



***At Home Worship for Faith and Hope***

***Fifth Sunday of Easter***

May 2, 2021

*“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish.*

John 21:12-13 (NLT)

\*Call to Worship

*Brothers and sisters. If you lift your net and it is empty,  
Come here!*

***We'll cast it out again into Christ's abundance.***

*If you open your eyes but do not recognize the Holy One,  
Come here!*

***We'll find the Risen Christ here among us.***

*If your life is filled with mourning,  
Come here!*

***Christ is leading a dance of joy.***

*Come here, sisters and brothers!*

***To give blessing and honor and glory to God!***

\*Easter Praise

*“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”*

UMH 139

**\*Opening Prayer**

*God of power and might, let your love shine on us and through us to others. Take the blindness from our eyes and our hearts. Forgive us when we so easily become distracted by our own cares and worries that we ignore the needs of others around us. Give us the joy of knowing and serving you in all that we say, think and do. In Jesus' Name, we pray.*

**Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God**

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

**Sing the Doxology Together**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***A Prayer for Living in Light of the Resurrection***

*Lord Jesus, now a month down the road, the rush of Easter is over, the excitement which carried us to Easter and to the room where Jesus appeared to the disciples is wearing off. We just aren't sure what to do now that the journey to the Cross is completed. Help us to understand that the Cross is not our ending point, but rather the pivotal point.*

*Help us to be people of astounding faith, who have seen the light of Resurrection, who know that you have conquered death. Fear cannot claim and bind us. You have released us to serve others and witness to the glorious good news.*

*As we have brought the names of those near and dear to us to you in prayer, help us to feel the restoring and rejuvenating power of your love in our lives. Inspire us to move into compassionate ministries to your world. For we ask these things in the name of our Risen Lord. AMEN*

**The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

God's Word

John 21:1-14 (NLT)

(see below)

*The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!*

Message

***“You Can Find Your Story in God’s Story”***

Pastor Clark

*...Peter’s Unexpected Comeback*

See Message Below

The Lord’s Supper

See At Home Communion Guide Below

\*Hymn of Faith

*“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”*

UMH 348

Blessing

*You are people of the Resurrection!  
You know the powerful love of God!  
Go into God’s world proclaiming hope, peace,  
and joy, in the name of the Risen Lord. AMEN.*



## A Service of Home Communion

### Greeting

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

### Call to Worship

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

### Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together as Jesus taught us to pray: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

### Lifeline of Scripture

Hear these portions of scripture: Jesus invites us: *"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls."* **Matthew 11:28-29**

Jesus declares: *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me and anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away."* **John 6:35, 37**

### Invitation to the Lord's Supper

We invite you now to spiritually unite with all the members of Faith and Hope United Methodist Churches, and partake of the Lord's Supper.

According to Luke, when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples, he took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

**Sharing the Bread** This is the body of Christ, the bread of life—given for you. Amen.

**Sharing the Cup** This is the blood of Christ, the cup of salvation—shed for you. Amen.

**Prayer after Communion** Let us pray: *"We thank you, O God, that through Word and Sacrament you have given us your Son, who is the true bread from heaven and food of eternal life. We lift up to you, this day, these joys and concerns of our hearts: So strengthen us in your service that our daily living may show our thanks, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

**Parting Blessing** May the Lord bless and keep you. Amen

## **“You Can Find Your Story in God’s Story”**

*...Peter’s unexpected comeback”*

John 21:1-14 (NLT)

### **Introduction**

Jesus understood the power of a good story. Stories captivate our minds and grab our hearts like nothing else can. Stories give us new eyes to see the world around us. They raise questions that force us to think. Stories have the power to nudge us out of our complacency.

Yes, Jesus knew the power of stories. Jesus’ most memorable stories are about people... the stories that captured the unique ways He worked in human hearts in real people. Who could forget about stories like the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Young Ruler, Zacchaeus coming down from the tree, and the Woman at the Well. Yes, the stories from the New Testament reveal the workings of God’s grace in the course of our daily lives.

One of the most intriguing stories is about the apostle Peter. Like his impetuous personality, Peter’s story has some astonishing twists and turns. Today we pick this story up in John 21 where we encounter some more of Jesus’ final words...words He spoke after His resurrection.

Before I get to this leg of Peter’s story, allow me to suggest this: you have a story to tell too! You don’t have to be a character in the Bible to have a story to tell. In fact, all of us have a story to tell. We may not have the confidence to tell our story, but that can change. So I really want you to wrestle with this over the next three weeks...**what is your God story?** I can hear you saying something like this: “*Oh, that’s for the characters of the Bible.*” Or “*that’s for those who are full-time Christian workers.*” Or “*that’s for the Christian celebrities who we put on pedestals.*” *Oh, but surely not me!* Well, once again, I want to gently remind you, we all have a story to tell...and specifically a God-story. When we come to see our story as part of God’s story then we find our voice and our confidence to tell our unique story.

