

**Centre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
The Rev Dr Scott Everett Couper
April 4, 2021, 8:00am
Easter Sunday 'Son Rose' Service**

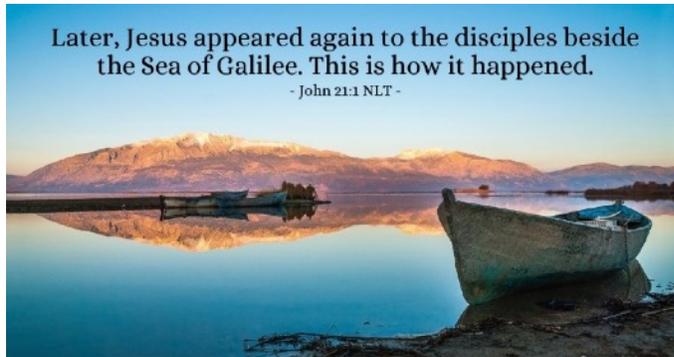
"Tasting Fellowship: Breakfast with the Resurrected Jesus"

John 21:1-14



Two weeks ago, Matt Dean preached a profound sermon that taught us that when we are dependent on visual stimuli only, we are spiritually impoverished. How right he is! Matt has focused on silence and on breathing to help us attune ourselves to the divine. I know Priscilla Svec, as a physical therapist, is acutely aware of the mind and body connection and can teach us much about the sense of touch. Bonnie Girvan is another of Centre Church's spiritual leaders who will, starting next week, begin a Guided Meditation service that will precede our regularly scheduled 10:00am worship. I can attest to you that the sound of her voice enables us to be more fully spiritually grounded.

This morning, inspired by Matt, Priscilla, and Bonnie, I would like to focus on taste. My favorite resurrection story is from the Gospel of John, chapter 21.



Jesus Appears at the Sea of Galilee

1After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested *Himself* in this way. **2**Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. **3**Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will also come with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.

4But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5**So Jesus said to them, “Children, you do not have any fish, do you?” They answered Him, “No.” **6**And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find *a catch*.” So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. **7**Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped *for work*), and threw himself into the sea. **8**But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net *full* of fish.

9So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread. **10**Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.” **11**Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. **12**Jesus said to them, “Come *and* have breakfast.” None of the

disciples ventured to question Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. [13](#) Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise. [14](#) This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. So, now, taste the smoked fish and bread that I serve you this morning for breakfast.



When I was in South Africa, it was around the *braai* that intimacy occurred. A *braai* is a ‘barbeque’. I apologize to Matt and Ella, and my other vegetarian and vegan comrades, but South Africa, I read at once, is the second largest consumer of meat *per capita* in the world (second only to Argentina, I think). The *braai* in South Africa is where people fellowship, bond, know one another, talk, debate, laugh, lament, and therefore where people build relationship.



When I hear of Jesus, cooking fish over coals, I imagine the disciples and Jesus sitting around the fire and just enjoying being together – like ‘old times’. It was the smoked fish and the bread, the sense of taste, that I suspect in part drew the disciples back into relationship with the Christ.

This Easter, we look forward to the end of the COVID pandemic that has ravaged our country for over a year now. We look forward to reuniting with friends and family. I crave reuniting with all of you in the sanctuary for worship and in your homes for meals. When we are able to reunite, let us not confine ourselves as faithful Christians dedicated to this church to Long-Range Planning Team *meetings*, Deacon’s *meetings*, and Council *meetings*. Let us, when it is safe, make a conscious effort to invite as many friends and members of Centre Church to our homes to talk, laugh, fellowship, eat, and drink.



Let us be Marys and sit at one another’s feet, rather than Marthas who only work (Luke 10:38-42). The disciples, I believe, were as much if not more, friends with, rather than disciples of, Jesus. I remember once being invited with my son Micah

to Michael and Heidi Mario's home for a *braai*. It was a blessing. It was a joy. I learned a lot. You know, when I was at their home, it was worship.



And so it was with Jesus and his friends on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. The disciples, over fish and bread, were worshipping again with their friend, Jesus. May the spirit of Christ live within us as we seek means, not so much as fellow servants of Centre Church, but more so as friends, to enjoy fellowship with and love for one another.

This is the word of God, and it was delivered to the people of God, and the people of God responded: "Amen!"