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A Breakfast to Die For!
John 21:1-14

The Rev. Dr. Gareth Icenogle
West Side Presbyterian Church

There are lots of instances in scripture where when there's food offered somebody or something dies to provide it. When I moved to the east coast in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania one of the expressions I heard many times about excellence was, "that is to die for." An east coast expression evidently. Never heard it in California. We don't die for things in California. The purpose of that statement is that this is so good I'm willing to sacrifice myself in order to get it. My question for you today is what is so good in your life that you're willing to sacrifice yourself in order to get it?

Back in the middle '80s my wife was a vice president of a bank in Texas. I was a pastor and one of the things I enjoyed doing was going on business trips with her. Because on those business trips she was not my spouse, I was her spouse. I was the husband of Vida Icenogle. One of those particular trips was to a wonderful hotel in Maui, Hawaii called the Hyatt Regency. Maybe you've been there.

I will never forget that for many reasons. But particularly for two instances when I went out to be with her I went out with the idea that I would have some time alone while she was at the business meetings. I went by the pool in the morning. There was nobody there and I started laying out by the pool on this nice cool but kind of balmy

morning and I had no more but began to read a book that I heard this voice call out across the pool. “Gareth is that you?” I said, “Oh no somebody knows me.” I had come all the way across the country and the Pacific Ocean to be discovered by somebody who was from the same church where I was in Dallas, Texas. No matter where you go, where I go, I can’t hide. There are lots of obvious reasons for that.

But one of memories I have of that moment was my wife and I having breakfast together in a beautiful open-door space that looked out into a pond called the Swan Court. The big doors opening up to look over the Pacific Ocean as well, and this huge buffet of food. Lots and lots of food. If you’re getting hungry because I’m telling the story we’ll make this as short as possible. The food was any kind of breakfast food you could possibly imagine. Handmade, homemade crepes and omelets, breads of all kinds. But the thing that was the most outstanding were the fresh fruits and the fresh fruit juices. They were to die for. I’ll never forget that breakfast.

Back in 1961 there was a movie that won Academy Awards. It was called Breakfast at Tiffany’s. If you remember that movie with Audrey Hepburn and George Papard and several other wonderful actors, a film by Blake Edwards on a book by Truman Capote. Lots of wonderful history attached to that movie. But the heart of that movie was the beginning of it when Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly – love that name – drove up in a Taxi in front of Tiffany’s and as she was drinking her coffee and having her danish she stood in front of the Tiffany windows and admired what she

Gospel in the German context to come and die. And he himself died to feed the people of God.

Bonhoeffer calls upon us as many people from scripture do, what are you willing to die for? Who are you willing to die for? Come and die is what Jesus calls us to do. And the invitation is not just because this life is all there is but because this life is the first breakfast of the rest of eternity. And life is just the beginning. And that’s the invitation that we have for ourselves to come and dine, to come die, and to come and share Christ’s love with other people around us. That is something that’s worth dying for.

Let’s pray.

Gracious God you bid us to come and dine and to come and die. We ask that you would give us the courage and the passion to live life with your purpose and your presence. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

vite you to sing it today. But there's one thing important that's missing in that hymn. It is the fact that it isn't just about Jesus feeding us and our needs. It is that Jesus at the end of this event invites Peter in a very dramatic way to feed his sheep, to feed his lambs. Peter do you love me? Yes Lord I do. Peter do you love me? Yes Lord I do. And even on the third time Jesus saying Peter do you love me? And Peter in a rather hurt way Lord you know I love you. Jesus' main question to us is if you love me then feed my sheep.

We have already talked today about the importance of being feeders of people who have needs – feeding them physically, feeding the homeless, helping those people who do not have enough in life. We are committed to doing that. But that's the beginning. It's not just feeding them physically; it's feeding them in every way. It's feeding them emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, biblically. Feeding them the presence of Christ. Begins with the physical and is culminated in the spiritual fullness of what we need to feed other people.

