

# Coffee to Go | Third Sunday of Easter | Year C

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Easter, resurrection, discipleship, compassion.

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:20

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you in the journey. So we are in the Easter season. Easter is more than one Sunday. It's actually 50 days from Easter day until Pentecost. And during the Easter season, a lot of things happen, including post-resurrection appearances by Jesus and some kind of last or final teachings. Some of them, like today, are promises or commitments or other type of things that Jesus wants to make sure he gets out before he departs. So this Sunday we are with the disciples. Jesus has been crucified, has been seen post resurrection, but he's not with them, and they have done what I say quite often men do, or women do, when things don't go their way. They went fishing. They went back to what they knew. And so they're fishing, and it's on the Sea of Tiberias, and they see a figure on this shore that they don't recognize. So what happens Blake?

### **Blake Smith** 01:45

Alright, well let's find out. We're reading from the Gospel according to John the 21st Chapter, and it is the 1st through the 19th verse that I'll be reading today.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberius, and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." And they said to him, "We'll go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night, they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 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. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "it is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he had taken it off and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the full net of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 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. 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. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did

the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. 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." The 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." 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." And Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 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." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

And why does this matter? Before I get to why does this matter, I just want to say I don't know if Karin, if our listeners, catch the fact of what comes out of some of these conversations. I just know that I've read a lot of these scriptures time and time throughout my life. They're familiar scriptures, a lot of them, but when we are able to have these conversations and read it in this way and then have conversation about it, I get so much more out of it. Just things that I have never thought of and this is one of those passages where there are connections there that you shared with me and that were just kind of really eye-opening and helps me to look at the scripture in a new way. So, I hope that these conversations are helpful for the listeners too, and probably even help them find other connections that we haven't even seen. That's why these conversations are so important.

#### **Karin Peter 06:08**

Well, that's why the lectionary is so helpful, because we revisit the same scriptures, sometimes parallel in the Gospels, over the three-year cycle, but certainly by the time the nine-year cycle is complete, we've covered everything, and then we go back and we cover it again, and we go back and we cover it again. That's part of formation, although I do have to say, I mean, another thing is a lot of times we agree on what we're hearing and seeing, a lot of times we don't. But I hope that we're modeling that we expand our understanding, rather than shutdown when somebody else has an opinion that's not the same as ours. So hopefully we manage to do that. But I have to say, the thing that hit me when you were just reading the scripture, it was like, I've always been taught that the reason Jesus asked Peter three times was because Peter had denied him three times in the garden, and it was a way of equaling that out, if you will. And I don't believe Jesus worked that way. I don't believe Jesus felt like, you know, okay, we have a mathematical equation. If I ask him three times, it'll take away the three times he didn't. I mean, no, I don't think that. Here's what I think. I think Peter had an attention deficit problem, because everything that you read about Peter is he is like 'in the moment.' He jumps to it. He jumps out of the boat. He jumps here, he goes there. He runs. He ran to the tomb. I mean, he's like this. Soon as he hears anything, zip, he's off. And I think at times we do that as well. And this is a good reminder here that Jesus was being very intentional and saying several times to Peter because Peter didn't hear it the first time. His brain was already off on the next thing that seems to be Peter's behavior. And so, Jesus was calling him back to the center each time, trying to get him centered, trying to get him focused. And I think that's what our conversations about scripture help us do here at Coffee to Go as well.

**Blake Smith** 08:05

Right, and I think, for me, in these conversations and those places where we haven't agreed, it has still been enlightening for me to hear how someone else reads it, to hear that perspective. And it does at least make me think about it, and I may still come out in, well, 'I'm not sure that, that's there,' but hearing that perspective. In the larger perspective of our Christian journey, of our faith journey, our spiritual journey, however we frame that is being able to understand the different perspectives that are around us in the world. It helps us to see the things that happen in our world from a bigger place. So that's all even, even again, if we don't come down on that end, at least we can begin to understand.

**Karin Peter** 09:02

So, we're going to open our ears and open our minds.

**Blake Smith** 09:04

Yeah, so let's get to why does this matter in this particular case? I think it's important for us to pick up that these are, it's another post-resurrection appearance, and in all of the post-resurrection appearances, that's a lot to say, so I'm tripping up on it. A lot of syllables in that for a good southern boy. But in these post-resurrection appearances, Jesus is represented and presented as living and present with us. In this case, with his disciples, and not just that. And you mentioned that the disciples, men in particular, go to what they're comfortable doing in times of trouble. Jesus meets them where they are. So, does it call them? In the first time he meets them on the beach, he calls them to come away and follow him. And here, he does get to that, the 'follow me,' but ultimately, and initially, I guess he meets them where they are. So, it's in the upper room the first two times, and now it's on the beach where they have gone to reconnect with what they know. And Jesus is the one who cares for and comforts them in this time of struggle. And this particular passage, as you mentioned, they have returned to what they know, what is their comfort zone. And maybe for some of us, it's fishing. For me, I really connect with the beach. In tough times I used to love to go and sit on the dunes and listen to the waves roll in and smell the salt air and that kind of thing. I don't have that where I am currently in Chicago. So, for me now, it's going down to my woodshop and doing something on the lathe that is simple and easy. It's something I know I can do. It's something I can accomplish. And in that it brings me comfort. And so, the disciples have done that. This is where they, many of them, started. Let's go fishing. It's their area of knowledge. It's their area of expertise. And it is, again, where Jesus appears to them. But in this case, like other appearances, they don't recognize who he is until he gives them fishing advice. And in this case, he's speaking their language. Not only is he meeting them where they are, but he's speaking their language. He has that connection. So, that's some really important things for me and for our listeners. I think that when we're in those difficult times, we can go back to those things that bring us comfort and solace and peace, and Christ is with us in those moments. There's some other connections Karin that you mentioned before when we were talking about this. And this is one of those areas where it was like, oh, you know, I've never picked that up. And that is that Jesus is here by the charcoal fire, and he's got fish and bread, the very two things that are used in the story of the feeding of the 5000, fish and bread.

