



Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

Wednesday Prayer – 3rd Sunday of Easter

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. John 21:14-17

What is Jesus up to here with Peter? After Peter's recent denial of Jesus (three times), Jesus is now asking (three times) whether Peter loves him. Dr. Karoline Lewis¹ sees this not simply as a chance for Peter to be forgiven, or to be reconciled to Christ, but as a way for Peter to accept who Jesus needs him to be. Peter has gone back to the comforts of fishing, denying who he is as a disciple of Jesus.

Sometimes we want to deny who we are – it's just too hard. Maybe we are leaders and the leading is hard. Maybe we are not sure who we are and feel pressures and expectations laid upon us. Maybe we are in situations that we feel are shameful and we're fearful of what might happen when we leave. So we deny who we really are, and live a life God did not intend for us.

By asking Peter to claim his love for Jesus (three times), he is challenging Peter to stop the denial of who he is meant to be. He is asking Peter to stop playing it safe and work for justice – "Feed my sheep." We can step into this challenge as well, working to step out of the comforts we create around us, and instead challenge systems that are unjust, reach out to understand and connect with communities that have been marginalized, love Jesus and our neighbor enough to tend to these needs.

Dear God our shepherd, lead us to tend to the needs of those who are marginalized, at risk of being exploited or trafficked, or those who have suffered under these oppressions. Help us to stop denying who we are as your disciples and start to accept and believe we are what you need to do this work in the world. Amen.

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