We at Westside Presbyterian Church are committed to eating at Jesus' table and then turning and feeding those around us – the fullness of life as Christ gives it to us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called the cost of discipleship and in that book he has a phrase that's often repeated. It's not come and dine, it's come and die. Bonhoeffer wrote that not knowing it at the time but maybe having a sense of it that Jesus himself would ask him to lay down his own life to feed those who were faithful to the

saw inside that beautiful store. Holly Golightly, named because she in her life was not attached to anything. She stayed disconnected from everything as much as possible. And in her disconnectedness she refused to have furniture in her home or even name her cat. She said I'll name my cat when I feel that I'm connected to something really important in my life and life is stable and worth living.

Holly would often times get what she called the mean reds. – that sense of desperateness when she was alone and she was afraid and she didn't know what to do and she would say I go to Tiffany's and I look in the window and somehow the experience at Tiffany's gives me a sense that life's going to be okay. Breakfast at Tiffany's for her was the point of restoration in her life. It was what in a sense she lived for and that wasn't much.

Breakfast as we see today in this scene with Jesus and his disciples is on the beach of the Lake of Tiberius, commonly known to most of us as the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is there on the shore. The disciples have fished all night and they have caught nothing. Jesus calls to them from the shore and names the reality that they've experienced. You've caught nothing have you? And he tells them to fish on the other side of the boat. In the meantime Jesus is preparing a breakfast for them. Now this according to John is one of the three times that Jesus appears to the disciples after the resurrection. Jesus appears to the disciples so that they will know that his death has not been the ending point for their lives. And that discovery changes them forever.

When you meet the resurrected Christ his presence in your life will change you forever. And the message is that Jesus doesn't have us try to find him but Jesus goes out to the Sea of Galilee to find the disciples in the midst of whatever they're doing at that moment in time. He meets them in the midst of their work. He meets them in the midst of their failures, their ordinary life. The resurrected Christ will meet us in the midst of the ordinary stuff of life even in our losses and our failures.

You have no fish do you? You have no money do you? You have no time to be with your family do you? You have no opportunities for a job do you? Those are the questions Jesus asks us and makes a comment that Jesus will help us discover life in the midst of those losses and failures. That is the power of the resurrected Christ – that Jesus will meet us where we do not expect Christ to be.

My question for you today is what is important for you? Particularly when you are in a sense of loss and detachment from life. What are you willing to die for? What are you willing to sacrifice your life to gain? When the disciples lost Jesus their investment was in fishing. We'll go out and fish all night even if we don't catch anything. We'll die fishermen if we have to. But Jesus catches our attention and says you know that may a good thing to die for from your perspective but that's not ultimate goodness to die for.

So what is important to you? It is not so much where Jesus meets them – on the shore of the sea – or even what they eat – barbequed fish and warm bread. Or

that Jesus even prepared the meal for them and charcoal and where did he get the food? Did Jesus go out and actually collect the wood and light it on fire and prepare the fire himself? Did Jesus actually go fishing and get the fish and then go shopping and make the bread? John doesn't describe any of that. Because what's important here is not the detail of all that. What is important here in the detail is not where they ate or what they ate but who invited them to have breakfast with them.

If I have to go back to the most important part of my having breakfast at that magnificent hotel in Maui, Hawaii it wasn't the food. It wasn't the beautiful waterfalls coming out of the lava rock or the scene of the Pacific Ocean. It was the fact that I had some specific quiet space to have breakfast with my wife during a very busy time in our life. It's not what but it's who.

What are you willing to have breakfast to die for? Or who are you willing to have breakfast with to die for? The whole purpose of the gospel story is to cause into the presence of the living God in Jesus Christ. It is not so much what we eat or where we are or what we experience. It is the reality of the resurrected Christ who meets us in the middle of the meal.

There's an old Gospel hymn called Come and Dine the Master Callesth Come and Dine. And emphasis on the fact that Jesus feeds us as disciples. I sang that hymn for years growing up in the Pentecostal tradition. I'm not going to in-