

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for nation for healing from coronavirus.

# STRINESTOWN SON

Volume 5 April 19 2020

### Announcements:

## ALL PUBLIC SERVICES ARE CANCELED FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

This newsletter is available electronically. If you or someone you know would like it sent to them via email, please let us know by emailing [pastorjody@strinestown.org](mailto:pastorjody@strinestown.org)

For grocery/prescription pick up please call  
Pastor Jody 717.332.4804 or Tina S. 717.495.0663.

### FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JODY

Devotional and Message Notes

HE IS RISEN!!

We are still in the Easter season as we celebrate the resurrection of our Savior and remember how he was present with the early church before his ascension. During that time he appeared to over 500 people! So the gospel writers, (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) had plenty of eyewitnesses who would know if what they were writing was true. Their accounts of Jesus life, death and resurrection were letters passed around and read among groups of believers, much like what we are doing with our newsletter.

I wonder if those early disciples and followers of Jesus felt like they weren't sure what to do next. Yes Jesus was alive, but what did that mean? Although Jesus had been preparing them to be sent out as witnesses to the world about who He is, the Holy Spirit had not been sent yet. We may be feeling like this in the midst of our current situation. We are to stay home so that we can keep ourselves and others safe from spreading the coronavirus. It's seems like we are in a period of waiting.

Sarah Young writes the following in *Jesus Calling*:

When I (Jesus) give you no special guidance, stay where you are. Concentrate on doing your everyday tasks in awareness of My Presence with you. The Joy of My Presence will shine on you, as you do everything for Me. Thus you invite Me into every aspect of your life. Through Collaborating with Me in all things, you allow My life to merge with Yours. This is the secret of not only joyful living but of victorious living. I designed you to depend on Me moment by moment., recognizing that apart from Me you can do nothing.

Be thankful for quiet days, when nothing special seems to be happening. Instead of being bored by lack of action, use times of routine to seek My Face. Although this is an invisible transaction, it speaks volumes in spiritual realms. Moreover, you are richly blessed when you walk trustingly with me through the routines of your day.

**Jesus is with us in this period of waiting.**

**Please Pray through the following outline (either by yourself or with someone else at home or on the phone):**

**Praise** - *The Lord that He is our strength; Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. (Ps. 105:4)*

Lord we look to you and you alone as our strength. We praise you because you are our strength and we can ALWAYS seek your face!

(other praises to God for WHO he is)

**Confess** – Forgive us Lord when we do things for human recognition and try to do things on our own without you.

**Thanksgiving** – *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)* Thank you for being our vine, the source of our strength and growth!

(Other thanksgivings for the Lord's care and answers)

**Intercession** – *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...(Col. 3:23)* Lord give us a heart to seek you even in the quiet times. Show us how we can pray for others during this time.

(Prayers for family and friends, our community, our church family, our state, nation and world).

**All the doubt in the world cannot wash away our inheritance  
-an inheritance of love, refuge and strength.**

## Call to Worship:

Come into God's presence with joy.

In God, we have an inheritance

That is imperishable

Come into God's presence with hope.

In Christ we have an inheritance

That cannot be defiled

Come into God's presence with longing

In the Spirit, we have an inheritance

That never fades

Come into God's presence with the love.

In God, we have an inheritance

That brings new life.

## Message from Pastor Jody

**It's all about Relationship: Relationship Restored!**

**John 21: 15-19**

Easter Sunday must have been a glorious reunion! Mary met the Lord in the garden; imagine her joy when she realizes he is ALIVE! It's impossible, but there he is standing right in front of her. She goes to tell the disciples what she has seen. Later that evening the disciples are gathered behind locked doors for fear of being hunted down by the authorities for their association with Jesus. And Jesus comes and stands among them, speaking words of peace and bringing the Holy Spirit. (John 20: 19-22).

John's eyewitness account of seeing Jesus in his resurrected state shows the power Jesus was indeed alive! He had appeared to the disciples and had shown himself to Thomas, the one who still would not believe. The last chapter of John's gospel is another confirmation that Jesus was not only spiritually alive, but his physical body was there. It was not simply a vision or ghost, but his physical presence that proved he has conquered death.

