

SURPRISING ENCOUNTERS

John 21:1-14

I. A CANDLE FLAME IN THE DARK

- A. *“After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias ... Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know it was Jesus.” (John 21:1&4)*
- B. The Most Important Part of the Story.
 - 1. When the gospel writers get to the climax of the story, they tell it in whispers.
 - 2. There is no choir of angels to proclaim it. Not a single soul was around to see it happen.
 - 3. “Jesus came back from death not in a blaze of glory but more like a candle flame in the dark, flickering first in this place, then in that place, then in no place at all.” (Frederick Buechner)
- C. That’s Why the Sundays After Easter Are So Precious.
 - 1. Easter Sundays seem so powerful because of the large number of lilies, the beautiful music, the fancy clothes, and the packed pews.
 - 2. The Sundays after Easter are so powerful because they are closer to how we really experience the resurrection.

II. WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT

- A. Where Was God ...
 - 1. On Monday, April 16, when 33 young lives were tragically cut short in the quaint town of Blacksburg, Virginia?
 - 2. On September 11, when 3000 died because of an evil radical ideology?
 - 3. On August 29, when 280,000 died in the Asian Tsunami?
- B. He Was There ...
 - 1. As a nation rushed to the scene to embrace a campus in crisis.
 - 2. As people poured their lives into those who had lost theirs.
 - 3. “Whenever we are made more brave and strong and beautiful, we may be sure that Christ is present with us even though more often than not our eyes are kept from recognizing him.” (Buechner)
- C. Wounds Must Heal Wounds.
 - 1. Even though the disciples didn’t recognize Jesus, Jesus recognized them.
 - 2. He also sees us like that!
 - 3. Whether we recognize him or not, or believe in him or not, or even know his name, he comes to us and stands on the beach or walks with us along whatever road we’re on.

Prayer Concerns: Members – Virginia Baker, Burney Biesel, Sarah Clark, Patty Gibson, Joe McDowell, **Diane Mallard**, Anne Miller, **Mary Jo Moore**, Carol Webb ... **Friends** – Tommy Anderson, Pat Bryan, Clara Garrett, Penny Guthrie, **Jim Hayes**, Benette Hobday, Seth & Reece Jenson, Roy Johnson, **Dillon LaRue**, Lawrence Lusk, Bill Macarthur, Shirley Rice, **Andy Schumacher**, David Smith, Shirley Waldron, Cindy Waldron, Frances Wright, **Virginia Tech** ...

Christian Sympathy is extended to **Margaret Baker and Mary Katherine Wofford and family** on the death of their brother, **A.C. Ivey**, and to **Jenny Edwards and family** on the death of her brother-in-law, **Wayne Brown** ...

PASTORAL PRAYER

O loving God, your promise to us has never been that life would be easy enough for us, but rather that we would grow strong enough for life. Here in worship, we claim that promise, and ask you to fill our hearts in this service so that we would go out stronger than when we came in.

We grow quiet for a moment, now. Hear us as in the silence of our hearts we confess that which we have done which has brought pain to someone else this past week. (*Pray Silently*)

O God, so often we find ourselves lost and afraid. We bring before you that one problem which makes us most uncertain about which way to turn. In our silence, speak to us words of guidance. (*Pray Silently*)

Now we turn loose of those unnecessary burdens which weigh us down, our bitterness against someone we don't understand, our anxiety about what might happen next, our guilt, our fear. Here in quietness we release those things to you. (*Pray Silently*)

Now lift us up, as we continue our worship, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

JOHN 21:1-14

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon 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.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on 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, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

April 29	<i>Recognizing Our Redeemer</i>	John 10:22-30
May 6	<i>Breaking Down Barriers</i>	Acts 11:1-18

On the Radio (1450 AM):

April 29	<i>The Ten Commandments: Don't Do It</i>	Exodus 20:13-17
May 6	<i>Gut-check Christianity</i>	James 1:1-12