



COME AND HAVE BREAKFAST

April 2015

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

John 21:9-12

Imagine how the disciples felt after such an unfruitful night, being told by a man on shore to put their nets out on the right side of the boat, and as a result catching all those fish. Then to realize this person was Jesus. A net full of cold slippery fish was impressive, but not being a fisherman, that part of the story did not really do that much for me. What moved me more than anything was the invitation to have breakfast.

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Imagine how the disciples felt after a long night on the water, not catching anything. They must have been exhausted, feeling like a failure. On top of that they were grieving an intense loss. Their Lord, whom they had followed for three years, the person on whom they pinned all their hopes for a new kingdom, was no longer with them.

I thought of how it would be for me after having suffered a long dark night of the soul, feeling lost and alone, distant from God. I thought of how I would feel in the early morning light, to arrive on the shore and have Jesus greet me with, "Come and have breakfast." The relief; the comfort; the peace. Like the embrace of a compassionate friend. Yes, this picture very much speaks to me.

On Good Friday a pastor told his congregation that we are called to "walk the way of the cross." To me that meant that we are called to join with Jesus as he lives and suffers. To feel what he must have felt. To have the assurance that he feels what we feel. To follow his example of giving sacrificially. This is part of what I believe it means to be a follower of Christ.

Jesus suffered the excruciating physical pain of dying on the cross. But I think the greatest pain must have been the emotional pain that went along with it, knowing he was abandoned by those he loved, rejected by those he served. Many of us have, I'm sure, experienced something similar. We can identify with Christ in knowing the intense emotional pain that rejection can bring. With Christ, we are "walking the way of the cross."

But a time comes when we must leave that pain behind—something that can be hard to do.

Christ arose from the dead. He lives! And we too must live.

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