

May 7 2017

Reading from the Bible John 21:1-19

John 13:36-38

Sermon Galilee BBQ

Peter says, "I am going fishing." When we were living in Wyoming, Gary would say to me if he was tired and the weather uncertain, maybe sunny day or not, "I'm going fishing". So off he would go with his pole and he would say as most fishermen would say, "a bad of fishing is a better than a good day anywhere else." "I'm going fishing."

Peter was apparently was not ostracized by his fellow disciples. In fact, they said, "we are going, too." After all John but, none of them said did much better after Jesus arrest? On their mind-set as disciples, is this in the end of all we know or hoped for. They had to be discouraged. We don't know if this was a one day cruise just to go out on Peter's boat and fish to get away, an attention reliever and to relax. It was the normal thing to do in Galilee and was much safer than Jerusalem or any other place, or were they actually at the point of abandoning their ministry if Jesus hadn't appeared to get instructions. Or was it a diversion will they were waiting before they were going to follow their old profession. Fishing was predictable and now they had to make a living now that they were no long itinerary preachers any longer

It is interesting that there is only the seven of them mentioned. Seven disciples- they were not all together; four of them are missing; they are fragmented. They had a close fellowship, all of them for three years walking, teaching and preaching and watching Jesus and now their connections were loose. They were shaking in their relationships. And every one of them had miserably failed their Master. Peter the denial was joined by doubting Thomas. Nathanael, who had said any good, can come from Nazareth, James and John, the sons of thunder who were also fishermen, and two more. We don't know who they are but one might be Andrew, Peter's brother fishermen. They weren't even successful in fishing. It seems they couldn't do anything right.

The story tells of the miracle of the fish but the greater miracle was the work that Jesus had with Peter. The rock Peter was impulsive passionate with his profound profession, "My Lord and my God, you are the Messiah." He was part of the inner circle and Transfiguration and yet when talking about forgiveness Peter asked Jesus about forgiving seven times which was the Levitical model. Jesus said no. What did him say- seven times seventy?

The good news for us Jesus doesn't wait until the disciples' perfection and not now. Peter was so sure of his faith, he said to Jesus, "If everyone forsakes you-not

me I will stick to you like glue.” And then in the upper room when Jesus announced the betrayer. Peter said, “Who is it, Lord?” Then he said, “I will lay down my life for you!” “It can’t be me” But Jesus knew what was in his heart. The challenge would be way too much for Peter could ever for see or try to Peter. Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. And you know what, he knows us better.

We know the familiar story in chapter 13: 36-38

Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward.” Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times,”

When Jesus said he was going, Peter said, “Why can’t I follow you now. I will lay down my life for you. Jesus said. “Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows you will have denied me three times.” And that was three o’clock in the morning. When the cock crowed in the early dawn that time was considered to be three o’clock in the morning. We see Jesus as being arrested and Simon Peter-what did Simon Peter do? He went prepared, this was a man who expected trouble and takes out his sword or a dagger and he lops off the ear of the high priest’s servant. There was a lot of blood in any kind of head wound. He lops it off. It is mentioned in all four gospels about Peter’s denial and all four tell the story. And Jesus said, “No, that is not what we are about. It is not about swords. And we know from another gospel Jesus healed the Malchus’ ear right there in the spot.

John was known in the circles and gets Peter into the courtyard of the high priest. And a gal let Peter in and the first thing that Peter hears, “You are not also one his disciples are you?” “I think you are with them.” Peter answers, “I am not!” And then Peter was standing warming himself by the fire and they asked him in front of a whole bunch of people, “You are with him, aren’t you?” He denied it, “I am not!” And one of the slaves of the High Priest- could it get any worse-an actual eye witness. The slave of the High Priest said, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Peter denied it and the cock crowed. We don’t know where Peter went from there. We have no clue. At that point, we don’t know if he was overcome with shame or remorse or hid or maybe Peter was terrified he had been identified as a co-conspirator with Jesus. He was not around according to the Gospels; they only mention John, to take care of Jesus’ mother. None of the disciples were around the cross. None of them were there for the beating and none of them for the humiliation. So much for Peter’s promise for his fidelity. He could never get his head around what Jesus was talking about. I wondered about his words about the sheep Mary Magdalene on Easter morning came and got Peter and John and took them to the tomb. They had not been there yet. She reported that the body was

gone! What happened to the body? And they come running and Peter looks in but he doesn't go in and John goes in. and he believes. I still don't know if John believes that Jesus was raised. He believed he wasn't there and something was going on. Peter was still not sure.

