

EASTER: HERE'S MY HEART

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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. 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.

15When 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." 16A 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." 17He 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. 18Very truly, I tell you, when you were

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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.” 19(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. According to John’s Gospel, Jesus has appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) and to the disciples (John 20:19-23). And yet, this story begins with Simon Peter saying, “I am going fishing,” and many of the disciples join him (John 21:3). Why do you think this is? Do any of the following possibilities resonate with you: Are they taking a break from ministry? Are they still confused and disillusioned? Are they returning to what they know in order to find a “new normal”? Are they uncertain about what to do next? With Jesus gone, do they need to generate some income for themselves and their families?
3. The original Greek of this scripture uses two different words for “love”: agápē and philō. Agápē means unconditional, sacrificial, divine love; it is considered the highest form of love. Philō is “brotherly love” and refers to the love shared between close friends. The first two times Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?” he asks, “Do you agápē me?” and Peter responds, “You know I philō you.” The third time, Jesus shifts to ask Peter, “Do you philō me?” and Peter again responds, “You know I philō you.” How does this affect how you read this conversation? What kind of love is Peter promising? What kind of love does Jesus have in mind?
4. Why do you think Jesus uses shepherding imagery and language? What does that mean for Peter’s ministry?
5. If you were to receive this charge in your own life, what does it look like for you to “tend” and to “feed” God’s sheep?
6. Jesus’ threefold invitation for Peter to love parallels Peter’s earlier three-fold denial of Jesus (John 18:15-27). How might this be a redemption or renewal of Peter? How might this be a way to understand the grace of God for each and every person?