

GOSPEL MESSAGE

May 1, 2022

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

The After Gospel

The gospel of Jesus is a wonder. It is *there*, it is *here*, it is *now*, rising up to meet us in the morning after, in the days after, in the years after . . . after all we'd hoped for, waited for, lived for. After all we'd dreaded or feared or suffered has taken leave, run its course, faded, or fled, the gospel of Jesus stays; it rises to find us in the morning.

All the scattered reports told in the four gospels, the reports of where and how Jesus showed up after the day of resurrection, by whom and with whom he was seen—and also not recognized—are a kaleidoscope of wonder. There is no pinning Jesus down, no single story. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each tell it a little—or a lot—differently: Jesus in Galilee, Jesus in Jerusalem, Jesus in a closed room, Jesus on an open road, Jesus talking with a woman, Jesus meeting with the men, Jesus at the sea, Jesus on the mountain. But what they all have to say with one accord is this: Jesus is *there*, is *here*, is *now* in a moment, the morning after, the days after, and the years after.

Nowhere is *after* a more beautifully affectionate wonder than on the shores of Tiberias, where Jesus had found disciples before, and where he now—again, still—finds them after.

“Children,” he calls to them out on the water (John 21:5). “Children.” Such intimacy in the way he beckons. “No fish?” All night empty nets. All night no fish. Then, the morning after: Jesus with a fire *there*, Jesus with fish *here*, Jesus with bread *now*. “Come.” After all their hoping and waiting and living together, the dread and fear and suffering they had shared together, Jesus follows them and finds them with their nets empty. “Come and have breakfast” (v. 12). This is the beautiful wonder of the gospel of Jesus for the morning after.

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