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April 12, 2026

Scripture: John 21: 1-25

Sermon Title: An Invitation to Surrender to Jesus

John 21

New Revised Standard Version

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin,[a] Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” 6 He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom

Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them, and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus and Peter

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know

that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” 16 A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

Jesus and the Beloved Disciple

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” 22 Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!” 23 So the rumor spread among

the brothers and sisters that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”[b] This is the Word of the Lord.

Prayer...

Start off with a couple of jokes. For those of you new to the church, I normally do this only on Bright Sunday. If you want more jokes, then you might need to check out Joel Osteen. He starts every sermon off with a joke. That feels like too much pressure. Most of my humor is by accident, like last week when I told the congregation that we should keep praying for Sigrid Cronin and she was in the congregation waving at me. Anyways, I do have a couple of joke. The first two are from Jim Gaffigan. He’s a professional comedian, so if you don’t laugh, blame him.

Jesus walking on water....

Jesus making bread for the multitude....

Some thoughts on the Gospel writer John. I relate to John. He has a tendency to be a bit prideful.

- The one Jesus loved... really are you the only one Jesus loved.
- I am the one that believes, not Peter, just want to remind people of that.
- I am the fast one. Yeah, Peter was a bit slow. I am the track star. Just want you to know that.
- And finally, can you guess what the humor is in our story today? It has to do with Peter again. He is a little awkward in the story. Our version of the text said that he was naked in the boat. The gospel writer John is probably making fun of Peter again. Imagine you are Peter, hanging out doing some fishing naked. Apparently, that was a thing. And then Jesus is on the shore. You might be a little embarrassed. So Peter does the same thing and puts on a bunch of clothes and goes swimming. Great idea! I imagine Jesus was laughing on the shore.

So that's all the jokes for today... If you want more humor, the good news is you only have to wait one whole year until the next Bright Sunday. Some of you are like, thank goodness.

I did want to share something meaningful about this story of Jesus and Peter.

Over the course of Lent and now into the Easter Season, we have reflected on the insights from David Benner's books, *Surrender to Love*.

What I find beautiful about Jesus' conversation with Peter, is that Jesus is inviting him to surrender to love. He is inviting Peter to love him. In our text, Jesus asks Peter if he loves him. He asks three times and Peter is a little upset about that.

Peter wants to say to Jesus, "Hey Mister, I told you I love you. Give me a break." And Jesus in my reading says, "Okay, then show me your love by caring for your flock." In other words, "I trust that you love me, now show me you love me by being a good pastor."

Now this may still sound like a bit of pressure on Peter, but what is happening is that Jesus is also restoring Peter. Remember Peter is the same guy who denied Jesus three times. As Peter responds three times, I love you Jesus. Peter is healing himself. Peter is being restored by Jesus as he recommits himself to the mission of Jesus. And the good news is that Peter stays true to his calling and becomes a Pastor for the early church. The Catholic Church

considers St. Peter the first leader of the Apostles. Mary Magdalene was also great among the apostles.

Peter learned surrender by experiencing Grace. Grace of restoration by saying I love you. You know that I love you. He said it three times and that restored him. It was an empowering way for Jesus to forgive him and to let Peter know that his failings did not prohibit him from becoming a great leader of the church. The whole Bible is full of stories like Peter, where ordinary people do extraordinary things for God through the power of grace and love. Benner reminds us of how surrender leads to personal transformation. He writes,

“Surrender is not the only means by which we access the grace of transformation, but it is the most important and most distinctively Christian. But surrender is not something that we only practice when we approach God with open hands and hearts in faith. It is something that we need to make a moment by- moment part of how we live our life.” (P. 101 Surrender to Love)

Not all of us are called like Peter to become a pastor, but we are all called to pastor someone in our lives. We are all called to feed sheep in some way. The

Thurston's are taking in a couple goats, so they will tell you about feeding goats. In a metaphorical sense, we all are called to care for others in our lives as part of loving Jesus.

I hope you feel encouraged in this Easter season to embrace Jesus' invitation to surrender your life to him. He is trustworthy. He is full of grace. Following Jesus is not about will power. It is about trusting in the love of God. God does not expect our perfection. God simply desires our openness to follow our Savior Jesus. Sometimes the road is not easy, but there is always hope in the power of resurrection love as we surrender our lives and follow the way of Christ. Bright Sunday reminds us to have hope and even some humor on this journey of life.

Please pray with me...