

3rd Sunday of Easter

It used to be considered normal for a person to work for the same employer their entire working career. It was a badge of honor to say I've been with the company 30 or 40 years. Often a big celebration was held for an employee who had made their whole career there. But things are different today. Now, almost the opposite is true. When a person can recreate themselves so they might have two or even three careers we consider that noble. Today, it wouldn't be considered unusual for a person to be a lawyer, then a legislator, and finally a business executive.

The Apostles certainly fit into that latter category in their day. They had careers as fishers and tax collectors. Maybe some were traders or farmers. Whatever they did during their years prior to meeting Jesus ended when they were called by Him. Jesus invited them to take a risk to let go of everything and follow him. He even showed them that if they followed He would make them fishers of men. They would catch far more than a boatload of fish.

The Apostles leave their homes, their families, and their livelihood. They assume that Jesus will reward them with a comfortable life. But then they see him crucified and wonder if all they had hoped and dreamed for was gone. It is only natural that they are confused and unsure of the next steps. So, they go back to what they know. Peter decides to go back to fishing and the others follow.

Yet, their fishing expedition doesn't provide them with security either. It is a night of uselessness. They go fishing, and just as before, the sea doesn't yield them any fish. But then they see a stranger on the beach who tells them to lower their nets again and they haul in a great number of fish, 153 exactly, a symbol of all the known nations of the world at that time.

They all know that this stranger is Jesus. He calls them into ministry one more time. Even though they have failed and Jesus knows it, He calls them again. Even though Peter has denied knowing Jesus he is given an opportunity to reaffirm his love and commitment to Jesus. Jesus sees the big picture, even if those Apostles could not. He knows they are capable of great things even though they know they are fearful and unsure of themselves.

Peter, who told the Lord that he would do anything, even die for Jesus couldn't defend him. Now Peter is told he will have a great mission. His boldness will be needed, but he is warned not to get too confident. There will come a day when your strength will wane and you will be imprisoned and led to crucifixion, he is told. Peter, I'm sure, is overjoyed knowing the Lord hasn't rejected him. He knows now that his mission till his dying day will be to spread the news that God has sent His Son into the world to conquer sin and death. Jesus is the source of life even while dying on a cross.

Peter and the other Apostles would see amazing things. Peter would cure hundreds, even by his shadow passing over the cots of those afflicted with illness. They would not experience the comfort and wealth they first imagined, but their next career would be even more grand. They would stand before religious and political leaders without fear, knowing they were doing as the Lord required. They would transform the Roman Empire!

You and I certainly have disappointments in this life. It is not uncommon to be forced to change jobs because of the economy. We don't find the comfortable life as we imagined. Maybe sickness has entered into the picture and we weren't planning for that. It would be easy to give up at those times. Today we have heard that as followers of the lamb who was

sacrificed, but now reigns victorious, we are also victors. No setback or disappointment is greater than the power of the resurrection. We are not alone in this world. Christ is with us when we find ourselves in a storm tossed boat with no fish in it, just as surely as when we are sitting on top of the world with the finest catch imaginable. May we have confidence in knowing the risen Lord and proclaiming Him even when it is hard or seems foolish. We know it. We know the Lamb is victorious so let it be our plan to reign with Him for all eternity.