Remember the people who were walking on the road to Emmaus They came to Jerusalem and they said, "We have seen the Lord." And the Lord appeared to Peter too. We have no clue what was said or what was done. We do know that he was in the room with the disciples when Jesus appeared. A week later of course they were still in the room I hope they went out for groceries. They were still locked in the room and the conversation was with Thomas. Jesus met Thomas' needs at the moment but Peter was not singled out. But if Jesus saw leadership potential in Peter, we really have to wonder? All of these guys would have been fired maybe not John but they were a bunch of losers. But people talking about business practices would say Jesus would take a tremendous risk with all of them especially Peter. Peter was a loud boaster and he failed miserably. He didn't get it. Maybe Jesus should have let him stay at the fishing boat Just let him go. Jesus should pick someone more stable, with more potential. Was Jesus overly optimistic? He had invested three years with these guys or maybe Jesus thought, they are the best he could do right now since he was only going to be there a few more days. But Jesus intended that Peter would play a much larger role. He was going to be a fisher of souls; a shepherd of souls. Jesus the good shepherd had come back for this lost sheep the one who would bring believer together who had been faithful in their witness testimony of the love of God to the world.

And now we come to the beach and Jesus, Peter and their little chat. I don't know if this is public or not, if public it was meant to show the other disciples something. I have the feeling that it was private. Jesus said, "Let's go over there and sit on this drift wood, we will be right back." and Jesus had this little talk with Peter.

There are a lot of talk and ideas about why Jesus asked Peter, "love me, love me, love me; feed my lambs and tend my sheep. The lamb thing is less critical at this point but the main thing of what I think is critical at this point is, he was to be the feeder of the lambs and being a shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Many great scholars have said love, love; in Greek there are five words of the different kinds of love. Jesus uses the words agape-divine love. If I use the agape love for Don and Chris that doesn't mean we are good buddies that is phileo, the other kind of love. Agape love means I will do the best for them; I will do what I can to help them prosper. I will lay down my life for them. I will feel connected spiritually with divine love. Agape love is what this church is built on. The lamb love, phileo love is like Jesus is my good buddy, you and my friend. You

don't usually say you are going to lay down your life for your best friend that is a friendship love brotherly/sisterly love.

Jesus called Peter Simon, son of John and that is what he called him by the seashore. I think that is significant. And what Jesus says is truly love agape love, a caring love I love you. Jesus says again agape you love me fully. Peter says, I do love, phileo, you Jesus says again are you my friend you care for me and Peter is just wrenched and he says, "You know everything about me, you know I love you and Jesus says follow me. He tells Peter what his life is going to be like you are going to find yourself sacrificed for me you are going to be crucified for the faith and you will have an agape love for me. You have that lesser love and Jesus knew he would do it. Jesus knows our every thought every secret and everything about us. Jesus expected a lot from Peter. Jesus follows me, knowing eventually what it implied Peter pledged his life this time. When we give our lives to Christian living, it requires sacrificed. We are required to give ourselves up. And then Jesus turns to us, "Do you love me?" How willing and how strong is your love for me?" Are just buddies with Jesus? Do we like Jesus? Do we love him but sometimes when somebody challenges us about our faith do we weaken?

What I really love about this story is Jesus came to Peter and wherever you are on the journey you are welcomed here. Peter knew exactly about Jesus; but Jesus knew what was in Peter's heart and he knew what Peter could do? Do you love me? Think about that as we come to the communion table we have a chance to think about that phrase. How much do you love Jesus? What are we willing to give up? Do you love him?

Let us pray: Dear God we thank you for this scripture. Thank you that you work with people like Peter People like us who are not perfect who are prone to wander prone to leave you Take our hearts and spirits. Amen