

Theme: The Resurrection Is Relevant to Every Day Life

Text: John 21:1-14

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ.

Our text for meditation is from the Holy Gospel of John which I read before. Let us
pray: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in
your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." Amen

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A while ago I read an article regarding the war in Vietnam. And this article says
that the last American soldier to die in Vietnam was Lt. Col. William Nolde. He was
killed before the cease fire went into effect in Vietnam. His wife Joyce, after receiving
the sad news about the death of her husband, showed forth an amazing outward calm
and made the equally amazing assertion, "I am not bitter at all. My husband was a
very, very sensitive man who cared a great deal about people. He was simply doing
what he wanted to do."

She then explained to reporters the reason for her lack of bitterness and outer
calm. "I knew he was dead," she said. "I dreamed that a rocket came in and hit him
and he said, 'Do not worry honey, I will be okay.' Then she said: "The blast woke me
up." The result of the dream was blessed assurance for Joyce that all was well with
her husband.

Let me tell you another story and this is about a mother and father who sat in
the warmth of their living room before Christmas. They were discussing the gifts they
had purchased for their twelve-year-old son. At that moment the doorbell rang and
when the father opened the door a policeman was standing there. Suddenly the
climate in that house became very cold. The officer was a bearer of bad news: their
son had been struck by a car and was lying near death in the hospital.

When the mother and father reached the hospital the doctors told them there
was not any hope. Their son did not receive the Christmas gifts his parents had
bought for him with great care. He died and was buried shortly before the celebration
of the birth of our Lord.

The father then says that he had an inspiring experience. He said that during
the last night that his son was unconscious, he stood by his boy's bed in the hospital,
and he had the strange sensation that his son had actually left his body. Furthermore,
he sensed his son speaking to him telling him that he was fine, telling him that he was
already living a new life and that everything was wonderful in his new life. The father
said that the result of that mysterious, inspiring experience was the blessed assurance
that all was well with his boy. No longer did he feel that his son was on that hospital
bed. Instead the father was certain that his son was already dwelling in the next life
with our Lord.

Other pastors had told me that they had heard similar testimonies from men

and women in moments of mourning. These mysterious, inspiring experiences always bring about the same result: blessed assurance.

Blessed assurance was one result of the appearance of our Lord to his followers after His resurrection. The appearance of Christ assured his followers that death is not a closed door but an open door leading to a life far finer than we can possibly imagine in this life. The apostle Paul proclaimed triumphantly that human eyes have not seen, nor have human ears heard the grand and glorious things God has prepared for them that die in Christ.

Peter Pan in the movie proclaimed this thrilling truth. In the play, Peter Pan stands on a rock in the midst of a lagoon. With the water rising around him and when drowning seemed inevitable Peter Pan declared victoriously: "to die will be an awfully big adventure!"

Yes, the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ gave his followers the wonderful assurance that in the moment we die, in that moment we begin to truly live. Death frees us so that we experience the grand and glorious fulfillment of our identity.

The resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ, however, have to do with more than blessed assurance about the next life. The resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ are also relevant to our everyday life. Christ wants us to experience the explosive power of His resurrection in our day to day life. Our heavenly Father desires to resurrect us from the bunch of meaningless things in which we presently exist.

The Creator who raised His Son from the dead desires to resurrect each one of us from a living death. Christ desires to resurrect us now. This is seen clearly in the appearances of our Saviour to his disciples on the seashore. Here we see the resurrected Christ coming to the disciples when they are at work not only when they are at worship. Christ comes to them and resurrects them from a sense of meaninglessness in their work.

Christ comes to them and resurrects them from the misery and worthiness in their work. Not only were their nets empty, but from their lives which were also empty. Jesus resurrected them from this emptiness that had evolved from their failure to take Him into their daily work.

In the appearance of our Risen Saviour on the seashore we see Him entering into our failures. After the disciples experienced a night of failure, Christ came with the dawning of a new day. In order to experience success, the disciples had to rely on Him entering into something so mundane as our daily meals. Meals with the Master mean meals that are meaningful.

How much healthier our meals would be if we were aware that the resurrected Christ was present. Psychologists tell us how significant mealtime is in the home. A healthy mealtime contributes much to the psychological good health of the persons in the family.

In the appearance of our resurrected Saviour in the seashore we see Him bringing the resurrection to a broken relationship. The result was reconciliation. Peter had denied His Lord. Yet, when Peter heard that the resurrected Savior was standing on the shore, Peter, without hesitation, leaped towards Jesus.

Peter's moving towards the Master without hesitation tells us some very fine things about our Lord. It tells us that Peter sensed acceptance coming from the resurrected Christ. Else he would have stood off at a safe distance or even walked away as he did in the courtyard. Peter felt forgiveness coming from Christ. Else Peter would not have had the courage to come to Jesus.

Peter caught love flowing from the Lord and thus Peter leaped into the sea to reach the resurrected Christ who died for our sins, and He is risen again from the dead. This is cause for joy. But to add to that rejoicing is this: Risen from the dead and having conquered all of His enemies, the Lord Jesus Christ still serves. He still provides us with daily bread, and He still gives us the forgiveness of sins.

His Humiliation has come to an end. His humility has not, and the Lord of all continues to be the Servant of all. Here is even more reason for thanksgiving: Not only does the Lord provide for us, but He desires that we be with Him. Risen again, He did not treat the disciples like pigs in a pen, to be fed but kept away from the house.

Rather, He calls them to Himself in order to care for them, just as He does for us today. Peter, the swimmer, would later write of this truth in his first epistle: **"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.** (I Pet. 2:9-10)

Peter says "You are a royal priesthood," and what do priests do? They have the privilege of drawing near to God. You have the privilege of drawing near to Him. The Lord wants you in His presence-not just in the future in heaven, but right now. He does not want to keep you as distant recipients of His gifts, but calls you to Him now.

And where do you go to draw near to Jesus? You go to where He promises to be found: You go to where His Word is preached and His Sacraments are given out. You go to the Church. That is where Jesus is to be found, forgiving your sins.

Where does God give forgiveness? In His means of grace. Wherever His Gospel is preached and His Sacraments administered accordingly, Jesus is there to forgive. If His Gospel is not preached, nor His Sacraments administered accordingly, Jesus is there, but not to forgive sins. He works through means, in this case: His means of grace.

If you are trolling for trout on Sunday morning, God is there, yes; but not to forgive sins. Hebrews 10:25 tells us: "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." The author of Hebrews exhorts us to gather together in order to encourage one

another, especially as the Last Day approaches. To be off by yourself is to rob others of your presence and the encouragement that your presence provides here. My point is that our Lord is present in His means of grace to forgive. That is where we draw near to Him.

My friends in Christ; the desires of our resurrected Christ is to bring the resurrection to our broken relationship with Him and to our broken relationships with others. Yes, the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection give us the blessed assurance that death is swallowed up by eternal life. But these appearances also mean that our Lord wants us to experience the resurrection in our daily lives: to receive His forgiveness.

And Christ desires to resurrect us from a living death—from days of drudgery, defeat, division, problems and despair. When we experience the resurrection in this life, we are confident that Christ will resurrect us in the moment of our death. Amen

“The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keeps your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour”. Amen