

CHRIST IS RISEN TO FEED, HEAL AND BLESS



Scripture:

Revelation 5:11-14

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²singing with full voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, “To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

¹⁴And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

John 21:1-14

¹After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon 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.

⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” ⁶He 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. ⁷That 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. ⁸But 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.

⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” ¹¹So 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. ¹²Jesus 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. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



CHRIST IS RISEN TO FEED, HEAL AND BLESS

This is quite the scene, isn't it? Jesus, in his transformed risen body, appears to the disciples to feed, heal and bless as he continues to empower them to keep calm and carry on with his ministry.

This appearance takes place at the Sea of Galilee which is sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias because it lies next to the town of Tiberias. This is actually the fourth appearance of the risen Christ if we count when he first appeared to Mary in the garden, secondly, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The third appearance was to the disciples in a room in Jerusalem where he healed Thomas of his doubt, which we talked about last week.

JESUS' APPEARANCES

Let's look at these appearances and what Jesus accomplished by them. It seems he continued doing the same kinds of things in his post-resurrection ministry as he did in his pre-crucifixion ministry, but he so far has limited his appearances to within the circle of his disciples.

Before his crucifixion his ministry involved feeding, healing, teaching and blessing. Remember, he fed the five thousand, healed many of their illnesses, and blessed basically whomever he met.

Now, in his post-resurrection ministry he healed Thomas of his doubt, blessed Mary in the garden, and ate with the disciples who were on the road to Emmaus and today in this passage he is about to feed the disciples breakfast.

They say you can trust someone when they are very consistent in their behavior. And Jesus continued to heal, feed, and bless after he was resurrected. Maybe there is a message in this consistency for us. How can we carry on his ministry by healing, feeding, and blessing people on behalf of Jesus today?

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

Well, there is a saying, "By Hook or by Crook." Have you heard it said, "I'll get it done by hook or by crook!"? In this modern era, it means, "I'll get it done by any means necessary." But in the days of John 21, the hook would have been a fishing hook and the crook would have pertained to a shepherd's crook.

The saying 'By Hook or by Crook' pertains to this passage we read and two ways to view Christ's

ministry. Jesus was a fisher of people, always hooking more followers and then shepherding those who came to him.

In John's beautiful symbolic way, this story of the fish and the breakfast shows Christ using both the hook and the crook. He helped the disciples fish and nurtured them by preparing breakfast.

Christ was using this opportunity to demonstrate for the disciples once again how to heal, bless and feed those in need by doing so for them. As modern day disciples, that is our charge as well. We are to heal, feed, and bless all those we can. I must say, we already do this very well here at the Church of the Roses, especially in the feeding department.

FEEDING THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY

I have asked a few of our leaders to share with you about the impact your participation and donations have on the breakfast program, the Boys and Girls Club snack program and how your Deacons' Fund donations help sustain those who are hungry in our immediate neighborhood, too.

First, Gwen Christiansen will share a few words about the impact your donations have on the Boys and Girls Club snack program.

Second, Cindy Goede and Karen Bowles will share a little story with you on how the food bags the Deacons' Fund provides help the hungry families in our region.

And third, I asked Chris Rhodes to share about the impact the Montgomery High School Breakfast Program has on the Montgomery High kids who join us daily.

Come and see our breakfast program sometime and see the happy look on the teens' faces as they are provided with the best breakfast in this region every weekday morning.

GWEN CHRISTIANSEN BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Two years ago, during one of her sermons, Pastor Cindy wondered aloud what our church might be able to do to help our across the street neighbors, the Boys and Girls Club. Shortly after that, Connie Norris and I walked across the street and talked to the director, asking how our church could be of help to them.

There was a real need for help in providing assistance with the afternoon snack time. Their budget was strained, but the children still needed the snacks.

So for the past two years, Connie and I have gone across the street every Monday, taking healthy snacks and fresh fruit for the afternoon snack time for the whole week. For many of the children, that is the last food they have until the free school breakfast the next morning.

We are able to do this because of the generosity of the members of our congregation.

Do they appreciate it? YES!

Would Jesus approve? YES!

CINDY GOEDE AND KAREN BOWLES DEACONS' FUND FOOD BAGS

All of you show Christ's love when you give to the Deacons' Fund. The money in that fund allows us to purchase and pack food bags that are given to needy folks who come into our office seeking help. (A cart full of food and a packed food bag showed the congregation the food that is given to hungry individuals and families. It was quite impressive!)

