*John 21:1-19 ~ May 4, 2025*

***Call to Worship:***

Sing praises to the Lord, you faithful;

**We will give thanks to God's holy name.**

Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

**We will give thanks to God's holy name.**

God has turned our mourning into dancing! Let us praise and not be silent!

**Lord our God, we will give thanks to your holy name, now and always!**

*Hymn: #814 Morning has broken*

***Prayer of Approach and Confession:***

God of the Risen Christ and the rising earth,

we come giving thanks for all the wonder in your creation:

for the tiny perfection revealed in a baby’s fingers grasping ours,

in each daffodil unzipping its jacket to greet the spring,

and each rock face worn by wind and water,

bearing its rugged beauty with your praise.

These details lift our hearts to praise you, too.

So let the details of the story of the Risen Christ lift our hearts this day,

that we may greet a new week

as an occasion to discover him in our midst,

making all things new with the springtime of your Spirit.

Receive our heartfelt worship, O God,

Creator, Christ and Spirit,

ever Three and ever One,

now and evermore. Amen.

God of grace,

we acknowledge ways in which

we fall short of your hope and purposes for us.

We confess we find it difficult to forgive others and ourselves.

We carry grudges about things done by others long ago,

and things we have done still haunt us.

Forgive us and give us the grace to forgive others;

amend who we are and set us free to begin again with you and one another.

***Assurance of Pardon*:**

Friends in Christ, while it is true we have all fallen short of God’s intentions,

it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God’s love in Jesus Christ.

To all who humbly seek the mercy of God, Jesus offers forgiveness and new life.

So be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another.

*Hymn: #358 There is a redeemer*

***Anthem***

***Scripture Readings:*** *Psalm 30*

I will exalt you, Lord,  
    for you lifted me out of the depths  
    and did not let my enemies gloat over me.  
**2**Lord my God, I called to you for help,  
    and you healed me.  
**3**You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead;  
    you spared me from going down to the pit.

**4**Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people;  
    praise his holy name.  
**5**For his anger lasts only a moment,  
    but his favor lasts a lifetime;  
weeping may stay for the night,  
    but rejoicing comes in the morning.

**6**When I felt secure, I said,  
    “I will never be shaken.”  
**7**Lord, when you favored me,  
    you made my royal mountain[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2030&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14327c)] stand firm;  
but when you hid your face,  
    I was dismayed.

**8**To you, Lord, I called;  
    to the Lord I cried for mercy:  
**9**“What is gained if I am silenced,  
    if I go down to the pit?  
Will the dust praise you?  
    Will it proclaim your faithfulness?  
**10**Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me;  
    Lord, be my help.”

**11**You turned my wailing into dancing;  
    you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,  
**12**that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.  
    Lord my God, I will praise you forever.

*John 21:1-19*

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1-19&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26900a)] It happened this way: **2**Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1-19&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26901b)]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. **3**“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

**4**Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

**5**He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

**6**He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

**7**Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. **8**The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021%3A1-19&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26907c)] **9**When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

**10**Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” **11**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. **12**Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. **13**Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. **14**This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

**15**When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

**16**Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

**17**The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. **18**Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” **19**Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

***Meditation:*** *“Do You Love Me?”*

Have you ever sworn that you would never do something only to discover that later on you did the very thing that you said you would never do? Now that can be a good thing when you did something positive that you wouldn’t have thought of doing, but often times it tends to be something negative.

When we look back over our lives, how many of us can see some of the things we did or said that we now regret. And one of the hardest things to do is to let that all go and move on. The truth is if we don’t, and we continue to carry those mistakes with us life becomes too difficult to handle.

There is a reason we are here. Not a single person here is an accident. You were born because God had a plan in mind for you. Because of this we need to trust and let go of our failures because hanging on to them keeps us from becoming what God wants us to be.

When Jesus was alive, he chose 12 people to be his disciples. Out of the 12, he chose three disciples that he truly invested himself in and provided them with spiritual experiences that the others did not have. One of the inner three was Simon Peter. Jesus went even further with Peter and told him he would be the leader among the 12 and would be crucial in the establishment of the church. Peter was proud of Christ and committed his life to Jesus and the work he was being called to fulfill.

Sometimes when we make our commitment to follow God, we do not understand that God’s way of doing things are not our way of acting in a given situation. We want to respond in ways that make sense to us and sometimes the ways God wants us to respond doesn’t always make sense.

Peter said to the other disciples, “I’m going to go fishing.” The other disciples said, “We’ll go with you.” When Jesus first called the disciples, many of them were fisherman by trade. So, their choice to go back fishing was actually a decision to change the direction that Jesus had provided for their lives. They wanted to go back to what was familiar and what they thought would be easy. They were starting to remember the good ole days. But the good ole days were never quite as easy as they thought they were.

They had visions of eating a good fish meal and putting some extra money in their pockets from the extra fish they would sell on the market. It seemed like a good plan. They were on their way to a new beginning in life. The only problem was this new beginning was not of God.

The fact that they caught nothing all night didn’t cause them to give up. They heard a voice from the shore saying, “Friends you don’t have any fish do you.” They yelled back, “No.”

Jesus yelled out to them, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some of them.” Reluctantly they tried it, and the net had so many fish inside of it they could hardly pull it in. Do you see how close we can be to a blessing, but if we choose to ignore the word of God, we can miss it. The fish were right there on the other side of the boat.

