

“Come And Have Breakfast”

26 April 2020 - Led by Rev. Sam Mawhinney

Welcome & Call to Worship:

Well, good morning everybody. You are very welcome to the breakfast table here in our home and there is a place for you. If you were able, I would love for you to come and join us and share in this orange juice, cereal, toast, and tea and coffee. It's a lovely thing, isn't it, to have a meal prepared for you, and even better, to hear an invitation: “come and eat”? In our service today, we will look at a story where Jesus has prepared breakfast for His tired and hungry disciples and He gives them this invitation: “Come and have breakfast”. We're going to consider Jesus' love and grace in that simple invitation. But we begin our service by singing “All Creatures Of Our God And King” as we remember that God is the Creator of all created things. And the writer invites all of us to come and bless our Creator and worship Him in humbleness.

Praise: IPH 17 All Creatures Of Our God And King

Prayers of Adoration and Confession:

Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we come to You in prayer. We thank You that we can come to Your throne of grace. You are God Almighty. You are sovereign. You are our Creator and Sustainer of life. We see Your hand in creation. We can feel the rushing wind, feel the heat of the burning sun and see the silver moon of night. You send the rain and the sunshine. Day turns into night, spring into summer, all at Your command. You, the Creator, have given us a beautiful world to enjoy. You are the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. You are the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Help us to delight in You and adore You. Thank You that You are a faithful God, the same yesterday, today and forever. Forgive us when we are not faithful to You. Forgive us when we don't honour and adore You as we should, when we get our priorities wrong and when we don't take time to wait in Your presence. Forgive us for being busy and not giving You first place in our lives. Forgive us when we are slow to profess Your love and tell of Your love that endures forever. Forgive us for not keeping our eyes fixed on You. Thank You that You are a God of grace and mercy. And although we let you down in so many ways, when we turn to You and confess our sins, You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Help us to remember and be ever thankful that you paid the ultimate price for our sins by dying on the cross and giving us the gift of eternal life. We ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus, amen.

Reading: John 21:1-14

Sermon:

Thank you, Aaron, for reading the passage from John chapter 21. If you have a Bible close by, why don't you open it and check out the story of this most unusual fishing experience? John tells us

there are seven disciples gathered by the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, which we would commonly call the Sea of Galilee. We are told this is an eye-witness account of a very unusual incident for these experienced fishermen (in v.1). They are unsure of what to be doing. We might say they're at a loss, lost without Jesus whom they have been following for three years and who was killed by crucifixion. And although they have now seen Him twice after his death, resurrected, everything has changed for them and they are wondering, "what do we do next?"

Peter is still the natural leader. It appears he still has a boat, and he says, "I'm going fishing", and they enthusiastically say, "we'll go with you" (v.3). It was common to fish at night, in the dark, on the Sea of Galilee and yet they caught nothing at all, as I'm sure sometimes happened. On their way back in, someone calls from the shore, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "NO!" "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some" - and no doubt there were lots of thoughts and even comments about that advice. But the Bible tells us when they did as the stranger said, they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish (in v.6). In fact, there were 153 large fish, no doubt because someone counted them so the fishing story could be told. The catch was unusually large, but the net wasn't torn, which was remarkable, and it took all the disciples to land the catch on the shore. It is indeed a great fishing story with a remarkable catch, but let me highlight a couple of further details.

I. Peter's Enthusiasm

I want us to notice Peter's enthusiasm in seeing Jesus. He has been at a loss, as we said, he's not sure what to do next. And yet, when he hears from John that the stranger on the shore is Jesus, he grabs his outer garment (he has either been fishing in his first century underpants or he has let his outer garment become loose with the effort of fishing) and he wraps it around himself tight and jumps into the sea, so that he could be with Jesus. And when Jesus says, "Bring some of the fish" (v.10), Peter enthusiastically obeys, climbing on board to carry out Jesus' command.

