

July 23, 2017
Summer Sermon Series
“Beaches of the Bible: Fisher’s Beach II”
(Fish For Breakfast)



First Reading ~ John 21: 1-17, 19b

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee); 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 other disciples. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I’m going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will go with you.’ They went out and got into the boat, but all through the night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; though none of the disciples knew that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, ‘Have you caught anything, lads?’ They answered him, ‘Not a thing.’ ‘Throw your net off the starboard side of the boat,’ he said, ‘and you’ll find something.’ So they made a cast and caught so many fish they couldn’t haul the net in. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved cried out to Peter, ‘It’s the Teacher!’ Upon hearing this, Simon Peter threw on his cloak (he was naked) and jumped into the water. But the other disciples came in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from the beach, only about a hundred yards off.

When they landed on the beach, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish and bread already being grilled. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.’ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled ashore the net, full of large fish, a hundred and 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 Teacher. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This marked the third time that Jesus had appeared to the disciples after being raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon ben-John, do you love me more than these?' Peter said, 'Yes, Rabbi; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time Jesus put the question, 'Simon ben-John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Rabbi; you know that I love you.' Jesus replied, 'Tend my sheep.' A third time Jesus asked, 'Simon ben-John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because Jesus asked him 'Do you love me?' a third time. So he said, 'You know everything, Rabbi. You know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'

After this he said to Peter, 'Follow me.'

Second Reading ~ *Adapted from Leonard Sweet in
"From Table to Table: Where Community is Found and Identity is Formed"*

There is an old saying, "Fishing isn't just fishing." Similarly, eating isn't just eating. Food connects us to one another while setting us apart, giving us a unique tribal identity. In Jesus' day, Jewish authorities protected their identity by not eating with "sinners" and people of bad repute. But Jesus didn't care about a "holy table" as the religious establishment defined "holy." For Jesus, a holy table was one that was open to anyone, a table where all God's children were present.

That "holy table" could be anywhere: in a homeless shelter, in a café, in an online chat room, at a casino—anywhere grace is needed. Jesus didn't keep a moral table, he kept a healing table. People who sat at table with Jesus didn't see him primarily as a moral teacher but as a healer and a friend. For Jesus, the very thing that set his followers apart is what united them as a group: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).