

## Greenways Benefice weekly Devotion (N0 8)

10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Bible reading – John 21:1 – 19

Hi, I'm Veronica. Anyone for a barbeque? I don't know about you, but I love eating breakfast outside. If the sun is shining, even when it's cold, we've been known, just after 7.30am, to find a sheltered sunny spot in the garden for breakfast! The air smells fresh and the birds are vocal, even the cat hovers to see what's for breakfast.

Whether you are a toast and coffee person or prefer a full English, it's still lovely to feel the fresh air on your face, especially during this time of lockdown.

Today I'm inviting you to travel with me to the Sea of Galilee, to the time when Jesus prepared a barbeque breakfast on the beach for his disciples.

The previous evening, Peter and some of the other disciples were together. It had been a roller coaster of a week. On Thursday night one of their own had betrayed Jesus, and seeing the mob, they had all been terrified and fled. Jesus had been arrested and dragged off for a mocking, cruel trial. The next day Jesus had been crucified, the most cruel Roman form of execution. But on Sunday morning Mary discovered that Jesus had actually risen from the dead – He was alive! And since then Jesus had appeared to them twice.

Sometimes, when life gets too stressful, we go back to the familiar, secure things in our lives. That was exactly what Peter did. He was a fisherman by trade. He said "I'm going fishing." We don't know, but it could have been that Peter wanted to go back to the familiarity of fishing, to help him process the enormity of what had happened and try to make sense of it all. He was also still torturing himself with having denied even knowing Jesus.

The others decided to go with him. So they fished all night but caught nothing. Very early the next morning, just as the sun was rising, they spotted a figure standing on the shore, but didn't recognise him. Jesus called "Haven't you caught any fish?" "No" they answered. Jesus said "Throw your nets over on the right side of the boat and you'll find some". Most of them were fishermen, they knew where the shoals of fish could be found. They also knew that if they didn't make a catch at night they were not likely to at daytime. But they did as Jesus had said and suddenly, the penny dropped! The nets were so crammed full of fish, they were unable to haul them into the boat.

John exclaimed "It's the Lord!" Peter's heart flipped and he couldn't get to the shore fast enough. He jumped out of the boat and rushed back to the beach, leaving the others to drag back the bulging net full of fish.

There on the beach, Jesus had prepared a barbeque breakfast for them. He knew they would be tired and hungry and he reached out to them with practical, compassionate love.

How many ways does Jesus use to tell us how much He loves us?

How many times, in hindsight have we looked back and realised He has been there preparing the way and providing for our needs even before we prayed? Perhaps you could check this out, later.

When they had finished breakfast and were chatting, Jesus took Peter for a stroll along the beach. I think this was one of the main reasons for this third appearance. There was unfinished business to do with Peter. He went straight to the nagging problem.

He took Peter back to the days when he was simply "Simon, son of John" and met him where he was. He said, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

Jesus could have meant - do you love me more than the other disciples or he could have been pointing to the boat and the fishing tackle.

Do you love me more than the familiarity of these things? For us it could be the things that surround us, the stuff we collect.

Regardless of which it was, three times Jesus asked Peter “Do you truly love me? The third time he said “How much do you love me?”

That hurt, but Jesus was facing the problem with him, bringing healing and forgiveness.

He always goes straight to the pain and deals with it. He pours his loving forgiveness into our mistakes and failures and reinstates us, just as he did with Peter.

He doesn't expect us to make ourselves better before he can deal with us – he meets us where we are, with all our fears, failures and weaknesses. All he requires is for us to love him, and he will take our hands and lead us onward. And as we look at his hands we can see just how much he loves each one of us.

During this time of lockdown, just as we are, let's spend time with Jesus, allowing him to pour his love and peace into our lives, giving us strength for today and hope for the future.

### **Can I invite you to pray with me.**

Loving Lord, thank you that you take us as we are with all our failings, and as we trust you, you wrap your loving arms around us and give us your peace.

In this challenging time of uncertainty and stress, we pray that our leaders and indeed, all world leaders, will be given your wisdom and guidance as they lead our country and the whole world through this pandemic.

And may the love and peace of God bless us today with his strength and bright hope for the future. Amen.

God bless, stay safe, keep smiling and most of all keep trusting.

Veronica K