

John 21:1-19 Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred metres off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Readings COCU33C

It is not possible to live every day on the 'high' of Easter Day. Great moments of faith are often followed by the shadow of doubt and a wistful longing for clarity of understanding. This is one of the reasons that the Sunday after Easter is termed 'Low Sunday' and the Sundays that follow allow us to explore some aspects of living the Christian life in the ordinary of every day.

Psalm 30

Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness A Song at the dedication of the temple.

The Psalm allows us to explore something of the ebb and flow of the life of faith. It's not all about Easter confidence and conviction; it is also a life which features hesitation and doubt. The Psalmist has experienced all sorts of feelings which are nothing short of a description of melancholy and misery. It invites us to see how depression can overtake any one of us. The Psalmist describes "being lifted out Sheol" – a place of darkness and shadow – and describes weeping that is transformed into joy, mourning that gives way to dancing and the hidden face of God being restored to view.

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

**Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.**

For God's anger is but for a moment; God's favour is for a lifetime.

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

As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."

By your favour, O Lord, you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication:

"What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?"

Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?

Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me! O Lord, be my helper!"

You have turned my mourning into dancing;

you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Revelation 5:11-14

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Acts 9: 1-6 The Conversion of Saul

Saul is a public opponent of this new Jesus movement. He has been an activist in the movement to stamp out this unorthodox and, in his view, unwelcome proposal that the Messiah has been encountered in the crucified Christ. The very idea of a crucified God was anathema to the ultra-orthodox Saul (find the expression of his early theological understanding of the cross in 1 Corinthians Ch 1), so any approach to these verses cannot underestimate the significance of the "turnaround" that we see in the life of the man whose conversion even brings about a change of name - from Saul to Paul.

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

Dialogue between Saul and Paul (*inspired by the events in Acts 9*)

I am Saul

I am Paul

I am passionate about my faith

I am passionate about my faith

I will work tirelessly for what I believe in

and I recognize that may hurt others

in order to keep the faith

I will work tirelessly for my beliefs too

and I also recognize that doing so can hurt others

but living the faith is never going to be easy

I have made a choice to put myself on the line for my faith
and if those who are out to destroy the faith get in the way,

then I will move them out the way

I have made a choice to put myself on the line for my faith

and will continue to do so

even in the face of those who want to move me out the way

I am Saul

I am Paul

Faith is everything to me.

It must be kept true at all costs.

It is too vital to my culture,

my traditions and how I understand life

Faith is everything to me.

It must stand true at all costs.

It is too vital for the Good News

for traditions and culture to stand in the way

of this new understanding of life

I will seek out those who destroy the faith

I will seek out those who limit the faith

I will keep our borders pure

and our traditions clean from contamination

I will cross every border

and welcome in Jew and Gentile, slave and free

I am Saul

I am Paul

I will work for the authorities

I will work for Jesus Christ

I will hold tight to the church

I will break open the church

I will keep the faith pure

I will keep the faith growing

I will be the death of Christianity

And I will be its life

I am Saul

I am Paul

(Source: Rev. Roddy Hamilton, Minister of New Kilpatrick Church)