

It is the Lord that Constantly Cares for Us

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Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church Pastor Tyson Labuhn

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

In our Gospel reading two weeks ago we heard the angels say surprising Easter words, ***"He's not here, but [He] has risen!"*** Last week, Jesus said, ***"Peace be with you."*** And today in our Gospel reading we heard another set of Easter words when John says to Peter, ***"It is the Lord!"***

According to John's Gospel this morning, it was the third time that Jesus appeared to His disciples. And while He appeared to Mary and the other women at the tomb on that first Easter morning, the first time, according to John's Gospel, when Jesus appeared to His disciples was behind closed doors. Then again eight days later when Thomas was with them. And while the sensation of that first week might've worn off, in today's Gospel, Jesus appears to them a third time so that they might believe that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee (James and John) as well as two other disciples all went out fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (another name for the Sea of Galilee). They spent all night trying to catch some fish, but they caught nothing. Tired and somewhat disheartened, they decided to head back to the shore just before daybreak.

As the disciples did, we too can get so caught up in our daily lives that we forget about the constant care from our loving Lord. Jesus constantly cares for His disciples. He appears to them in the upper room on two occasions. And as we heard

today, He's waiting for them on the shore. And yet, the disciples are so caught up within themselves that they didn't recognize when the Lord was speaking to them.

When we get caught up in disappointment and frustration with what we're trying to accomplish, there are times that we don't recognize when our Lord is speaking to us. Instead, we often needlessly worry about the smaller things of this world. And we even worry at times if God even cares for us or our loved ones at all. But our heavenly Father knows even the most insignificant details of our lives. His concern is for you and He knows every single hair on your head.

But I think that for some of us He's making it easier on Himself. Now if God is so concerned with every single hair, you can be assured that He is more concerned about the things that really matter to you. Because the Lord's care is constant. And even though we're all sinners, we experience His gracious generosity by forgiving us our sins. He remembers them no more. And even though we betray Him with our thoughts, words, and deeds, in His great love for us, He separates our sins from us, as far as the east is from the west.

There's a story of a man who was shipwrecked on a deserted island. He scrounged around and was able to build a little hut for some protection from the sun, and warmth at night. And he prayed for his rescue, but when He looked out on the horizon for a ship, He didn't see one. It seemed like for weeks he lived under the hot sun and the cold nights.

Then one day, when he returned from His search for food, he came back to find his little shelter in flames. He was crushed. What little possessions he had were burning up and there was nothing he could do but watch. So that night, he slept out in the open by the ashes and wondered why God hadn't

listened to his prayers. Prayers for rescue. But early the next morning he saw a ship anchored off the island. And the captain who came to rescue him said, *"We saw your smoke signal, and so we came to see what you needed."* The man had thought that everything had been taken away and he was without anything. But he soon realized that the very instruments that he thought would save him became the instruments that God used to bless him. God seemed so far away, and yet He was there all the time, caring for him, even though what seemed to be disastrous to the man so that the man might be saved.

Now, getting back to our Gospel for today, Jesus asks the disciples, even before they get to the shore, ***"Children, do you have any fish? They replied, 'No.'"*** (John 21:5) They had fished all night. They were disheartened and ready to be done. But then they hear, ***"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."*** (John 21:6) The disciples did so and their net was filled... Our Lord provided for them powerfully.

John says to Peter, ***"It is the Lord!"*** And what does Peter do? He jumps in the water. And they brought in 153 fish, which was a large number for them and the net didn't break. Jesus continues to show that He cares for them because on the shore He had prepared a fire, He had brought some bread, and was grilling some fish. Jesus says to them to, ***"bring some of the fish they had just caught."*** (John 21:10) And without even having to ask, by His grace their eyes and hearts were opened once again to see that he constantly cares for us.

"It is the Lord!" This simple gospel message needs to be shared with the world today. Jesus wants all of us to have what these disciples had. He wants us to know, believe, and boldly proclaim that ***"It is the Lord!"*** The Lord God who constantly cares and provides for us out of His grace. That

our ears might hear, our eyes might see, and our hearts might believe His Gospel truth. One in which He gives to us that we might grow in every good work.

Of course, it begins with Jesus who powerfully provides for us in a quiet, humble way. Because through Holy Baptism, God takes us away from Satan's grasp and makes us a child of His own family. He gives us faith to believe. He provides for us the time to privately study His Word, so that our faith might be nourished and strengthened. And in His quiet and humble way, He provides us forgiveness and eternal life. As we continue to listen to His Word we act accordingly, for by His grace, our very lives, and maybe even the lives of others, are changed.

You know, two weeks ago we heard the angels say the surprising Easter words, ***"He is not here, but [He] has risen!"*** ... Last week, Jesus said, ***"Peace be with you."*** ... Today, in John's Gospel reading, we heard, ***"It is the Lord."*** And because we are His own, our lives are dead to sin but alive in Christ. This is God's free gift of grace to us...that we know, and believe that ***"It is the Lord."*** And we can see and hear Him constantly caring for us. That as His children, we witness to those around us that they too might see that ***"It is the Lord."*** That we might celebrate with Him and all our loved ones at a heavenly banquet feast together... Who does all this for us, ***"It is the Lord!"***

In Jesus' name, Amen.