

## **The Risen Lord's Concern For Our Total Welfare.**

Text: John 21:1-14

Suggested Hymns:  
768, 765, 767, 184, 761

- 1) Children have you any food?
- 2) Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.
- 3) Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.
- 4) Come And Eat Breakfast.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 21:1-14, <sup>1</sup> *After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.*

<sup>3</sup> *Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."*

<sup>6</sup> *And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. <sup>7</sup> Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. <sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.*

<sup>9</sup> *Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." <sup>11</sup> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.*

<sup>12</sup> *Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" -- knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Jesus then*

*came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. <sup>14</sup> This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

One of the foremost characteristics of our times is its quest for security. The millions of dollars invested annually in insurance policies, investment programs, such as shares and property, and the increase in number and size of superannuation schemes, are all testimony to our desire for temporal security for ourselves and for the members of our families.

Commendable as this concern for our temporal welfare may be, it is well for us to remember with the poet Robert Burns that the *“best-laid plans of mice and men”* often fail, no matter how painstaking was the care in making them. We may be careful and prudent; yet our mind is always haunted by the realisation that all our feverish activity in quest of security may all be in vain.

However, as children of God we have an assurance which no pension plan, no social security program, no revenue-producing investment, and no cushion to absorb economic shock can give us.

As we reflect on our risen Lord’s post-Easter appearances before His disciples, particularly His third appearance, we find indisputable evidence of His concern for our total welfare. The risen Lord’s third appearance before His disciples is indisputable evidence of His concern for our total well-being. As we consider this post-resurrection appearance of our Lord, we note especially the words which He addressed to His disciples. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. The First Word Was**

#### ***“Children, Have You Any Food?”***

Jesus showed Himself to His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Much of His earthly ministry had been spent near this body of water. Against the background of the lapping of the waves, thousands had heard the Word of Life presented by Jesus. In the towns and villages dotting its shores many of Christ’s miracles had been performed. On this very sea, as the Lord also of the forces of

nature, He had stilled a storm and walked on the water. Here several of the disciples had heard His call and dedicated themselves to His service, learning to know and love Him as the Teacher. And here, once again, Jesus desired to show Himself as the risen Lord who could solve all of their problems for time and for eternity.

Under the leadership of Peter, seven disciples were fishing. It was not sport or recreation for them. They spent the entire night attempting to catch fish which would sustain their bodies. Tired and disappointed, having caught nothing, there came to them across the water the endearing call of their Lord, "***Children, have you any food?***"

In a sense, His question was unnecessary. Jesus knew their needs. Nevertheless, by His question He wanted to indicate to them that their problem was His problem and that their need was His need. The endearing cry "***Children***" and the question ***have you any food?*** which had their origin in the merciful and loving heart of Jesus, were a prelude to the action He would take in satisfying their needs.

The problems of life which you face are no less serious than those of the disciples. In fact, the problems which a father and mother in 21st century Australia face in maintaining a home, in rearing a family, in securing the necessities of life, are without dispute just as serious and those faced by the disciples on a cool Galilean morning 2,000 years ago. The mounting costs of almost everything cause the head of every household justifiable concern.

For that reason the Lord's appearance has a special comfort for us. The same risen Lord who stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee stands at our side. The question which sprang from His great and loving heart touches our hearts also. In all the difficulties which life presents, Jesus is with us.

We, too, are His children. Through His suffering and death He established our sonship. We can exult with Paul in Ephesians 1:4-5, ... ***He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup>having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.*** Or as John puts it in his Gospel, <sup>12</sup>***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.***<sup>1</sup>

As children of God we can dismiss our worries. We must follow the advice of Peter and ***“[cast] all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”***<sup>2</sup> How can we ceaselessly worry when God cries to us in Isaiah 49:15, <sup>15</sup> ***“Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you?”***

## 2. The Second Word Was

***“Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”***

The disciples met the Lord’s warm and friendly question with the answer ***“No.”*** They didn’t have anything to eat. Upon hearing their negative answer, Jesus replied with specific instructions which, if followed, would result in their relief. ***“Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”*** They followed His instructions. Success crowned their efforts. In fact, the exceedingly large number of fish caught almost made it impossible for the disciples to bring in their nets.

