

**A Sermon for The Third Sunday after Easter  
May 4, 2025**



**Morning Prayer Rite Two  
Preacher - Charlyn Bridges**

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[Third Sunday of Easter – The Episcopal Church](#)

## BREAKFAST ON THE BEACH WITH JESUS

Having breakfast on the beach with Jesus is – for me – the ultimate Easter Sunrise Service.

The disciples, longing to do something normal, have gone fishing. They've cast their nets over the side of the boat through the night and have come up with nothing.

Someone from the shore asks about their catch and they tell him. "Nothing."

"Cast your net on the other side," he calls to them. Weary from the fatigue of a night of labor, they do as he said. The nets are so loaded with fish they had to drag the nets to shore. The nets were too heavy to lift into the boat.

It was then; the disciples knew that it was the Lord – their Lord – who was calling from the shore. He was alive and doing something normal. Jesus, who filled their nets after a night of exhaustive – and fruitless labor. Peter, got dressed for breakfast, but he couldn't wait for the boat. He belly-flopped into the sea and swam to shore. The others brought the boat and the fish to the feast. Someone counted the catch and reported 153 large fish – which should have broken their net – but didn't.

Wouldn't we love that? To have breakfast on the beach with Jesus? Bringing the boat to shore with nets full of fish would have been so familiar to my ancestors. I am descended from Sea People.

My great grandfather was a lighthouse tender, and my grandmother was born on a lighthouse island. The island has washed away but

the lighthouse is still there. A hurricane brought the family to shore and my great grandfather purchased 100 acres of waterfront property along Mobile Bay. That became to ancestral home. We'll be there is a few weeks with two more generations of our family.

My grandmother, Ann Reed, the lighthouse baby, grew up and married John Murrill, who had been orphaned when the sea claimed his father and brother when they were fishing, Family records list a birth date for both but the date of death couldn't be determined so the family Bible reads: "Lost at Sea" for both of them. Young John was adopted by an Episcopal priest, Gardner C. Tucker who shepherded the large family Ann and John Murrill would have.

My generation grew up knowing the dangers of working with and against the sea – in the deep sometimes overnight.

Growing up close to the water, my many cousins and I learned to respect the water and the creatures in it. We spent Summers barefoot and in swimsuits. When the adults needed a break from all us cousins, someone would look over the water and observe, "It's about time to check the crab lines."

That was our cue: we'd grab the big washtub and the poles with crab nets and head for the bluff that lead to the beach. On the way to the crab lines, we'd swim and talk. I loved listening to my older cousins talk. They were so wise! I wanted to grow up and be just like them. Once we got to the crab lines all talking stopped. We worked in silence. Through the water, we could see the crabs nibbling on salt meat suspended from string from the crab lines. We'd ease the net

under the crab and lift them into the washtub.

Back on shore, the adults would have pots of boiling water with spices, and we'd toss the crabs into the pot. A split second later, the crab would toss itself back out of the pot and onto the floor. We'd have to catch them and put them back into the pot with tongs. It was a rite of passage to do battle with an angry crab while you were barefoot.

But fishing with a cast net was reserved for the young men in our family. Tossing a cast net – weighted on the edges with lead weights took some serious muscle so when a boy reached a certain level of maturity, my grandmother would take them to the front porch of her house at 153 Canal Street and put a hook in the front porch column. From that hook, she would show each boy how to knit a cast net. They would take over when they got the hang of the stitch. When the net got to be a certain size, someone inside would melt lead weights to stitch into the edges to anchor the net.

In the bay, the fisherman would place a weight in his teeth and cast the net as far out as possible making sure to let the weight in his teeth go. As he pulled the net back in, he'd see his catch in the net and load his catch into a long bag he had over his shoulder.

The disciples would have had a trawl type of net, and it would have been important to keep the nets repaired or your catch would swim away through the holes..

Let's review where we are...

The disciples have struggled through the night and have come up

empty handed.

Jesus has filled their nets: they've made their catch. Jesus has taken care of their immediate needs.

He has fed them and has made his presence known to them.

Jesus had more in mind than visiting with his followers. His questions to Peter: "Do you love me?" which Peter affirmed again and again. Each time Jesus responded with "Feed my Lambs," "Tend My Sheep," Feed My Sheep?

Who were the lambs?

We are. We are here because someone told us the news of Christ's salvation for us. Before they told us, someone had also told them.

The salvation story goes back generations and can ultimately be traced to the disciples who began telling the story after the resurrection. The handful of disciples, in obedience to Christ, spent the rest of their lives teaching and leading people to Christ.

What if Jesus asked us the same question, "Do you love me?" Feed my lambs.

Do you love me? Tend my sheep.

Do you love me? Feed My Sheep.

I treasure this time with the risen Christ inviting his disciples to join him for breakfast on the beach. There is a song that we've sung from time to time you remember the words:

"You have come down to the lakeshore seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy

But only asking me to follow

Oh Jesus, you have looked into my eyes  
Kindly smiling you've called out my name  
On the sand I have abandoned my small boat  
Now with you, I will seek other seas.  
You know full well my possessions  
Neither treasure nor weapons for conquest  
Just these my fishnets and will for working  
Oh Jesus, you have looked into my eyes  
Kindly smiling, you've called out my name  
On the sands I have abandoned my small boat  
Now with you, I will seek other seas.  
Amen