

Easter 3—C  
John 21:1-14  
“It Is The Lord!”

When you look at a mountain range, what do you see? If you're a skier, you probably look for those fast and powdery slopes. If you're a mountain climber, your eyes probably plot the ways to get to the top of the highest peak. If you're a geologist, your trained eyes probably look for various layers and formations. If you're the average Christian, you probably just marvel at the wonders of God's creation.

When you look at the mountain range of your daily life, what do you see? As you examine the peaks and valleys of life, do you see the hand of fate, or do you see the hand of the Lord? Do you see your life as happening just by chance, sometimes having good luck and sometimes having bad luck, or do you see your life as guided and controlled by the Lord? Just like with the mountains, how you answer depends on who you are. If you are Christian, you see a forever-living Savior as part of your everyday life.

Two weeks ago, this building was filled with sounds of hallelujahs and trumpets. There were choirs and lilies and folding chairs in the back of church to hold the overflow of Easter worshippers—all because of Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the grave. Because of this risen Savior we know for certain that we have a place in heaven when we die, and on the great day of the resurrection, we too will rise from the grave. Those are the key thoughts that made Easter such a day of rejoicing here at St. John's. But while our church building may look a bit different than it did two weeks ago and while you may have returned to your ordinary day to day living, there is some more Easter celebrating for us to do. You see, having a risen Savior not only is the key to our future life for eternity, but he's also the key to our earthly life at this very moment. This account of the risen Jesus appearing to his disciples for the third time causes his disciples to shout: *“It is the Lord!”* And even today, the Lord is with us. The Lord is with us with his presence, power, and grace.

I. His presence

Let's set the scene. It's sometime after Easter. The disciples traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee. Jesus said that he'd meet them there, but what should they do until he got there? *“I'm going out to fish,”* said impetuous Peter. It had been awhile since they tried their hand at their old trade, but since there was nothing else to do, why not? They used their time doing the ordinary work that at least four of them knew how to do well. But it wasn't a good night for fishing. They got skunked. At daybreak, Jesus is there on shore, but nobody realizes it's him. *“Boys, don't you have any fish?”* he calls out to them. *“‘No,’ they answered. He told them, ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ So they cast the net out. Then they were not able to haul it in because of the large number of fish”* (5-6). This miracle is much like the one Jesus had done a couple of years ago. Disciple John put two and two together and announced: *“It is the Lord!”* (7)

Jesus was there all the while they went about their daily duties and they didn't know it. Is that ever how it is with us? Do we sometimes go about our everyday life totally unaware of our risen Savior's presence? If we remembered that he is there looking over our shoulder at everything we say or do, just maybe there might be some things you and I would not be doing or saying. One of the great truths of Easter is that our Lord Jesus rose from the dead so that he could return to his

throne in heaven. The Bible tells us Jesus did that in order to fill the whole universe with his presence. That's why the risen Lord promised each of us: "*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*" (Matthew 28:20). How many Christians can go through a whole day, maybe even a week, without ever thinking about such a remarkable promise?

It was nothing but pure joy for those disciples to know Jesus was there with them. Peter was so excited that he jumped into the lake for Jesus and swam ashore to get there first. How about you and me? Are we excited to know that each day we walk on this earth our risen Savior will be right there beside us? In Psalm 139 King David said about his risen Savior: "*You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways*" (2). David wasn't just talking about himself. Wherever we go and whatever we do, the risen Lord is there. Whether it be the Monday-Friday fishing you do to put bread on your table or passing grades on your report card, whether you raise crops or you raise the children God has given you, whether it be those weekly struggles with the boss or the traffic jam or the extra homework, the nagging backache or the upset stomach from that cafeteria food, the risen Jesus says: "*Surely I am with you always.*" There isn't one corner of our lives, one pocket of our existence, one section of our humanity which our risen Savior is not concerned about.

Jesus knows us. He knows our lives. He knows our situations. He knew about the disciples and appeared to them. Our loving Lord knows about us, too. If God knows us, we can take comfort, for he also has power to help.