Why do you think Peter did that? The last time we met Peter and Jesus together, Peter had denied Him three times and with curses. Yet now there doesn't appear to be any barrier between them. It appears Peter has experienced forgiveness. He has heard and understood the enormity of what Jesus' death and resurrection has achieved and those gracious words, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). There is evidence in the Bible, in two places, that Peter did meet Jesus previous to the other disciples (Luke 24:32 / I Corinthians 15:5). He is super excited about Jesus, desires to be with Him, and he understands, "It is the Lord" (v.7) who stands on the shore, the risen Lord Jesus.

For Peter, the resurrection changed everything. His response of excitement about Jesus being alive is appropriate. He understood Jesus was the most significant, important, and real person. Peter has met the Risen Lord and been forgiven, and that has changed his life and given him a reason to live. Much has been written about Peter and the other disciples going back fishing and was it right to do so or not. Jesus doesn't comment on that, but I do see and hear that Peter understood the most

significant and important reality in his life was his relationship with the Lord Jesus, and he was excited by that. Could it be that God, through the COVID-19 crisis, has taken away from us many of the things we cherish and are devoted to? So much time is now freer, and as a colleague said, that is a divine mercy, a judgement, that has given us better clarity about what is important. What place does Jesus have in our lives? What place does the family of Jesus in the church have in our lives? What is our response to the risen Lord Jesus? Peter was enthusiastic about Jesus - are we?

II. Jesus' Provision

But let's return to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples have landed the big catch of fish and they find that Jesus has already breakfast ready for them, a cooked breakfast of fish and bread. And He invites them to bring some of the fish that they have caught. Freshly caught fish, roasted or baked on hot coals, with fresh bread - when you're hungry, it doesn't get any better than that. And the invitation to this ready-prepared meal with Jesus, "Come and have breakfast."

For a moment, forget it's me who is speaking to you and hear the invitation coming directly from Jesus to you. "Come and have breakfast." It's a personal invitation. In another place in the Gospels He says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). At that invitation the disciples moved towards Jesus, towards the fire and the fish and the bread and they interact with Him.

You see, Jesus cares and understands. He knows that they're tired and hungry from their work, He appreciates the change in their circumstances and the challenges that they now face in life, and He meets their needs. He meets those needs practically and physically. "Come and enjoy and participate in the good things I have made and provided for you in the world." What are you noticing and enjoying more, now that the busyness of your life has been slowed because of the present crisis? Food, music, literature, health, nature, flowers, birds, life itself....all are given by God. God provides. God, in His love, has given us all these things for our enjoyment and life and He says, "Come."

III. Our Spiritual Need

"Come and have breakfast": it's a picture of our spiritual need. We, like them, come in faith through His work on the cross. We interact with Jesus because He is alive through the resurrection. He invites us to come and to know Him, take time to learn about Him, to bring your burdens to Him, read His word, meditate upon what He says, talk to Him in prayer, read further on issues that He lays upon your heart, listen to and sing songs about Him, cultivate your knowledge and love for Him. Spend as much time as possible with other believers and church members. That is our spiritual food. It is said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It provides for our needs as we go to work and get ready for our day. How much breakfast do you have spiritually speaking? Again, the present crisis gives us opportunity to appreciate Jesus more, nourish ourselves in Him, read and pray, but always with the aim of getting to know Him better.

Peter and the other disciples really appreciated Jesus. Like the psalmist said, they tasted and saw that the Lord was good. He served them and met their needs. Yes, the food was good, and they ate and were satisfied. They also discovered that Jesus forgives, He keeps no record of wrongs. He died to forgive, He died to give them a second chance, He died to remake them. And Peter discovered that it was worth getting dressed for, worth leaving the boat for, worth getting excited about, and worth having breakfast with Jesus. And the invitation is given to us today, to similarly come, and have breakfast with Jesus. Let me pray, and I would love for you to pray with me in your heart this prayer of commitment.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for the invitation to come to You and have breakfast. I am sorry that I have so many other priorities, so many "gods" I want to worship. However, I am tired and aware of the fruitlessness of it all. Forgive me my sin. Thank You for the scars I see on Your hands and side, which remind me of the forgiveness You offer. Thank You for the meal You have prepared, that we might all have what we need in life. I know that You come in love and with the offer of eternal life, and I say, "Yes! I want to come." I accept Your offer to come and have breakfast with You. Amen