### I. Getting Back to Normal...

This seems to be the question on everyone's minds these days. When will we be able to return to some kind of normal life? When will we be able to go shopping or out to eat without concern of the coronavirus? When will we be able to gather on a Sunday morning for worship in the building at Strinestown? (we are still God's church at Strinestown even though we aren't physically together!)

When will we get back to “normal”?

I would guess that caution will be the biggest concern going forward. We certainly don't want to return to “normal life” too soon and risk ending up back where we were and isolated again for a period of time. We are in a time of waiting, not sure what we are supposed to do next, or what our futures hold. We want life to be “familiar” again.

The disciples seem to be in a similar place here in chapter 21. They had all abandoned Jesus when he hung on the cross (except for John). Jesus had appeared to them after his resurrection, but he was not constantly with them as he was before all the trouble started. It seems as though the disciples were at loose ends, not really knowing what to do next. They still have families to feed and bills to pay. So they return to what is familiar to them; they go fishing. Peter leads the way and the others decide to join him.

3 “I'm going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We'll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

They wanted to resume some kind of normalcy in life, but there was a bigger plan. Although they were not aware of it at the time, the disciples were being restored and prepared for a new purpose.

- Although our Easter celebrations were very different this year, there was still a sense of celebration. And now we are back to our somewhat normal routines. Do we have a sense that Jesus was with us, but now we are at a loss to know what to do next?
- With the situation around us, it's hard to know how to move forward. How can we help? What's our next step?
- We find comfort in familiar surroundings and routines and in uncertain times like these it's important for us to keep up with a normal rhythm of life.
- How will we see Jesus in this new normal, a situation that is out of our control?
- Is our relationship with Jesus being restored for a new purpose?

The disciples were in a new normal as well. They knew Jesus was alive, somehow. But things were different. Jesus WAS with them, but things were changing. And then they receive a new level of assurance.

They may not have known in it at the time, but Jesus would use the days after the resurrection to ensure that his followers were ready for the coming Pentecost. They grew in confidence of his resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of the kingdom of God and a strategy for bearing witness.

## **II. Their Needs are Taken Care Of**

As the disciples return to their “normal” life of fishing, Jesus once again appears and supplies what they need. In verses 4-6 we see another miraculous catch of fish:

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven't you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

We aren't sure why the disciples did not recognize Jesus. They had been out all night and it could have been barely light at this point in the early morning. They were about 100 yards out from the shore. And Jesus had a habit of coming and going at this point! So it may have been hard to see him or believe it was him standing there calling to them, again.

- While we are thinking about getting back to our normal lives right now, have we been able to see God’s provision in our midst?
- Even in the midst of potential disaster (loss of life, income, etc.) how are we trusting Jesus to get us through?
- Where has Jesus called us to look for ways he is providing for us? Are we paying attention to his instructions to “cast our nets” in a new direction?

The gospel story continues as John recognized who it was calling to them from the shoreline. He tells Peter what he thinks, and Peter reacts immediately. Impulsive, rough-around-the-edges Peter heads to shore ahead of the rest...

As the story goes, Peter gets to shore ahead of the rest as they are dragging a netful of fish. A catch so large that once again John says that the net does not break (verse 11). And when they arrive, breakfast is ready for them, prepared by their Lord - Jesus!

In verse 13 we see Jesus once again serving others through a simple act of cooking breakfast. The disciples were pretty sure it was Jesus but were afraid to come right out and ask. This was only the third time (vs. 14) they had seen him since his miraculous resurrection; we can only imagine what was running through their minds!

- Are we skeptical of the Lord and what he is doing in and through us?
- In what ways do we see him providing in basic ways for us like he did for the disciples in making breakfast for them?

It is only human to have a level of suspicion about unbelievable events. The disciples’ eyes were telling them one thing, but their minds were having a harder time making sense of it all. But Jesus doesn’t get angry or belittle them for their hesitation. Nor does he accuse them of leaving him all alone when he was on the cross...He simply serves them. He is restoring a relationship for a new purpose.

What happens next reminds us just how much Jesus loves us and is always ready to be in a relationship with us and all of humankind.

