

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, Faith Family**Title: Why Did Jesus Send the Disciples to Galilee?****Lesson: John 21:1-19 NRSV**

21 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ² 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. ³ 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.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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 yards off.

⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ 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." ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

(Slide 1) It's the third Sunday of Easter. Let's say Easter's greeting: Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. Today's text is John 21. Last Sunday's message was about the resurrected Jesus, his disciples and Thomas. At the end of Gospel John, Ch 20:30-31 says: ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."

It's like the epilogue of a book. However, we do know that there are 21 chapters in the Gospel of John. In fact, chapter 20 was the last written by the author of the Gospel of John. And chapter 21 was added by later editors. Why was chapter 21 added? This was because chapter 21 was important.

(Slide 2) The setting of John 21 is Galilee. Let's read together Matthew 28:7 and Mark 16:7: ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

As we read, the risen Jesus wanted to meet his disciples in Galilee. Galilee was a city of mourning and poor people. In other words, Galilee was a humble and lowly place. After the disciples met the risen Jesus, they followed his instructions and came to Galilee. They may have thought that Jesus would be waiting for them once they arrived in Galilee, but they didn't meet him. Jesus sent them to Galilee, but they did not know what to do in Galilee. Looking back on the moment they met the resurrected Jesus, they may have wondered whether it was real or not. Thus the disciples misunderstood Jesus' intention to send them to Galilee.

While waiting for Jesus, Simon Peter said to the other disciples: "I am going fishing." Then the other disciples also agreed to follow him. They came to Galilee to meet Jesus, but they didn't know what to do there and why Jesus sent them there. They were still confused between Jesus' death and resurrection.

(Slide 3) Because Jesus knew everything, he had sent his disciples to Galilee, where they first met Jesus. This is because Galilee was the starting point of their faith journey. The seven disciples including Simon Peter struggled all night to catch fish. There was a stranger, who had been watching them all night, but it was dark and they had no idea who he was. Maybe it was not because it was dark, but because they were engrossed in catching fish, and as they went through the

crucifixion of Jesus, they still had fear within them, so they did not recognize Jesus because they were spiritually dull.

Just after daybreak, the day was getting brighter. Then Jesus asked them. “Children, you have no fish, have you?” The disciples tried all night to catch fish, but in the end they didn't catch any fish. Then Jesus said to them: “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” The disciples followed Jesus' instructions and cast the net to the right, but this time there were too many fish to pull up the net. The Gospel of John records that 153 fish were caught in the net.

(Slide 4) Only then did the disciples realize that it was Jesus who had instructed them, and one of them said to Peter: “It is the Lord.” But, Peter was ashamed as he remembered that he had denied Jesus three times so when he saw Jesus again, he jumped into the sea and tried to hide himself.

When the disciples came to the shore, Jesus was preparing breakfast for them by making a charcoal fire. They ate the bread Jesus had prepared and the fish they caught. Peter must have felt a lot of shame when he saw the coals because when Jesus was carrying the cross and was heading to the execution table, he had denied Jesus three times, avoiding the cold in front of the coals.

(Slide 5) When they had finished breakfast, Jesus knew everything and asked Simon Peter: “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” Then Peter answered: “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.” Then Jesus said to him: “Feed my lambs.” Jesus asked Peter the same question again: “Simon son of John do you love me?” Then Peter answered: “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.” Then Jesus said: “Tend my sheep.” Jesus finally asked Peter: “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Then, when Peter learned that Jesus knew that he had denied him, he felt hurt and said: “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Then Jesus said: “Feed my sheep.”

(Slide 6) Let's read together verses 18-19: “¹⁸Very 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.” ¹⁹(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.””

(Slide 7) Why did Jesus send his disciples to Galilee? The first reason was to restore the passion and initial decision that the disciples had made when they first

met Jesus and promised to follow him. The second reason was that there were the Lord's sheep that Christians who experienced Jesus' resurrection have to feed and tend in the humble and lowly places like Galilee.

Jesus not only fed his disciples with bread and fish, but also gave them his flesh and blood. Jesus gave Peter the assurance of the resurrection by asking the same question three times. And Jesus said: "Follow me."

(Slide 8) What does "Follow me." mean? It means that to walk the way Jesus walked. Just as Jesus gave flesh and blood to his disciples, it is Jesus' intention that the disciples are to give flesh and blood to His sheep as well. You were all invited to the Lord's table and participated in the communion. To us, Jesus says: "Follow Me." So where are the Lord's sheep? They are in Galilee. They are also in lowly places like Galilee. Galilee means the places where the marginalized and the poor are. Where is Galilee for us today?

(Slide 9) One of my hobbies is watching movies. I like Netflix. I saw a movie called Hillbilly Elegy on Netflix a few months ago. The main character of this movie is J. D. Vance, a successful lawyer after graduating from law school at Yale University. The movie describes the life of Vance. He was born in the Rust Belt, a ruined industrial zone. He was raised by his mother after his parents divorced. At one time his mother was a nurse, but she became addicted to drugs, so she got fired, and her mood swings were so bad that she abused her son. The film portrayed the gloomy and insecure lives of the lower classes in America, and it helped me understand American culture more deeply.

(Slide 10) Going back to the question: Where is Galilee for us today? It is the places of the poor, the needy and the marginalized. Hillbilly described in the movie was Galilee. Galilee is still all around us. Jesus told us: "Feed my sheep" "Tend my sheep" "Follow me."

Friends, are you ready to walk the path Jesus walked? Are you ready to follow Jesus? Are you ready to go to Galilee? Just as Jesus gave us his flesh and blood; just as Jesus gave his bread and wine, so let us live a life of giving his sheep our flesh and blood.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. May we all experience the resurrection and walk the journey of faith in the resurrection of Christ by the grace of God. Amen.