Last week, we read about how Jesus appeared amongst the disciples behind a locked room a few days after his resurrection. Jesus showed them his scars and nail prints on his body, then the disciple recognized Him. That was the first time that Jesus appeared to his disciples and certainly would not be his last.

Our text today takes us to another familiar post-resurrection scene, as many of the disciples had decided to go back to the Galilee region, as they were trying to decide what were they going to do next in their lives. Should they continue to do what Jesus taught them to do….to be evangelists and to share the Gospel? Or should they go back to where they came from and do what they knew best. To many of them, it would mean going back to fishing. But that’s too risky and requires too great of personal sacrifice. Perhaps they should just stay low-profile and go back to their former life life – life before they encountered Jesus!

In verse 3, Simon Peter, who was the impulsive one and the self-proclaimed leader among the disciples, told the rest of the disciples that “**he was going fishing**”. I don’t think that’s what Jesus had in mind why He called them one-by-one to lay down their lives, including their family and livelihood, to pick up their cross and follow Him.

How soon had these disciples forgotten of what Jesus had instructed them that instead of catching fish, they would now be catching people, like nothing had happened over the last three years. Seriously? Haven’t they learned and remembered what Jesus had taught them?

Perhaps like many of those disciples, some of us might have had similar struggle concerning what we should do in terms of our lives. The career change that Jesus called upon the disciples was more than just a change of profession. It was a change of one’s perspective towards life and a lifelong commitment of one’s calling. There was to be no turning-back when it comes to our response to God’s calling in our lives. God will use us in anyway God sees fit, even when God’s circumstances lead us to unforeseen plans, not what WE want but what God wants in us.

Recently I met a young woman who by the grace of God, has had her life dramatically reversed. Rebecca who’s in her mid-upper 20’s, has gone through various struggles and challenges in her life. She likes to consider herself as a dreamer or an imaginer who senses God’s presence and calling in her through various gifts and passions in life. Encouraged by many of her friends and colleagues in various circles, Rebecca took a bold leap of faith by enrolling herself into the *Master of Divinity* program at *Union Seminary*. Her dream is that one day she may pursue her calling in utilizing her God given gifts in some capacity of creative ministry, most likely be not the traditional kind of ministry because of her free-spirited personality, but still it is still ministry nevertheless. No one really knows for sure how that might look like or does Rebecca herself. But she was willing to take the initial plunge, to see how deep that water might be and to see where and how far the current might take her downstream. Rebecca knows that she is not doing this all by herself. There are others who are standing by her side as well.

Rebecca has taken somewhat of a non-traditional path in order to discover her own sense of calling from God. Although she did grow up in a traditional church setting, but as she became older, she found church to be “dull and boring” and not a place where she could see herself fitting in at all. As a result, after her “confirmation” she had lost interest in her faith and began turning herself away from God altogether. During her teenage and early 20’s, Rebecca opted to take the “silent exodus” from the church that she grew up in. She went on to pursue her “other” personal dreams and ambitions, just like many young people would do, but unfortunately that didn’t seem to work out either with her failed marriage, numerous job changes. Nothing seemed to be working for Rebecca.

But somehow just as Rebecca hit the bottommost part of her life, by the grace of God, she turned to God and she prayed. She prayed that God will rescue her and give her a clear vision and a path that she should take. **She might have given up on God in her plan, but God has not given up on her in God’s plan.**

Rebecca knew that she is a child of God and that she has been called to use her various gifts and passions to glorify God and to fulfill God’s purpose in her life. That’s what this phase of inquiry and discernment all about. **It’s about placing God in the proper place, above all things, and feeding others as God has fed us spiritually through our many gifts of grace and blessings.**

Most likely Rebecca will encounter more bumps and hurdles along the way, as she re-dedicated her life in Christ once again going forward. But through her newfound faith, her trust and hope in the resurrected Lord, she is confident that the Holy Spirit will lead her and guide her through her faithful obedience as Christ’s disciple.

When our committee was interviewing her, Rebecca summed up her calling this way that her **deep hunger is to be fed spiritually so that she may in turn feed others as well. That’s life-giving.**

There are many sheep that God has prepared for Rebecca to feed and to take care of. That’s part of Rebecca’s discernment as she begins the next phase of her spiritually journey.

Just like those disciples who had initially said YES to God when God called them by the Sea of Galilee to follow him. They made the decision to drop everything and followed Christ wholeheartedly.

Somehow these disciples had short-term memory and were NOT thinking “outside the box”. **They were living through their own perspective in life instead of living through God’s perspective and God’s will.** Their focus was still living in the past, nostalgically thinking that things will go back to what it once was. If they could go back home, everything would be fine. Or they will just sit here and wait…wait till Jesus comes back to take them up with him. But unfortunately that’s not what Jesus had in mind for the disciples and for us today. Jesus wanted the disciples (and us as well) to live up to our calling and our commitment of following him, even when He is no longer with us…physically, but not spiritually.

When Jesus came back calling out the disciples when they were least expected. Many of the disciples did not recognize who Jesus was, the disciples were asked by Jesus to cast the net on the other side of the boat because they had been fishing all day and they’ve caught nothing. So they responded to Jesus, “Sure, why not? What have we gotten to lose?” And lo and behold, their net was full of fish…all 153 of them. Surprisingly the net was so full and yet it was not torn. But it wasn’t until Jesus sat down, engaged with them in conversation, broke bread with the disciples, then they recognize him. **This First Break** **after the resurrection by the seashore was a mirror image of the Last Supper that Jesus spent with his disciples before his passion journey to the cross.**

Furthermore, as Jesus was talking with the disciples, he asked Simon Peter, “Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?” He asked Simon Peter three times just to make sure….probably aware of Peter’s fickle heart after he had denied Jesus three times. Each time Peter answered, “yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” But each time, Jesus replied in a slightly differently way, **“Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, and feed my sheep”.**

It appears what Jesus was saying is that it’s not enough that we say we love Jesus with our lips, we must back that up with our actions initiated from our hearts. It’s not enough that we simply catch the fish or keep an eye on the sheep, and make sure they don’t wander off. We must feed them, nurture them, protect them, and help them discern God’s calling in them and fulfill their purpose. The only way we can do that is through LOVE. This is part of our calling in Christ as well.

**There is no turning back in our lives, once we’ve made such total commitment to follow Christ. We cannot say that we love God without loving others, especially those who have hurt us, insulted us, and antagonized us. Christ has made a promise that He would feed us, like the sheep and we must likewise do the same to others. *“Feed my lambs, Tend my sheep, and Feed my sheep”.***

By the virtue of our baptism, we have declared our total and unyielding commitment in Christ to be Christ’s disciples. No longer do we live for ourselves, but we live for Christ. The Christian faith journey and discernment is a life-long commitment and a work-in-progress. **We live as the Holy Spirit leads us in order to honor Christ’s calling to feed His sheep and take care of His lambs.**

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.