

*Risen Lord, you have invited us into the abundant life;
open our hearts to receive your treasures this morning. Amen..*

"Come and have breakfast." One of my professors liked to say that if he wasn't already a Christian, this story would have made him sign up – The idea of a God who makes breakfast for his friends after a hard night's work; a faith where the words, "Come and have breakfast" actually appear in the Scriptures, was irresistible to him. "That's the kind of God for me," he'd say. "The Post-Resurrection Beach Breakfast Fish-Fry" is one of my favorite stories in the whole Bible. It is a story I need to hear again and again – maybe we all do, especially in times when we feel like things are being taken away from us. What does it tell us? "There is enough. More than enough." "Try it a different way." "Look in another place." "Don't look at all – God will find you."

This is the kind of God we worship, my friends,
a God who cares about feeding us, in body as well as in spirit.
Not a lofty, way up in the clouds God, but right here, on the beach,
even after he's risen from the dead!
This is a God of love – not just cosmic love, but personal love,
a God who knows how to make a charcoal fire,
who knows how to clean a fish and cook it up, who remembers to bring bread.
A God who cares about details, a God who knows about abundance.

In fact, abundance is the language our God uses; the currency our God trades in. Abundance is our 3-in-1 God's very nature, and how God expresses God's nature. Abundance is what Jesus came to teach us, abundance is what Jesus modeled; extravagant, over-the-top abundance is the life to which we are called. How many times did they have to see it? How many times do we have to hear it? When Jesus turned water into wine, he didn't do a bottle or two – he turned six enormous 30-gallon water storage jars into finest wine! When Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 people on five loaves and two fish – how many baskets of leftovers were there? Twelve! And when he fed 4,000, how many baskets left over? Seven! This is about abundance, my friends. And it's not just food and wine – This abundance was also manifest in healing and in mercy and compassion. Jesus healed multitudes sometimes, all who came to him.

He forgave extortioners and prostitutes and thieves,
as well as the more modest sinners like me and you.
He spoke of lavishing on the one lost sheep all the care he had for the other 99.
In the story he told about the prodigal son, the father does not merely wait
for his errant son to return and then tolerate his presence –
No, he runs out to greet him, throws rich garments upon him
and a ring on his hand, and kills the fattling to make a feast: abundance!
We don't do "just enough" in the Kingdom: there is a full measure,
pressed down, shaken together, running over into your lap.
As you give, so shall it be given to you, says the Lord.

Our God is in the business of abundance. We may not experience it every moment.
Yet over and over again in my life, and in our life, I have seen it.
When I don't hoard and save and worry; when I expect abundance,
that's what I receive. And when I expect scarcity, that's where I end up.
The more you give, the more room you have for receiving.
That's how it works in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus tried to teach it to his disciples when he first called them,
with that first miraculous catch of fish.
Now, when they're confused and discouraged after his death and mystifying
resurrection, not sure what they're supposed to be doing, going back to
their old ways, Jesus comes and shows them abundance yet again.
And to make sure we the readers understand just how abundant it was,
John records the exact number of the fish. Doesn't bother name two of the
disciples, but somebody there that day must have counted those silly fish,
because we are told there were 153 of them.
While Jesus stood by, the resurrected Lord of life, they took the time to count!

I'm grateful to that statistics-obsessed 1st century fisherman,
because he paved the way for body-counters like me.
Because, you know what? We are all counted by God.
We are God's catch, the finest catch.
We may not feel abundant enough, but we're not the whole picture.
We're just part of the whole wide church.
If we only think about ourselves, we'll never have a sense of being a big catch.
Yet we are part of a much bigger church, and all our resources put together in our
diocese, with other local faith communities, other organizations. re enormous.

We have plenty to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick,
address greed and racism and inequality.
And as God's great catch, we become part of the way Jesus feeds the world.

Jesus doesn't just make breakfast for his friends –
He invites them to add some of the fish they've caught to the meal.
Jesus has in a sense caught all the fish, but the disciples had to haul them in.
That feast was made from the abundant catch they caught –
and they get to add it to what Jesus already has to give them.
God always asks our participation, to offer what He's given us back to the world.
We don't give from our own resources – we give from what we've received.

Our vestries met yesterday for our annual planning retreat, and friends –
God is inviting us to bring our fish to some exciting and challenging mission.
We came to the seven areas of priority for this year –

- ◆ Getting this hybrid worship experience absolutely awesome and glitch-free;
- ◆ Clarifying a clear path for spiritual growth and engaging all generations;
- ◆ Coordinating our outreach ministries;
- ◆ Connecting more deeply with people online as “church” in virtual space;
- ◆ Continuing to learn and act for equality and racial justice;
- ◆ Making the Sunday Learning Hour accessible from our buildings or homes;
- ◆ Making our grounds and buildings beautiful and welcoming.

That's a lot! And we have an abundance of fish, in the congregation and beyond.
And Jesus is always showing us new ways to fish.
And Jesus has feasts for us to make for the people around us.

Feasts both literal and spiritual.

And remember, Jesus fed his disciples first, before he asked them to feed others.
He always feeds us first.

This morning Jesus says to us, “Come and have breakfast.”

Come and have breakfast. Words of love. Words of grace.

Words that we will hear when we get to heaven – and that we can hear right now.

He has prepared a feast for us of his own self, that we might be richly fed,
in this bread and wine, His body and blood, and filled with His Spirit.

Come and be fed. Go and be food for the world.

It's a life cycle that goes round and round, a great story that will never end.

Amen.

John 21:1-19

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; 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 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. 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 some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 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. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, 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." 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." 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. 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."