter.

You're not just forgiven - you're still CALLED. You've still got a purpose, you still have work to do, your failure does not define you in God's eyes. Let me say that again for the folks in the back: Your failure does not define you in God's eyes.

Now some of you are sitting by your own fire right now, trying to keep warm. You're holding onto guilt, and shame, and failure... you're spiritually exhausted. Maybe you gone back to fishing, back to your old life where things are comfortable and known hoping that there's something left for you there away from the calling you were brought into, away from the trial and the testimony.

But there's Jesus on the shore calling out to you, "**Got any fish?**". And I bet you don't...

Not to mock you, not to scorn you, not to belittle you, but Jesus wants to meet you. He doesn't need your success and He doesn't demand you be perfect. He just wants your heart... and He's got breakfast ready for you.

Maybe you've never heard Jesus call your name before, or maybe you've known Him but you've been hiding, drifting, failing for whatever reason. There's good news... Jesus appears in the middle of our mess. When Peter thought he was forsaken, Jesus shows up and redeems him.

When the Disciples thought even fishing was an empty prospect, Jesus shows up and abundance follows. Jesus feeds us with grace. We may not deserve to be fed by the Saviour Himself, but He does. He comes with grilled fish.

And when we think that there's no possible way we could be useful to God, in our sin and our failures to follow, Jesus reminds us that we still have a purpose. There is a testimony to be given, there is Good News to be preached, there are the poor and needy to help, and a kingdom to be built.

So, let loose and swim to shore as quickly as you can. The fire is warm, the fish are nearly ready, and the King is calling.