

**2025 TALK, 18.5.25, JESUS & PETER, JOHN 21:1-14,15-25:**

**NEW MORNING, OLD MEMORIES, WILD FUTURE**

What a picture, right at the start of this story in John 21. A solitary figure on the shore... Jesus emerging from the morning mist. A new day with all sorts of possibilities... And there are the disciples, again in a boat on the Sea of Galilee -with no fish. Sounds depressingly familiar!... But this is a new day like no other. Jesus is standing at the edge, between worlds. He is calling to his friends from the shore; he is no longer in the boat with them.

This beach BBQ served up by Jesus, is a perfect preparation for what's next. It would have reminded all the disciples of some great days – memories which would have glowed in their minds. Memories from the very beginning, right through to memories of more recent times. This episode would have taken Peter & the disciples back to their first calling, the first miraculous catch of fish. And no doubt it would have reminded them of the Last Supper - how excited they all were at the start of that memorable meal.

At the same time, there was the unavoidable reminder of difficult memories they would prefer to forget. Jesus' words about betrayal at the Last Supper, his warning that they would all abandon him. And Peter himself being reminded of another open fire, not many days before, in the courtyard of the guard. He alone had stuck around – only to ultimately deny that he knew Jesus.

Old memories flooding back, on a new morning, with a bursting fishing net... Peter could well have been forgiven for thinking: 'Where did it all go wrong?'. But despite all this, here they are, where they are meant to be, eating with Jesus. After all they have been through together: wild wonders, wise words, warm worship – and then with them all going AWOL.

Surely Jesus would have given up on them by now... ? But no. Jesus encourages them to see this is a new day. His triple repeated question to Peter, inevitably reminds him denying his LORD three times. And at the same time, Jesus opens his mind to a new future. A future where he is no longer a fisherman but a shepherd, caring for & feeding Jesus' sheep & lambs. Sounds idyllic perhaps ...? Harmless, fluffy creatures. What could possibly go wrong ? But you only need to speak to anyone who has done any lambing or looked after sheep for any length of time, to know how challenging this new future was going to be...!

Having reminded Peter & the disciples about their times together, both good & bad, Jesus then makes it clear that the days ahead aren't going to be any easier. The good news of both suffering & glory on the way of the cross. No wonder Peter is keen to think about something else, anything else. He changes the subject to ask about 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. Jesus' simple response is to say: 'What's that got to do with you?... YOU follow me'...

I can't help but be reminded of the time we were looking after our grandson, Luca, recently. In the last few weeks Luca has really found his feet, as he demonstrated here last Sunday. Luca loves nothing more than walking round & round, the garden – or indeed anywhere... So, his mum & dad have just bought some reins. Great invention these... You're merrily walking along a street in Dunmow, (or Hemel) to get to the park. And suddenly Luca gets distracted. He veers off in another direction, exploring a grubby side alley. Or looking to cross the road... ! A good illustration of how we can be with Jesus... We are all so easily distracted from the way aren't we? 'Luca follow ? No I gonna lead!...' ' WE follow? No, we know better...

We all do this don't we? - 'What about them LORD?' 'What about him or her – surely you have plans for them don't you LORD? Or, surely you will put them straight LORD?'... When Luca stops looking ahead & gets distracted to one side or another – that's often when he falls over or bumps into something... I have to say, as much as we loved looking after him, we were mighty relieved to hand him back to his mum & dad - before he collected any more bumps & bruises... !

That bright & new morning Jesus says to Peter: "YOU follow me...". And he calls us to do the same. And just as he did with Peter that day, He asks of us, today: "Do you love me?"... "Do you love me - more than anything else?"... Following Jesus only makes any sense if we love Jesus. Do you love Jesus?... Then you will follow him, wherever that takes you...

As with Peter & the other disciples that day by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus comes to us. Like those disciples in the boat, none of us are far from the shore. The Kingdom of God is near, among us. We are all being called to share a meal with Jesus, today. To bring what we have & all that we are to Jesus. And Jesus calls us together, to equip us together, for a new mission. Carey has agreed our MAP. This includes launching an Alpha course this autumn, to share our faith with others around a table. Please pray about this... And today, we come to break

bread & share wine together. To remember all that God has done & to celebrate all that God will do - in & through our Saviour, Jesus. Thanks b 2 God.