Since we purchase the food through the Redwood Empire Food Bank, we are able to buy all the food displayed for \$15.00.

In the first quarter of 2015, we gave out nineteen food bags. This year in the first quarter, we supplied ninety food bags!

So thanks to everyone for helping the Deacons help our community.

CHRIS RHODES

MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL BREAKFAST

The Montgomery High School Breakfast Program has been providing breakfast to the students at Montgomery for over fourteen years. We provide a healthy breakfast every day the students are in school. Many of the kids who come to the breakfast are indeed hungry. Many of them fill their plates full with the good breakfast options we offer.

As much as the food itself is the draw for most of the students, many come for more than food. They come to be with their friends and classmates. They do homework together, some of them play the guitars that Bob Yee so generously provides, and they talk about school and sports and life. They sit at the round tables and immediately become small communities, support groups to one another. The vast majority of the kids that come are from lower socioeconomic households and the tables where they eat and gather provide far more than just physical food, they provide a safe place to talk, to study, to share life's joys, struggles and challenges.

On more than one occasion, Laurie Fong, the principal at Montgomery, has stopped by to visit and she always comments about the fact that the kids eat on real plates, with real silverware and sit together at round tables, like families do. We provide an atmosphere that so many of these kids are missing in their lives at home. And much like the scripture verse we read from John this morning, we are indeed feeding God's children. Yes we provide a good healthy breakfast, but the meal the kids eat does so much more than fill their stomachs, it feeds their souls as well.

OUR CHARGE TODAY

Christ taught us to feed, heal, and bless with love to all in need, and that is our charge today, the same as it was the charge Jesus gave to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee.

After feeding the disciples, he asked Peter three times to "feed his sheep" as a way of showing he truly loved Jesus. And that is how we are to show we love Christ today, by feeding the hungry here, across the street, and globally, like the hungry kids in orphanages in Haiti.

John reports in Chapter 21 that exactly one-hundred-fifty-three fish were caught by the disciples that day with Christ's help. Almost all the Bible commentators agree that John has a reason for giving the number. The most likely reason, according to the ancient theologian, Jerome, is that the local Galileans believed there were one-hundred-fifty-three kinds of fish in the sea. If this was the wide belief in that day, then God was using this event to show that the gospel is a universal gospel; it is for everybody, no matter what their background, color, culture, education, economic status, whatever. The Good News of Christ's love is designed for men and women and children everywhere on earth.

THE WONDERFUL WORD CAN'T BE CONTAINED

It has been true through all of history that wherever this wonderful word has spread it can't be contained. The word of the gospel speaks right to the human heart and feeds it spiritual food.

In the gospel today we see also that the work of fishing blesses the fisherman. As Jesus gathered these disciples on the shore he invited them to feast

with him. When we donate our resources and work to serve those in need, the blessings go around and come back around to us. We have been so blessed by the breakfast program kids returning the blessings in many ways. Kevin Castro is now a breakfast volunteer. After graduating from Montgomery High School and college he is back now to the breakfast but working in our kitchen on Fridays because he is so grateful for having the breakfast when he was in high school.

Sarah, who comes to our church occasionally and eats breakfast here daily, recently asked if she could help fill the Deacons' food bags that we hand out from the front office.



So today we want to pray for God to continue to bless and supply our food programs for the very hungry in this area. Also we need to remember to credit God for the sixteen years of feeding the high school kids successfully, and for the many food bags given to the hungry from our front office, and the way we have been empowered to feed the kids at the Boys and Girls Club who otherwise would have no afternoon snacks.

And now God is also calling you to continue to help by donating to the Deacons' Fund and Boys and Girls Club snack fund, or become a volunteer cook at our daily breakfast program. Getting

personally involved in any of these will be a blessing to you as well. You have been blessed to be a blessing.

By hook or by crook, you can participate in and expand our food ministries. We do this joyfully on behalf of our Risen Christ, whose victory over death was accomplished out of God's deep love for each of us. So today we thank you for answering his call to help our church 'Feed his Sheep!' Amen

Benediction:

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen



**Rev. Dr. Cindy Alloway
Presbyterian Church of the Roses
2500 Patio Court
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
April 10, 2016**