The Lord revealed Himself to them as the almighty God. Truly there is evidence here that to Jesus has been given all power ***“of things in heaven and in earth.”*** Even the creatures are obedient to His commands; and, when necessary, their obedience is used to the greater welfare of His children.

Still living in the bright light of Easter Sunday, we vividly recall the majestic display of power which Christ evidenced in His resurrection. Paul can well write to the Romans that Jesus was ***“declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead.”***<sup>3</sup>

But Jesus not only rose from the dead, today He sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for those whom He has redeemed and governing and protecting them. Looking at the empty grave, overwhelmed by our Lord’s almighty power, we exult with the great Apostle that God ***seated [Christ] at His right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.***<sup>4</sup>

The disciples lacked food. We, too, have our problems. Temporary unemployment, labour strikes, floods, drought, and sickness all pose serious problems to all people. However, for you and me the seriousness of our

problems is considerably reduced by the presence of Jesus who assures us in Matthew 28:20, *lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

In heartbreaking difficulties our hearts are strengthened by the sure knowledge that our blessed Lord not only desires to help us, but also can and does. Sin, death, and the devil lie at His feet. Realising that Jesus Christ is worthy of our complete trust, we sing with Luther,<sup>5</sup>

*With might of ours can naught be done,  
Soon were our fall effected;  
But for us fights the valiant one  
Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye: Who is this?  
Christ Jesus it is,  
Of Sabaoth Lord,  
And there's none other God;  
He holds the field for ever.*

### 3. The Third Word Was

***“Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”***

As the disciples approached land, Jesus urged a simple request upon them, ***“Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”*** Christ wanted them to see and to appreciate the great gift with which they had been blessed in the marvellous catch of fish.

A reminder that we count our blessings is in order. Gratitude is not one of the marks of our times. The spiritual and temporal blessings which are ours we take for granted. Even worse, we frequently take personal credit for blessings which in reality come from the kind and gracious hand of God.

Spiritually God has blessed us immensely. He called us out of the darkness of sin and hate into the glorious light of the forgiveness of sins and love. He transformed us from slaves of Satan into sons of God. He covered our filthy garment of the flesh with the perfect garment of His righteousness. He commended His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, He died for us.

Materially God has blessed us also. We could cite facts and figures as evidence that our nation has been blessed materially as never before. Our standard of living is unparalleled. This era has witnessed a more even distribution, not only of the necessities, but also of the luxuries of life. But such a listing of statistics is finally meaningless.

More meaningful for you and I is that simple yet sublime confession of our utter dependency upon God for all that we have, and all that we are, as it is found in Martin Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Creed.

*I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.*

*He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.*

*He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me.*

#### **4. The Fourth Word Was "Come And Eat Breakfast."**

Finally, the risen Christ invites the disciples to partake of the meal which He had prepared. John's record relates, *Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast."*

We, too, have received an invitation from our Lord. In fact, the invitations were already engraved in eternity. The assurance given to the Ephesian Christians is our assurance, God has *chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.*

And to what a banquet we have been invited! Jesus prepared it for us through His death, through His resurrection, and through His ascension. Truly, it is a victory banquet. Having conquered His foes, sin, death, and the devil, and having ransomed us from their power, He gives us the fruits of victory, life and salvation.

In this life we know that His gracious invitation will never be torn from our hands, for we are His, He has redeemed us, and He has called us by name.

And one day when Christ returns in glory, we shall hear from His own lips as recorded in Matthew 25:34, ***Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.***

Yes, we can all cast our care upon Jesus who cares for us. Be reassured and heartened by Christ's post-Easter appearances, you can commit the solution of all your problems to Him. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:12

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 5:7

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 1:4

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 1:20-22

<sup>5</sup> Hymn 195 v 2