Here’s part of Peter’s story as found in John 21:1-14 (NLT)

*Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. <sup>2</sup> Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.*

<sup>3</sup> *Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”*

*“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.*

<sup>4</sup> *At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. <sup>5</sup> He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”*

*“No,” they replied.*

<sup>6</sup> *Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.*

<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. <sup>8</sup> The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. <sup>9</sup> When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

<sup>10</sup> “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

<sup>12</sup> “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. <sup>14</sup> This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

### **Before Peter met Jesus...**

**Simon**, son of Jonas and resident of Bethsaida, was a fisherman with his brother Andrew. Bethsaida was located near the mouth of the Jordan River at the northeast edge of the Sea of Galilee where the best fishing grounds were found. James and John were most likely partners with Simon and Andrew in this fishing business.

We know that Peter was married and later owned a house in Capernaum. His mother-in-law lived with them. Jesus seemed to use this house as a base of operations for his ministry.

In some ways Peter was a lot like us. Family. Home. Job. And all the cares and concerns that come with those.

We can see from Peter’s profile that he was impulsive often blurting out half-formed thoughts. Peter leap into life with uninhibited enthusiasm which all too many times got him in trouble. Despite all his bold declarations, Peter really didn’t understand Jesus very well.

### **How Peter met Jesus...**

Simon encountered Jesus when his brother Andrew claimed to find the Messiah. When they were introduced, Jesus renamed him ‘**Cephas**’ (‘rock’ or ‘stone’ in Hebrew) which translates to ‘**Peter**’ in Greek.

Later, as Peter was fishing with Andrew, Jesus called and the brothers followed. In Capernaum, Peter witnessed Jesus’ power to heal his mother-in-law of a high fever. Still, Peter had not forsaken everything. Sometime later, after Jesus used his fishing boat as a teaching platform, the Master directed Peter to let his net into the sea, and the boats were nearly overwhelmed with the catch. Peter fell down at Jesus’ knees, crying out that he was sinful man. Jesus responded that he would be a fisher of men, and Peter left everything to follow the Lord.

It has been said that all of us are on a journey of becoming real. This is ever so true of Peter. Tracking his life story is like watching the slow transformation of the old persona become the real man Jesus

saw in choosing Peter to lead the early church. God was chiseling and shaping and forming a genuine Christfulness in Peter though it would take a roller coaster ride for that to emerge.

### ***After Peter met Jesus, Peter...***

The Storycorp people who capture people's stories all across the US, tell us that to have a story, "*you have to have a character who **wants something** and has to **overcome conflict** to get it.*" For Peter, one gets that sense that Peter wanted to live up to Jesus' view of him as the Rock upon which the church was to be built. Only thing is, Peter thought he had to do this in his own strength...in his own impetuous manner. Hence, Peter actually encountered most of his life-conflict after he came to know Jesus. He was constantly sticking his foot in his mouth or taking some brash course of action that made no sense in light of Jesus' kingdom-of-God values.

- Peter for instance rebuked Jesus when Jesus began to teach the disciples about his coming suffering.
- On the mountain of Transfiguration, Peter proposed they build three dwellings—one each for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus with the implications that they just stay on the mountain and not worry about suffering or the Cross.
- At the Last Supper Peter would not allow Jesus to wash his feet at first. But when Jesus explained the significance of washing his feet, immediately Peter requested Jesus wash his whole body.
- When Jesus predicted that after his arrest that the disciples would fall away, Peter impetuously responded, "Even though all become deserters, I will never desert you!"

This led to Peter's greatest failure—the failure for which he is most known. After Jesus' arrest, Peter is in the courtyard—hanging close but not too close. He was spotted by a servant girl as being a follower of Jesus. And Peter's fateful response was to deny even knowing Jesus—not once but three times. Ironically, this is just as Jesus had predicted.

Peter was crushed by this dark turn of events...crushed by his failure to stand strong with Jesus. In terms of a life story, Peter felt and thought like this was the end of it all. That the story had no redemption, no new chapters. Peter had a very fixed view of himself that didn't allow plot twists and soul transformations. He was dejected and completely out of hope for the future. End of story! His life would forever be defined by his greatest failure.

Allow me to pause in Peter's unfolding story to suggest that we all have a life story, a God story. We all could use this as a kind of natural template to write our own God Stories: what was my life like before I met Jesus? How did I meet Jesus, when did Jesus become real to me? And after you met Jesus, what has life been like, what do you truly want in life and what challenges and conflict have you faced? You can be prepared to share your God Story with those around you if only you'd take the time to reflect and pray over how Jesus intersected your life! You could tell your story in a simple and succinct manner flowing out of your natural life experiences. You could share your God Story with confidence.