John immediately recognized that this was Jesus on the shore. Peter jumped into the water clothes and all to get to Jesus. He remembered it was just like this before, years earlier when Jesus had done a similar miracle and, in the process, he gave Peter a new beginning for his life. Peter wanted to begin again. He knew he needed a new beginning.

When he got to the shore, Peter discovered, Jesus already had some fish for them to eat. Jesus chose the life of a servant even after death. He invited the disciples to sit down and eat with him.

As they sat and talked, they must have talked about some of the old times together. But talking about old times eventually would lead up to those final days. That was a period in which no one was really that proud of their actions. All had deserted him. Everybody knew they had failed somewhat miserably in the end.

But you know something, God always has a way or restoring us when we fall. God never says, “How could you have done such a thing?” God wants us to walk with him.

And so, Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me?”

Peter responded, “Yes lord, you know that I love you.” Peter probably expected Jesus to say, then why did you betray me and leave me. But instead, Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Jesus was not talking about lambs but about people. He’s saying Peter I’ve got a plan for your life, and I want you to take care of people who are young believers. Peter was probably very happy to hear Jesus say, “I still have confidence in your ability as a leader and I’m restoring you to your position.”

But then Jesus asks him again, “Simon, son of John do you truly love me.” Now was it that Peter was going to be used by God that made him happy. Was he in love with being in the limelight or was it truly Jesus that he loved. You see in giving Peter a new beginning, Jesus had to make sure Peter had his priorities in order. Peter was somewhat caught off guard that Jesus asked him a second time, but he responded once again, Yes Lord, you know that I love you.

With this second declaration of love came another responsibility for ministry. You see loving God always is going to involve meeting the needs of others. Jesus then told Peter “Take care of my sheep.” When those lambs grow, don’t abandon them. I expect you to be faithful with the passing of time. God is telling us he’s not calling us for short time service, but a lifetime of commitment.

Then Jesus asks him a third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” This third time for Peter was a little too much. It hurt inside for Jesus to have asked this third time do you love me. But Peter had forgotten that three times he had openly declared before the world he did not know Jesus. As painful as it was, Jesus had presented him with three opportunities to boldly cross out those three earlier denials. Perhaps Jesus also asked this question to see if Peter could speak of his love for Christ, even when he felt that Christ had hurt him deeply without cause.

It’s easy to say we love Jesus when he’s giving us something, but can we say it when we feel hurt by him. When we did all the right things and things still didn’t go our way. You know something, this is when we need a new beginning the most. When we are hurt and not sure of which way to go. Peter was still able to say, “Lord you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus gave him a third ministry assignment “feed my sheep”. Jesus was letting Peter know there would be no end to the call of discipleship upon his life. As the sheep aged, Peter was to age in service to them providing them with the teachings and word of God. Jesus also revealed to Peter that not only did he have a plan for his life, he even had planned the way in which Peter would die many years later.

We have been born to make a difference for God in this world right now. The most important question we will have to answer again and again is, “do you love me, more than these?” Each time we say no, we will drift further from God, but each time we say yes, we will discover the purpose God has for our lives.

Amen.

*Hymn: #757 Come sing, O Church, in joy*

***Invitation of Offering:***

Our lives overflow with God’s blessings in Christ and in creation. With gratitude for all that we have received, let us present our offering to God, trusting that God can do a new thing with our gifts – and with our lives!

***Doxology:*** *#830 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

***Prayer of Dedication:***

Gracious God, you have given us life and furnished it with much beauty and blessing.

In Christ you have given yourself to us. So we offer to you a portion of what we have received to share in the work of your kingdom. Use our energy and ability for your purposes for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

***Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer:***

God of care,

we draw near to you in prayer,

trusting that your love changes lives

and your resurrection brings renewal and redemption into the world God loves.

As we lay before you the concerns on our hearts,

we pray that you will draw near to the people and situations we name

and bring each one the gift that is needed.

We lay before you, Lord, the concerns we share from the news headlines

and the many world situations where hope and change are desperately needed.

We lay before you, O God, those who are in hospital or care

and all those who struggle with illness, pain or health burdens of any sort;

and we remember those facing grief and loss, bearing burdens of sorrow and worry.

We lay before you, God of peace,

families under stress, relationships that are strained,

friends and neighbours in need of reconciliation,

and we pray for the healing of divisions in our country, between countries, and around the world.

We lay before you, Creator,

the earth itself, struggling in so many places to maintain its fruitfulness,

and we pray for all the vulnerable creatures and communities who are finding it harder and harder to live on land, sea or sky.

Lord Jesus,

we believe that you hear our prayers and will be faithful to our requests and concerns. Use us in every opportunity that presents itself to serve you

by serving our neighbours near and far. And so we pray together the words you gave us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.   
Thy will be done on earth,   
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.   
Lead us not into temptation,   
But deliver us from evil.   
For thine is the kingdom,   
The power, and the glory,   
For ever and ever.   
Amen.

*Hymn: #634 Will you come and follow me*

***Benediction:***

Go in peace; God calls us to step out in faith, to follow where He leads

even if what He calls us to do seems impossible. So let’s go from here with courage, trusting in God’s presence and power, and eager to do God’s will.

Now may the LORD keep us and bless us,

May the LORD make his face to shine upon us

and be gracious unto us,

Now and for ever more, AMEN.

***Choral Closing: “Go Now in Peace”***

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.  
God will go with you each hour of every day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.  
Know He will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there watching from above.  
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.