### III. Relationship Restored

The next few verses give us a glimpse of restoration. Peter...impulsive, rough-around-the-edges Peter has a very intimate conversation with Jesus. Remember, not long before this conversation, Peter denied even knowing Jesus; a denial that must have hurt Jesus to the very core of his soul. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus proclaims Peter’s future after Peter states that Jesus is the son of God:

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

But in the face of adversity and possibly death, Peter failed the friendship test. He had claimed he would die with Jesus, even defended him with a sword in the garden. Yet when he feared for his life, he denied the friendship. The next couple of verses show that Jesus has plans for Peter and offers the opportunity of the relationship to be restored for a new purpose.

#### John 21:15-19

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, **do you love me** more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “**Feed my lambs.**”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, **do you love me?**”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “**Take care of my sheep.**”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, **do you love me?**”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “**Feed my sheep.**”

John notes a couple of things in this section. First, the disciples are sitting around a fire while eating breakfast. This is the same setting where Peter denied Jesus (John 18:25-26). The memory must have been painful for both of them, but it had to be addressed before they could move on.

The next comparison is the number of times Jesus asked the question; “do you love me?” three times. Just as Jesus had predicted in John 13:38, Peter had denied knowing the Lord three times. Jesus addresses this without having to say it out loud; Peter knew what he meant by the third question; It must have been a crushing question.

- How do we react when the Lord brings up something we have done that shows we are denying who he is?
- What things cause us to deny that we have a relationship with Jesus? Loss, fear, ridicule, the possibility of pain and suffering?
- Has or is Jesus asking us if we Love him in the same way he asked Peter?

The conversation between Peter and Jesus needed to take place so that the relationship could be restored for a new purpose. The new purpose was the rock, the foundation of the church. Peter would no longer be a fisherman but would become a shepherd to the sheep, the future group of followers of Jesus called Christians. Although Peter had turned away in fear before, the new purpose would take him to dangerous places. He may not have known it yet, but in a few short weeks, Peter would receive incredible power and fulfill Jesus calling.

18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

Peter, the one who had failed Jesus when he needed him most, was restored for a new purpose. Just as he was called from the fishing boat some years before, Jesus once again instructs him to follow.

- Although he had every right to be angry and to tell Peter he needed to confess his sin, Jesus doesn’t do that. Instead he asks Peter about love. Do you love me?
- I would imagine this must have hurt more than any punishment Peter could have been given. He knew what he did, and that Jesus still loved him in spite of it.
- Instead of judgement, Peter found grace and invitation...Follow me!
- How do we react when confronted with something we have done that is against the will our Lord has for us?
- Do we expect him to be angry and stand in judgement? Do we hear Jesus ask us “do you love me?”

This is the meaning of **GRACE**. We cannot hide our sin from the Lord. He knows and is heartbroken for us. Just like Peter and the disciples, Jesus provides the opportunity to engage with him as he provides for our needs. He is always looking to restore our relationship with him for a new purpose. That new purpose is to follow him!

## Conclusion

There’s no question that we are living in a time like nothing we may have lived through to date. There are uncertainties, the future may be a little scary; the unknown often is. Like the disciples in the last chapter of John, we may just want to get back to normal, whatever that looks like for us. That is a natural reaction and there’s nothing wrong with wanting life to be back into some kind of routine.

But maybe Jesus has something else in mind. His presence assures us that he is with us and that he knows our needs. Like the disciples' financial need for a good catch and for physical needs of food, Jesus provides for us too. We can trust him in that.

Jesus used the disciples' in-between time to prepare them. He restored the relationships for a new purpose. The day was coming when the church would be released, Pentecost. How are we preparing to be the church in whatever God has planned? The simple answer is "Follow Jesus."

We need to be prepared. Pray. Study God's word, the Bible. Listen. And most importantly don't be afraid. Jesus is restoring our relationship with him so that we might be ready for a new purpose. When we do this, just like the disciples waiting in the in-between time, we will be prepared for the church will be released into a new world.

Our relationship is restored so that we can carry that message of restoration into a hurting world!

### **Benediction**

Through Christ, God has given us new birth into a living hope.  
God has given us an inheritance  
that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading-  
an inheritance protected by the power of God  
Rejoice, therefore, even if for a while we suffer various trials  
For life is stronger than death  
love is stronger than hate  
joy is stronger than sorrow,  
and the promises of God are sure.

**Our relationship with Jesus is restored for a new purpose!**