

Sermon on John 21:1-19

Last week I ended my sermon with a question—who were you going to tell this wonderful, amazing story to? Well, how many of you did that? Anyone? Well, if you didn't you're in pretty good company; the disciples didn't at first either. Remember they had just met with the risen Lord; had the Holy Spirit given to them by Jesus and then were sent out into the world by Jesus. And yet, Peter decides he wants to go fishing and everyone else goes with him!

Now Jesus could have chided them and asked them what they were doing out in a boat fishing when they should be out spreading the word about God's kingdom, but he doesn't. He calls them ashore and he feeds them before he sends them out again. But he does more than that; he asks them to add what they have to what he has already provided. It is as they share that they are drawn back into the fellowship of those who not only see, but believe.

And then we have Peter—Peter who didn't recognize Jesus until the other disciple told him who was on the beach—swims to shore and is welcomed by Jesus to a breakfast of fish grilled on a charcoal fire. Now the last time Peter was around a charcoal fire he had just denied knowing Jesus three times. Jesus gives Peter three chances to wipe away his denials. Jesus could have turned Peter away, but Jesus welcomes Peter back into the community and gives him meaningful work to do. Jesus asks Peter to feed his sheep, to tend his lambs. And that's great news for us today!

We too are given the Holy Spirit at our baptisms and are commissioned by Jesus to go out into this world and participate in God's work in the world, but like

Peter there will be times when we will fall short. We fail to speak a word of encouragement; to do a necessary act. But like Peter Jesus forgives us each time we fail and then we are sent out again. Jesus invites us to share what gifts we have to further God's kingdom in this world.

What we do in our everyday lives is just as or maybe more important than what we do and believe here today. We are called to look for opportunities—out there—to care for and nourish the people and a world that God loves enough to send the Son into to redeem all of creation. There will be times when we miss the mark; when we don't say something, when we don't visit with others, when we don't volunteer; when we forget or are too tired to help; we might think that because of our failures we aren't wanted and sometimes we even leave.

If there is one thing that you remember from this sermon today it's this—Jesus never, never, ever gives up on us! Jesus keeps inviting us back, nourishing and encouraging us with word and sacrament; then he calls us to take what we have and go back out into the world to try again. And I want you to know that I am grateful for all that you do out there—I know it isn't easy, in fact it can be overwhelming. But we are called to do this together, to share God's amazing love for this world with the world. So I ask you again—who will you tell this amazing, wonderful story to as you go back out into the world?