Now back to Peter's story. What changed him? He encountered Jesus in a particular way that matched his greatest need. Just when Peter thought he had crashed into a dead-end wall, Jesus came and rescued him. Jesus took the initiative to pursue Peter to restore him as a Christ-follower and as the leader of the church. That's what this story in John 21 is all about. The breakfast by the sea and what followed was all about Jesus coming for Peter! Jesus came seeking Peter to rescue and restore him. ***Jesus was Peter's Rescuer.***

Maybe for you, at your point of greatest need, Jesus will come to you in a way that you need him most. Look at the following:

- Maybe you are struggling with illness or disease and you need Jesus as your ***Healer***
- Maybe you have lost your way and you need Jesus as your ***Guide***
- Maybe your life has crash landed and you need Jesus as your ***Hope***
- Maybe your life has become stuck and you need Jesus as your ***New Beginning***
- Maybe your life is clouded with aloneness and depression and you need Jesus as your ***Friend***
- Maybe your life is lacking wisdom and instruction and you need Jesus as your ***Teacher***
- Maybe your life has crashed and burned with a mess of sin and self-seeking and you need Jesus as your ***Redeemer or Forgiver.***

Your God Story can describe how Jesus became real to you, how you most needed Jesus at that turning point in your life, where Jesus came alongside and helped resolve the tension and conflict in your story.

Here is another absolutely crucial point: ***"What is it about the story of your relationship with Jesus that could help your neighbor draw closer to God?"*** I am absolutely convinced that the Holy Spirit can providentially arrange some divine appointments with someone who needs to encounter Jesus much the same way you have! Your God Story may well be a lifeline to that person...a lifeline that opens the way for them to experience Jesus' grace and love in their life. You can be ready for that moment!

### ***Climax***

What can we learn about Jesus' rescue of Peter? And then, what happened as a result in Peter's life? What change and transformation did Peter experience? Peter's life can be described as one of the most amazing ***comebacks*** in history!

Here's what we can learn:

- ***Comebacks start with God!*** God is the ultimate comeback Author. God takes the initiative through the Holy Spirit. Your comeback is in God's mind and heart right now!
- ***Failure need never be fatal!*** With Christ comebacks are always possible! Restoration is always possible!
- ***It's never too late*** to experience a comeback!
- ***Amazing fruitfulness happens*** when we meet Jesus in a genuine comeback!



### ***What happened in Peter's life?***

- Peter became a humble leader who relied on the Holy Spirit instead of his own self...read through Acts or his letter of 1 Peter to see this in living color
- Peter truly became the rock upon which the church was built
- Peter preached on Pentecost Day when the Jesus movement exploded onto the scene with thousands coming to faith
- Peter demonstrated the power of Christ throughout his ministry
- Peter became the instrumental person to open this new movement to the Gentiles.
- Peter was martyred for his faith but, as tradition has said, refused to die like Jesus and was crucified upside down—not worthy to die like Jesus. We likely won't be crucified like Peter...

Folks, you can find your true story in God's story! Just imagine: What might happen in your life as a result of encountering Jesus? Sharing your God Story?

## **Men's Breakfast and Fellowship to Restart May 8**

*The men of Faith and Hope are invited to participate in the restart of our Men's Breakfast and Fellowship this coming Saturday May 8 at 8:00 AM at Faith. We will share an awesome breakfast together, be uplifted by the devotional inspiration from one of our men, and then head outside work on the landscaping around the church.*

## **Dinner Church Exploratory Team**

*We would like to form a small team of folks who might join Pastor Clark in exploring more about the Dinner Church model. A team of three to five would be ideal in addition to me. We have resources we can use for this including a DVD that not only introduces the Dinner Church model but also highlights Dinner Church in action in several churches across the US. Email Pastor Clark if you'd like to participate [clarkhess.cw@gmail.com](mailto:clarkhess.cw@gmail.com)*

## **Today Is DisAbility Awareness Sunday**

*Disability Awareness Sunday is an opportunity for us to celebrate the inclusion of people affected by disabilities into the body and family of the church. We celebrate this every time we come together, but this day is a special reminder and a good starting point for new activities and ministries. The definition of a disability is broad and diverse, giving us the opportunity to seek ways of including people with any and all gifts. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as: "A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity." This includes people living with physical disabilities, cognitive/learning disabilities, and mental illness.*

## **Celebrating Mother's Day Next Sunday May 9**

*It's not been an easy year for moms...and grandmothers too! Hard to imagine it, but even more has been put on Mom's plate during this pandemic year. Mothers have been under great stress. Let's gather to provide some relief and joy!*

*So, next Sunday May 9 we will celebrate Mothers and Grandmothers as part of our worship experience. Come prepared for a dose of tender remembrance, joyful laughter, and encouraging inspiration. We will explore the phases of a mother's love as we look through the lens of Mary, Jesus' mother. She demonstrated an enduring faithfulness through intense challenges in the seasons of her life. Invite your mom or grandmother, or extended family to share in this uplifting worship experience.*

*Along the way we will acknowledge that this is also a very difficult day for many whose families have lost a mom or a grandmother or for a variety of other reasons. Healing grace will flow!*