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This is an outline of my sermon text for **Fifth Sunday of Easter**, on **May 10, 2020**. My focus was on the Gospel lesson, **John 21:1-19**. + pBRC

*Grace to you, and God's peace as well! AMEN*

- As my time since answering the call to go into ministry has grown, I have developed more of a fellowship and empathy for the Apostle Peter.
  - Maybe I relate to him because I too have been slow to see the right answer and the right thing to do.
  - Or maybe, I come back to the fact that, if not for my father, I could have been much more like Peter, Simon Peter, also known as Cephus.
  - There is a legend in the Campbell side of my family dating way back to the late 1700's when great times a bunch great-grandpa Robert Cephus Campbell was given the choice to leave Scotland on a boat to North America or be beheaded.
    - Great times a bunch grandpa Robert Cephus Campbell got on a boat. When he landed in Nova Scotia, he married, and named his first-born son, Cephus Robert Campbell.
      - Cephus Robert moved to the west coast of Michigan & begat Robert Cephus, who begat Cephus Robert, & you see the tradition.
      - My father is was Robert. He broke with tradition and named me Brian; which probably made going to school a LOT easier than life may have been for little Cephus.
  - Besides almost sharing a not so popular name, I share with Simon Peter – Cephus, the ability to hold onto and dwell over my errors.
- I'm going to focus on the conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter.
  - I'm going to skip over the naked fishing, and the over-abundant catch, other than to say this shows that the abundant goodness that comes from Jesus in John's

Gospel did not end with his life. God continues to provide abundantly through the Risen Christ.

- In the Prologue of John's Gospel, we hear about grace upon grace.
- This exorbitant catch of fish shows God's grace – God's love, mercy, blessings and forgiveness – extend beyond Christ's life and death.
- God's abundant grace is ours forever and always more than we need.
- For a third time, the Risen Jesus Christ appears to his disciples. This time in Cana of Galilee, providing breakfast to them over a charcoal fire.
  - The only reference to an outdoor fire in the Gospels is in John 18:17-26.
    - Then, Peter stands near a charcoal fire in the High Priest's courtyard.
    - There, Peter three times denies being a follower of Jesus.
      - In John's Gospel, Peter is asked three times if he is a disciple of Jesus or if he is with Jesus. Three times, he says he is not.
      - In the Synoptic Gospels, Peter denies knowing Jesus. In John, he denies being a follower of Jesus.
  - So the question Jesus repeatedly asks isn't to embarrass or demean.
    - The question Jesus repeatedly asks isn't to provide forgiveness.
    - The question Jesus repeatedly asks is to question Peter's identity.
      - While Peter denied being Jesus' disciple, is he willing to be an Apostle – a sent out one – for Jesus, for the sake of the Gospel.
    - Jesus gives an opportunity to make up for each time Peter denied following him.
      - This isn't so much a call, or re-call, as it is a commissioning.
      - To be commissioned is to be given a task and the tools and abilities to carry out your mission.
        - How is Peter to tend and feed Jesus' sheep?
        - He is to love them. He is to love them as he loves Jesus, and has been loved by Jesus. He is to share God's love with them.
  - This is truly Lutheran passage.
    - Jesus doesn't ask Peter to prove his faith by taking care of the lambs and sheep.
    - Because Peter confesses his love and faith in Jesus Christ, Jesus asks - tells - him to act in response to that faith.
    - Jesus tells Peter SINCE you love me, live a life reflecting that love, feeding and tending to those who also love and have faith in Jesus.
  - God doesn't need for Peter to be reconciled. The other disciples, nor the church as a whole, do not need a reconciled Peter.
    - Peter needs to be reconciled.
    - Peter needs is to accept who Jesus needs him to be.

- Peter needs to be the leader he was, and has been groomed to be.
- Peter is the one charged to bring the Good News to the Gentiles.
- Peter is given the mission to feed hungry people with the nourishing word of God.
- Just as we know “Give us today our daily bread,” is not about only eating bread; feeding is not just about providing food.
  - It is about helping people with the necessities of life, shelter, sustenance and security. But everyone needs more than that.
  - They need to be valued, to know that they, and our lives, matter.
  - They need to know, and the world needs to be reminded, we are ALL beloved children of God, *imago Dei*, made in our Creator’s image.
- This is a story for those who have lost faith or denied their faith to know they are always welcomed.
  - This story helps all of us who have had our faith cycle up and down like a roller coaster to understand it is our problem.
    - We have always been welcome.
  - How are we to live out the call and commission we have as followers of Christ?
    - Like Peter, we are to love, and to allow ourselves to be loved.
    - We need to identify who the lambs and sheep are in our lives and in our communities, and find how we can feed and take care of them.
      - We, like Peter, need to embrace our identity.
        - We have been blessed so we can be a blessing.
        - We have been saved so we can serve.
        - We have been forgiven so we can give.
        - We are beloved by God so we can be God’s love to others.
  - I think I’m not the only one among us who is like Cephus.
    - I think we all have some lambs and sheep to tend to and to feed.
    - And let all of God’s people say ...

**Amen.**