

Easter 3C

Acts 9:1-22

Revelation 5:8-14

John 21:1-19

The sermon for the third Sunday of Easter is from the Gospel of St John 21:1-19. The sermon is entitled, "The Merciful Word"

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Peter asks Jesus in John 13, "Lord where are you going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now but you will follow afterward"

Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you"

Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times"

So who's word would prevail?

The pride and confidence in the words of Peter, or the enduring word of Christ?

Of course we know the answer, as Peter was warming himself near the fire in the courtyard, there He would vehemently deny Jesus saying, I do not know this man of whom you speak.....not once, not twice but thrice, and there the rooster would crow....indeed....at the Word of Christ.

And so it is the same in John 21, after Jesus had risen from the dead, appearing to his disciples yet again near the sea of tiberias, where there the disciples had gone fishing, yet they had caught nothing....but though the disciples did not know that it was Jesus, it was at the shore where Jesus said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some"...and by His Word, they would find themselves catching a net full of fish...

Again. At the Word of Christ.

And so they came in where Jesus had already had a charcoal fire in place, preparing breakfast and soon thereafter, Jesus said to Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?

Interesting isn't it?

From the fire in the courtyard where Peter was warming himself before he would soon deny the Christ three times....

And now to the fire at the shore of tiberias where Peter would eat with Jesus only to say to him, Do you love me? Yes, Lord; you know that I love you...not once, not twice, but three times....

Yes, three times, the number that would cause the rooster to crow.... a crowing that would be the crushing blow to the pride and confidence that Peter once held so dear to himself, but ultimately, it was sobering reminder that his own word would fail....,

It is easy to look at Peter and the disciples, to see their foolishness and ask,

Why did they not listen to the Word of Christ?

Why did they trust in their own human reason and strength?

Why did they flee to their own pride and confidence rather than trusting in the Lord and His Word?

Therefore, after all that they had seen and heard, after the death and resurrection of the Lord, Jesus says, do you love me.....then feed my sheep...

During preschool chapel this week, I asked the children, When Jesus said Feed my lambs what were they to feed on? And the children said, "grass", while others said "hay", of course, that's what a child would say, yet I held up my bible and said, This is what they were to feed on.....

Feed my lambs....yes, to feed on the Word.

The Word that...in our reading in the book of Acts, the conversion of Saul, it was the Word that would bring him to faith, it was the Word that would lead him as the chosen instrument of God...and likewise it is the Word for St Peter that would lead him to be a bold proclaimer of the faith...preaching repentance and forgiveness.....

Yes, indeed, feed my lambs Jesus says....

And it is no different today.

From a Pastor's point of view, this text is always a reminder that the sheep need to feed upon the Word of God, for the Holy Spirit works through the Word, convicting you, showing you the mirror of the law, the call to repentance, but also not leaving you there but rather, pointing you to Christ who is your righteousness and your forgiveness.

That is why you are here today.

To hear the word. To receive the gifts, to have God work on you by His word, at His Word, in His Word and through His Word, yet as we go on with our week, how prideful like Peter we can be, believing in our own frail confidence, yes, so frail our flesh is due to sin, yet this is the deception, as we play as if we are our own little gods, so self-reliant we become that soon the word takes a backseat, soon the Word becomes a check in check out, once a week and be on my way and live as I please, and soon the word is overshadowed by our frail greatness, as if we can live move and have our being in our own word and in our own way.

It did not work for our first parents as they saw and took and ate by their own word, and it does not work for us.

This is the spiritual battle for you and me.

Though we are given the Word, though we know the word, the constant temptation is to have our trust upon everything but the Word.....

Where is your trust this day?

Is it in the Word?.

Or is your trust in your fears?

Is your trust in your pride?

Is your trust in the idols that are before you?

Is your trust in your own word rather than the word of God?

Where is your trust?

And thus we repent.

Do you Love Me Jesus Said,
Then Feed my Sheep.

After all that Peter had gone through, denying Christ, failing to abide in the word as his own fears took over, as his self-preservation had taken hold, there Jesus was.....merciful, kind, compassionate, Yes peter you denied me three times, of course I told you so, I told you could not follow me just yet, but afterward you will....and here we are, just as I had promised by my word...

And so it is for you.

Every time you have shrunk and bowed down to the pressures of the world.

There we deny Him.

Every time you have trust in ourselves rather than God and His Word.

There we deny Him.

Every time you have followed the ways of the world and the pursuits of the frail flesh as if this is the first and the last...

There we deny Him.

Yet just as it was for Peter, it is the same for you.....

Do you love me...

Feed my sheep...

That though he had miserably, our Lord is merciful, and there he was not only graciously reinstated, but indeed Peter was forgiven.

And here you are as well....

For we know our sin, yet when we confess our sins, God is faithful, indeed He is merciful, and He forgives you of all your sins.....for the merciful Word is your faith....

The merciful Word that took upon this flesh only to face humiliation for you.....

The merciful Word that as The Lamb of God...shed His blood for you.
The merciful Word that stood in your place in the most excruciating and humiliating way, even to the point of being forsaken by the Father....

The merciful Word that was crucified on the Cross for you....

And not only does our Lord die the big and merciful death, Yes, even afterward, for there was to be an afterward...Yes, Peter you will me afterward Jesus said to him in John 13....its as if Jesus was saying....

because I will not only go where you cannot follow, but there I will be crucified for you and in three days after my death upon the Cross, I will rise from the dead....to deliver you victory, the crown of righteousness, eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, the triumphant peace that this world cannot I give, Yes I give to you.....my merciful word, and Here I am, just as I promised, and you are forgiven.

And so are you.

Thanks be to God for His mercy,
for in His mercy you go....loving and serving,

in His mercy you go, rejoicing in His promises.
In His mercy you go as you boldly and confidently stand in what our
Lord has done for you.....

Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed!
Alleluia!

Amen.
The peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your
hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.