

Fishing Eucharist

I love the story of Jesus sharing breakfast on the beach with his disciples. The disciples, bewildered and bereaved after the events of the crucifixion and rumours of resurrection still haven't twigged what they are supposed to do, so they do what seems natural and return to their old way of life and go fishing! It takes a stranger on the beach (a carpenter by trade) to tell them they are casting their nets in the wrong place. I have put this story of the disciples alongside our own story. We are tired and worn out, have worked hard and done our best and feel overwhelmed by the needs around us! But then there is the wonderful interchange between Jesus and Peter. How bad must Peter have felt to be asked three times, "Do you love me", mirroring the three times he denied Jesus? But Jesus affirms Peter in his ministry of looking after and leading the disciples to share the good news. Likewise, we are affirmed in our ministry of sharing the good news in our community.

Simon Peter, let down your nets

but we've been working all night
and caught nothing
we're weary
and ready to rest

let down your nets
into the darkness of the deep

but this is my trade
and its no secret
that you don't fish in the deep
while the sun is still up

it is because you're tired that I ask you
to let down your nets

the timing is wrong
and the tide has turned
but we'll humour the carpenter's son
and cast our nets one again.

What is it that Jesus would ask us to do?

but we've worked hard
been faithful in our journey
we're weary
ready to take it easy

What is it that Jesus would ask us to do?

but this is who we are
and its no secret
that you don't regenerate a community
pushing chips across a casino table

What is it that Jesus would ask us to do?

we've tried new things
welcomed the stranger

but we'll humour the carpenter's son
and open our doors once again

Of course we can handle the nets on our own
we're proud of our skills
and fish by ourselves
but this catch is huge
and we can't cope
we need more hands to pull on the rope

we look at our journey
of where we have been
its high points and low points
and the bits in between
not heroes and heroines
so much as a team effort

the nets are tearing
the boats lie heavy in the water
the catch landed precariously
despite a huge team effort
boats groaning
with the weight of silvery fish

we're stretched to breaking point
busy with drop-ins and clubs
funding seems precarious
ever more reliant on working together
church groaning
with the needs of so many people

so light up a fire
on the pebbles of the beach
call out our families
to join in the feast
yet discontent niggles
as questions ripple

so celebrate the journey
and who we've become
as we gather each week
to join in the feast
yet uncertainty niggles
and questions ripple

no looking back to mistakes of the past
no staying with habits that can't last
together we continue a journey of faith
confronted by challenges
and a teacher's crazy ideas
investing the future with miraculous signs
of God's generosity for all humankind

On the beach after Jesus was betrayed by a close friend
On the beach after Simon Peter had denied him
On the beach the disciples had fled with fear
Jesus gathered them to him on the shore of the lake
an impromptu table spread for a breakfast feast

Nets broken
bread broken
body broken

fish overflowing
wine overflowing
blood overflowing

Simon Peter do you love me?
Simon Peter do you love me?
Simon Peter do you love me?

You know that I love you
You know that I love you
You know that I love you

Feed my lambs
Feed my lambs
Feed my lambs

This is my body broken for you
Do this in remembrance of me
This is my blood poured out for you
Do this in remembrance of me

[share bread and wine]

"Stir then the waters, Lord, stir up the wind.
Stir the hope that needs to be stretched.
Stir up the love that needs to be ground,
Stir the faith that needs to be fetched.

James and Andrew, Peter and John
And the women who walked by his side,
Hear how the Lord calls each one by name
Asking all to turn like the tide."

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