



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 8

Sunday 3rd May 2020

By the Seashore

John 21:1-14

O, I do like to be beside the seaside

At the moment chance would be a fine thing – we managed walks along the cliff top and along the beach going East and then West until we were all evicted from our Caravan Park as they had to close during mid-March.

This passage did evoke memories for me: verse 9: *‘When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.’*

Often later during the day when we have been to the beach we see people cooking on portable (and not so portable!) barbecues; our dog always finds this interesting! Often there are people fishing from the beach and we see fishing boats further out to sea or checking their lobster pots. All very evocative of accounts found in the Gospels.

This passage contains an account of the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples in Galilee after His resurrection. Interestingly, the catch of 153 fish is not described as a miracle nor is it intended to be seen as such. Around the Sea of Galilee it is still possible to watch people fishing either in boats or from the shore. Often there will be an observer on the beach who, with a different view of the sea, can possibly see a shoal of fish that the fishermen cannot and therefore can direct them where to cast their nets. So this a very typical scene now as then. Jesus was able to see a shoal of fish from the shore and was able to tell the Disciples where to cast the net.

Peter, being as impulsive as ever once he realised it was Jesus, jumped into the sea and headed for the beach as quickly as he could – he simply could not wait to get to Jesus. How keen are we to be in the presence of Jesus? There are those who really will be struggling at present as they find it easier to be with Jesus in their Church rather than anywhere else. I recall a vicar I knew some years ago now, and often when I called on him, I had to wait in the manse as he was in Church saying his daily prayers. Fortunately we do not need to be in Church to be with Jesus because He will come to us wherever we are. There have been times when we’ve been away on holiday that we have found local Churches holding a service on the beach for holidaymakers as well as themselves. One year in Criccieth, one fellowship even wheeled their harmonium down so their organist could lead the singing! Wonderful –

singing lots of Welsh hymn tunes. Perhaps one of the highlights of our holiday.

Maybe we need to keep times like those in mind whilst we are 'confined to barracks' to remind ourselves that in time things will return to normal. Turning to Jesus at times like these can bring comfort and help us to hold on to reality. Certainly hurrying to Jesus was a huge help to Peter and so it can be to us.

'May the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face upon you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24 – 26)

Best wishes - Roger

Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord;
my spirit waits for you, O living Word.

Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me,
as when you blessed the bread by Galilee.
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace, my All in all!

You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
your holy word the truth that rescues me.
Give me to eat and live with you above;
teach me to love your truth, for you are love.

O send your Spirit now, dear Lord, to me,
that he may touch my eyes and make me see.
Show me the truth made plain within your Word,
for in your book revealed I see you, Lord.

Mary A Lathbury 1841 – 1913 Psalter Hymnal, 1987