Praise: Come And Dine

Prayers for Others:

Let us pray. Dear Father, though we have much to pray for this morning, our hearts are also full of thankfulness to You for all You are doing for us, despite our difficulties in these times. But Lord, we also want to acknowledge these difficulties and challenges, knowing that when we bring them to You, You are with us and You hear our prayers. Thank You for reminding us this morning that You provide for us in so many wonderful ways. As we pray for our world, we pray that the COVID-19 virus would be stopped in its tracks as it spreads across the globe. We pray for those countries and areas which are particularly vulnerable - countries like India, continents like Africa, and also for the many refugee camps in Europe. We pray for protection on these highly populated areas, as they would find it so difficult to isolate if the virus took hold. How would they manage to even wash their hands? Please Lord, protect these people. We also pray that these people would not be forced into greater poverty than they are already in because of the virus.

We want to pray for great wisdom for our government as they lead our nation during this crisis. Thank You for our leaders and particularly for Dr. Tony Holohan, the Chief Medical Officer, as he so clearly advises the government and almost daily speaks to our nation, in order to keep us as safe as possible. We pray for our nation, that we would turn to You and put You first in our lives. We pray for those in our communities who are facing huge challenges. We pray for those who are recovering from COVID at home and in hospital. We particularly pray for those who are seriously ill in hospital and in the many different intensive care units. We remember in prayer the nursing homes and residential care centres in Ireland, praying for staff and vulnerable residents, that You would

surround them with a hedge of protection, and we particularly pray for members of our church family, the Zipsers, as they lovingly care for the residents in Tritonville. And we also remember Billy Gilmore, who resides in Mt. Tabor, that you would keep him safe and well. We pray for the frontline staff throughout the land as they work so hard, many in very challenging circumstances. We remember in particular those we know within, or who are connected with, our congregation. We pray for Antoine, Avegel, Baan, Sibongile, Ayman, Jenny, Jonathan, and Anne. Anxiety, worry and even suffering are playing huge parts in many people's lives just now. We pray for those who are concerned about loved ones who are ill. We want to bring to You those who are grieving because of the loss of loved ones through COVID-19, and we pray that they would find comfort in You. We pray for those who are feeling isolated and lonely, those who are missing family members and friends.

We pray for families that are finding homeschooling a challenge, and we pray for children and young people who are missing their friends. We think of those who are hoping to do exams, particularly the Leaving Cert. We pray for those who have financial worries, who have lost their jobs, and their future looks dismal. We have many understandable worries and concerns, but we pray that this nation would listen to Your voice and discover the love, peace, joy, hope and forgiveness which You offer to everyone who comes to You. Thank You that You are working miracles, even in the midst of these difficulties and challenges.

Thank You for the many new ways the Internet is used to do church. We thank you for all those behind the scenes who have organised this service today. Thank you for our church family. Help us to continue to love one another as Christ has loved us. We pray for Sam and the elders as our church dynamics have changed so much. Make us wise and sensitive to the needs of everyone in our congregation. We pray for Heather Meldrum on the loss of John, that she will continue to know Your comfort and care at this difficult time. We pray for William Brereton in hospital and that his mobility would improve, and we also remember John and Myrtle who are at home, that You would continue to surround them with Your love and care. Help us to know Your presence in our lives and, when we cast our cares upon You, that You really do care for us. Help us to know that we are not alone, that You are with us at all times, and that You will neither leave us nor forsake us. Help us to be still and know that You are God; You will be exalted among the nations, You will be exalted in the earth. We pray that You will use us to pass on Your love and the hope of the resurrection to others. Help us to be Your hands and feet as we care for those around us. During these very challenging days, help each one of us to encounter You, the risen Lord Jesus, in a fresh, new and deeper way. We pray all this in Your precious name, amen.

Closing Praise: Knowing You (All I Once Held Dear)

Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. Amen.