



## Christ United Methodist Church

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**Date:** May 5, 2019

**Sermon:** Breakfast with the Messiah

**Text:** John 21:1-12

**Speaker:** Pastor Don Archer

Today's reading from the Gospel of John is sometimes referred to as: *Jesus and the Disciples Have a Cookout*. Others have dubbed it: *Grillin' with the Messiah*. There is, after all, a clear reference to Jesus cooking fish and bread over a **charcoal** fire. (Let those who use propane or natural gas take note of this. Jesus used charcoal!!)

I realize that there are many elements to this, the third resurrection appearance, in John's Gospel. Other details are more miraculous ... the great catch of fish ... so great that it was a miracle that the net did not break. In the verses that follow today's reading, Jesus and Simon Peter have a powerful conversation about what it means to **love** the risen Lord. All of that is tremendously important but it is not what speaks to me in this narrative. The thing that catches my ear and tugs at my *little prune heart* is this charcoal fire and Jesus cooking fish and bread for the disciples. For me it is a very personal, intimate, gesture. It has the air of a backyard gathering among family and/or friends. A small group, gathered around the host who is preparing the meal. There are two things that Jesus says that makes this even more familiar for me. First, Jesus says to the disciples, who have just finished dragging this huge net of fish to the shore: *Bring some of the fish that you have just caught*. Does that sound familiar? Mom or Dad standing over the grill, calling out to someone to bring more hot dogs or hamburgers or whatever is on the menu. *Bring some of that fish you just caught, we're gonna need some more. James, bring the tartar sauce. John, bring me a Ginger Ale out of that cooler*. The text has, for me, that kind of atmosphere or feeling to it.

In addition to asking the disciples to bring some more fish for the cook out, Jesus offers an invitation: *Come and have breakfast*. I'm not sure if there are four more powerful words in all of the Gospels! *Come and have breakfast!* This is Jesus sounding like our mom or dad or grandparent. *Come and get it! Breakfast is ready. Eat before it gets cold*. This is Jesus saying this! The Son of God, the Messiah, the risen Lord! And it all sounds so personal, so human, so friendly? Yes, Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee ... but this ... cooking bread and fish over a fire, inviting the disciples to bring what they have, calling them to breakfast ... it is powerful stuff! Maybe it's just because I like breakfast. There is a lot going on at this lake shore cook out.

Whenever someone asks about my favorite image of Jesus or event in his life, I almost always come back to this scene. Jesus cooking bread and fish over a charcoal fire, for his friends, taking what they have and adding to what he has supplied, and then inviting them to share in this simple meal.

I have always thought that part of our post Easter/Resurrection tradition could include a church cook out. Some Sunday morning after Easter. None of this 6:30 a.m. stuff. 8:00-ish. Find one of those old charcoal grills with the wheels, throw some trout on it, or other grillable items. Some cornbread and any other dishes that anyone wanted to bring. A cookout pot luck combination. This part of John's Gospel could be read, a prayer of thanksgiving offered and then the invitation: *Come and have breakfast*. A way of remembering and celebrating the risen Lord.

This morning we have gathered to share another meal. A simple meal of bread and cup. A simple meal with greater significance than words can express. A meal that included the words: *This is my body broken for you. This is my blood poured out for you*. Like the breakfast by the Lake, Jesus invites us to bring what we have. *Bring some the fish that you have just caught. Bring your joys, your sorrows, your grief, your doubt, your hope. Bring whatever you have. As much or as little as we have*. What we have, what we are, whatever we are experiencing, will be **added** to what Jesus has already prepared. Bread and fish, bread and cup. *Love, forgiveness, mercy, peace, new life, new direction*. All prepared for us. All of us.

This morning, as on that eventful morning along the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus invites, calls us, *Come and have breakfast. Come and receive what I offer*.

*"Come and dine," the Master calleth, "Come and dine";  
You may feast at Jesus' table all the time;  
He Who fed the multitude, turned the water into wine,  
To the hungry calleth now, "Come and dine."*

*The disciples came to land,  
Thus obeying Christ's command,  
For the Master called unto them, "Come and dine";  
There they found their heart's desire,  
Bread and fish upon the fire; - (Charles Widmeyer)*

Let us remember and celebrate the risen Lord. Let us remember and celebrate the gifts of grace and forgiveness. Come and dine. **Amen**.