

Easter Day 5

Thursday April 5, 2018

Reading: John 21:15-17

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

Reflection

The other day my brother in law reminded me of something our former pastor used to say, “Grace smells like fried fish.” Peter had failed. Jesus had warned his disciples that they would all abandon him in fear when he was arrested. They were all dismayed by the prediction, after all none of us want to think of ourselves as cowards. But, Peter had to go beyond being disturbed to outright denying it could happen at all. In his mind there could never be a scenario where he would do such a thing, he would rather die.

As it turned out though, he would rather live. So, while Jesus was being interviewed by the High Priest, Peter was being interviewed by the common folk. They kept asking Peter to confirm that he was indeed a disciple of the one currently on trial. Three times in fact. And, three times Peter said ‘no’ before running away ashamed. When reading the gospels you get the sense very quickly that Peter is a leader among his peers, but we find he is ultimately a failed leader.

Now when Jesus stands on the beach and it’s clear by the catch of fish that it is indeed Jesus, Peter comes running. He still loves this man and he still wants to be important to him. So, after they eat Jesus has a conversation with him. He gives this failed leader an opportunity to reaffirm his love the same number of times he denied it and if every reaffirmation he grants leadership to him. Peter, this failed leader, is being given responsibility for caring for the disciple community of Jesus.

Grace. We fail, but that failure doesn’t disqualify us. Instead, we are restored and empowered to serve once more. Grace smells like fried fish; I wonder if Peter tenderly thought of this scene whenever he smelled fish frying? What does God’s grace smell like to you?

Prayer

Restorer of hearts, thank you for the aroma of your grace. Let it fill our nostrils and coat our clothes. Remind us when we are disheartened that you make those who stumble to stand. Amen.