## II. His power

This Easter story has some more good news in it. Not only will the risen Lord be in our daily lives with his extraordinary presence, he's also wants to be there with his power. Even for something as simple as fishing, we see that truth in our text. Without the risen Savior, those disciples caught nothing; but with him, they caught more than they could handle, 153 big ones, to be exact. What task is there in our lives that doesn't need the Savior's power? I can think of none. Jesus said: "*Apart from me, you can do nothing*" (John 15:5). We can't even live or breathe, let alone work or play without his power. The Bible says: "*In [Jesus] we live and move and have our being*" (Acts 17:28). This Easter story reminds us again of the only place we'll ever find Jesus' power. The Lord said to his disciples: "*'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.'* *When they did, they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish*" (6). Do you see now where you'll always find this extraordinary power of the Lord for your ordinary living? It is in Jesus' words. When those disciples heard and listened to those words, how they were blessed.

This is a comfort especially when things aren't going so well in our lives. One evening Martin Luther was sitting at his desk weighed down with fear and discouragement. Yet with his finger he began tracing on the wood a Latin word, over and over again—the word: "Vivit! Vivit! Vivit!" Translation: "He lives! He lives! He lives!" Our risen Jesus lives. Without that fact everything in life is one effort after another in futility. Dealing with our personal sins day after day, parenting a difficult teenager who wants to go off the deep end, trying to get along with a not-so-easy-to-get-along-with individual, refueling a marriage whose fires seem to be dying out, carrying the heavy burden of health problems, struggling to stop being a worry-wart—all those things are way beyond our ability. But what did you learn from this Easter story today? This extraordinary power of your Lord is waiting for you for each and every part of your ordinary living

right here in your Bible. Get into that Book each day and stay in it. Here you'll find the power of his forgiveness for all your sinful failures. Here you'll find the power of his guidance for every difficult responsibility in your life. Here you'll find the power of his strength to keep on going no matter how trying life becomes. Paul once said: "*I can do everything through him who gives me the strength*" (Philippians 4:13). You say it too: "*I can do everything through him who gives me the strength!*"

### III. His provision

"*It is the Lord*" with his presence, extraordinary with his power, and now one final Easter truth for us to carry home. Notice the simple thing that the risen Savior did for his disciples on that seashore. Jesus provided them with breakfast. This was a miracle as well. According to the original Greek here, there was only one fish on the coals, along with one, small loaf of bread. We read: "*Jesus came, took the (one) bread, and gave it to them, and also the (one) fish*" (the words are singular in the original). These are the exact words used when Jesus did another miracle of extraordinary provision for ordinary living—the feeding of the 5,000 with that little boy's lunch of 2 fish and 5 loaves.

Perhaps it isn't always with a miracle, but our risen Jesus certainly is responsible for our every breakfast, lunch, and supper, along with everything else he provides for you and me each day. The psalmist puts it so well: "*The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing*" (Psalm 145:15). Do we acknowledge the risen Jesus as our provider? The disciples did. "*It is the Lord!*" John shouted when he saw what had happened. How do you and I respond to our Lord's extraordinary provision? Do our eyes look to him as the source of every earthly blessing? Or do we take those blessings for granted? If we have been able to keep our job and our health, if our salary has increased so that there is more than enough food on the table and we have comfortable homes and many modern conveniences, do we say: "It is the Lord! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" or do we take the credit and think: "I've worked hard. I deserve what I have!" Or what about when our future is uncertain, our health is shaky, or our job isn't so secure? Do we worry and complain or do we say: "It is the Lord! He knows what is best for me. I will trust in him and not be afraid!"? We all know the right answers to those questions, but living those answers is another matter especially in a culture where so many see life as the survival of the fittest in a dog-eat-dog world. Our life is in the hands of our risen and loving Jesus. St. Paul tells us what that means: "*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things*" (Romans 8:32)? If such a Savior loves us so much that he was willing to die for our sins so that we will go to heaven, never ever do we have question his giving us what we need for our every day. Such a Savior will always provide.

And so we're celebrating Easter once again this Sunday. Because Jesus lives we have the assurance of his abiding presence for every moment of life, we have the power of his Word for every circumstance in life, and we have his wise and loving provision for everything we'll ever need for life. Now that's an extraordinary Savior for our ordinary living. Amen.