

**Don't Quit Your Job**  
[Text - John 21:1-17]

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I find the beginning of this morning's New Testament reading a bit strange, and a little anticlimactic. On Easter morning, Jesus' followers discover that his tomb is empty, and are told by heavenly messengers that he is alive and on the move! That evening, the Risen Christ miraculously passes through locked doors, to reassure those frightened followers that he is with them. The following week he does it again, this time inviting the doubting Thomas to touch his nail-pierced hands, and to believe! Jesus then breathes Holy Spirit upon those amazed Apostles, empowering them to go into the world and do extraordinary things. And today the narrative picks up with Simon Peter boldly proclaiming, "I'm going...fishing!" [What?] The other disciples look at him and say... "Cool dude! Count us in!" [Really?]

After all that's happened to them, taking an overnight fishing trip seems a little weird, and a bit boring; but maybe it's exactly what those disciples need. You can only ride an emotional roller-coaster of adrenalin for so long, before you need to take a break. And what better way for those fishermen to do so, than to go back to what's familiar to them - to get in their boat and bring-in a nice catch of catfish or a huge haul of halibut. They probably figure that after all they've been through, this fishing trip will be an easy, relaxing success; however it doesn't work-out that way. They fish all night, yet they can't even catch a cold!

Now maybe the reason the disciples go back to their fishing, is because they're feeling *adrift* - that they're *floundering* - that they're confused, frustrated, and discouraged. This fishing expedition may be a sign of their inner angst; yet it can also be an outward sign of encouragement - for them, as well as for us.

Those disciples go fishing because it gets them out of the house, it gives them something to do, and it's a big part of who they are. So while they're waiting for a clearer understanding of what God might have in store for them, why *not* go fishing? I think the same reasoning can hold true for you and me today - but don't rush-off to grab your fishing gear just yet!

What I'm saying, is that when you and I aren't quite sure where - or how - our Sacred Source is leading us, then faithfully going-about our everyday tasks is an excellent way to be available, ready and open. After all, it was when Peter and the others were performing their "day jobs" as fishermen, that they first heard Jesus' call to follow. And, quite fittingly, when they return to that familiar setting, they once again discover that Christ's Living Presence is still there among them. The same can be true for you and me today.

The compelling power of the Resurrection, is that it beckons us to go back to our everyday life with its ups and downs, its struggles and successes, its tremendous joys, and even its terrible tragedies - but to go back *realizing* that something is profoundly different! We can "fish all night and catch nothing" - we can seek answers to Life's complex problems and come up completely empty-handed. Yet like those first followers, when you and I finally look up from our own boatload of troubles, frustrations and anxiety, we can see a welcoming figure on the distant shore, and we hear an encouraging voice calling-out to us to persevere. So like those first disciples, we give it one more try; and lo-and-behold, we find that our net is now full, and that our lives actually do make sense.

We remember that the Risen Christ is *still with us*:  
The Compassionate One, whose only crime is believing that he truly is a Child of God, and that every person truly is his sister and brother - and deserves to be treated as such.

The Gracious One, who is here for us, as he was for those first disciples - waiting on the shore with a glowing fire and a warm welcome.

Just as Jesus prepares a special meal for them, he also prepares a Welcoming Table for you and me - a Table where all are invited and included, and where each person's gifts and contributions are appreciated and valued. And just as Jesus invites those disciples to share their catch-of-the-day, he also invites you and me to offer the fruits of our labors to make the meal complete. "Your efforts *are* important," Jesus says, "Because now it is *your* hands and hearts that will share Divine Love with others. And if you truly love me and want to follow my path, you *will* feed my sheep and tend my lambs. You will treat every hungering and hurting person around you with the utmost compassion and care. You'll learn to forgive your enemies, just like I did. You will let your light shine-through the darkness of divisiveness and discord. And thereby, you will come to know the tremendous joy of living fully and freely as beloved children of our One Heavenly Parent!"

The Good News of Easter can completely change our approach to Life, by reminding us that every person we meet is a precious offspring of the Eternal Source of Life. It infuses us with the power to faithfully follow the Way of Jesus Christ in our day-to-day living. Whether we're carrying-out our duties at the office, or caring for a person in need, Christ's Living Presence can transform our task into something special and sacred.

Today, the Easter message reminds us that Divine love *continues* to rise-up and meet us every day - no matter where we are! It strengthens our spirits, so that you and I can face Life's storms and struggles with an amazing confidence and peace. And like those faithful followers of old, you and I can find genuine purpose and joy in our work, in our worship, in our relationships, and even in our leisure activities. So go ahead and find your fishing pole,

grab you golf clubs, [or put on your snow skis], plant your garden,  
and play with your grandkids! Your life is God's greatest gift to  
you - so enjoy it, embrace it, enrich it - and then share it freely  
and fully, and make it count *every day!*