**Karin Peter** 12:26

This really surprised me when I read this. This was not me discerning this out of scripture. I'm not that savvy. Good commentary pointing that out.

**Blake Smith** 12:37

I was willing to give you credit.

**Karin Peter** 12:39

I appreciate that, but I have to fess up that when I first read that, it was like, how could I have missed that in the hundreds of times I've read or heard this scripture. How did I miss that connection? And what other connections am I missing because the original hearers of the Gospel they would have picked up on it like that. They would have been right there and known exactly what was being said. And we're so distant from this context that it's harder for us and we don't live in a way where these kind of connections are made, and so even when we make them, we don't understand what we're doing. So, I was really pleased the commentary helped me understand that it was really a sign of compassion and care, and yeah, bread and fish,

**Blake Smith** 13:37

Yeah, and another scripture connection, and this was kind of remote, but I mean, when we use the language of sheep, we might make a connection with the 23rd Psalm, which I think is interesting that, when we were talking about this before, that this is often used as the death Psalm, the funeral Psalm, to bring comfort in those days. But in reality, the 23rd Psalm wasn't necessarily meant for funerals. I think it's appropriate for funerals, but it's a general sense of comfort that Jesus' focus is being the shepherd. It's tending the sheep, loving the sheep, feeding the sheep, and that's what he is calling Peter to do in this, which another piece of that is you, and you mentioned that one of the things that Jesus is doing is bringing Peter's attention back to the focus. Peter answers the question. He's probably proud of himself that he just knows the answer that we all say, and then he's ready to move on and have the fish and the bread, maybe. But Jesus is saying, 'focus, focus.' And the focus is not on obedience to Jesus if we really look at that. He's not saying, okay, if you love me, then follow this commandment. Do this. He is saying, turn your attention to others, feed my sheep, tend my sheep, love my sheep. And that is a really, really important piece for us to pick up in this passage, because Jesus is modeling what we and what the disciples in that case, but what we are to do for others.

**Karin Peter** 15:22

Yeah.

**Blake Smith** 15:25

So, some questions that we might ask ourselves this week, when we think about the fact that the disciples went fishing and that was their turn to something of comfort, we might ask ourselves, what do we turn to when things don't go our way, where is our place, or where's our place of comfort? Or what is our activity that brings us peace? Maybe it's meditation. Maybe it's a place, whatever that is. Another question would be, how do I experience divine presence with me? We talk a lot about this. I mean, this is a connection that we can make with most of our scriptures, but it's important for us in this post-resurrection time to think about how we experience divine presence, recognizing that we all experience

that in different ways, and that's okay. So we don't need to feel pressure to feel it the way someone else feels it or experiences it.

**Karin Peter** 16:26

So I was looking at those two questions together just now, Blake, as you were going through them, and I was thinking about the conversation Jesus was having with Peter, and the whole kind of bigger picture. And I'm thinking Jesus appeared to them as you said, where they were, as they were. And so what? What if we think about, where do I go when things don't go my way? So where do I go to kind of lick my wounds, kind of terminology. And, maybe, the next question is, how do I experience the divine with me in that place, in that moment when I'm hurting, when I'm seeking comfort, when I'm going back to what I know? Because I think sometimes for us discipleship is it during church time, and then we separate it the rest of the time. So for me, if I'm going to go immerse myself in some art of some compete, something when things don't go my way, how do I experience God with me in that place, in that need? So I hadn't really thought about that until you were going through the questions.

**Blake Smith** 17:30

Yeah, that's a great way to really bring focus to it in this week, in this context. So thanks. Thanks for that. The last question that I would suggest we might consider is that Jesus calls us to love in belief and word and action. So how do I, or how do we, express care for or love for others?

**Karin Peter** 18:02

Good question, good things to think about this week during Easter season. So as we go through the week, keep in mind that Jesus did come and find the disciples. And in doing so, he cooked breakfast on the shore there for when they came in. So I think this week, one way to kind of live in this scripture is do the same for somebody else. So take somebody to coffee, fix a snack, go visit your neighbor, bake a pie, whatever it is your bread and fish, whatever that is for you, and invite someone into your space to share in that sustenance. Because the love that we offer is in that invitation. When we cook something and prepare something with our own hands, or in my case, buy it with my own hands from the grocery store and it's that coming together and inviting people to come and share that over the table and have table fellowship where compassion can begin. So try that this week.

**Blake Smith** 19:05

Yeah, and I think especially if you know something about the person you're meeting with and know a favorite that they have, just making that extra effort makes them a huge impact. So our blessing today is a blessing for when you are around the table, and it's from the common prayer for children and families, teach us to hunger and thirst for justice, life-giving God. We give you thanks for the food we are about to eat, for the Earth, animals and people that made this meal possible. Teach us to hunger and thirst for justice. Help us to share what we have with others and fill us with your power to make the world a better place. Amen.

**Karin Peter** 19:56

Amen.

**Blake Smith** 19:58

Well, thanks for joining us here today at Coffee to Go. We invite you as always to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.