

I would guess that twenty years ago today these kinds of questions were being asked all around the city. “Did you feel that? What was that? It sounded like something exploded?” It was 9:02 on April 19, 1995. Everyone who lived here in the city on that day can tell you where they were and what they were doing. They can tell you the story of how they first heard about the bombing. Almost automatically the first question was, “What building was it?” It was the Murrah federal building. It exploded and 168 people lost their lives while thousands were changed forever.

Peter and his associates were again fishing, this time not so much to make a living but to pass the time. They could tell you where they were when their master was crucified and when they heard he rose again. They could also remember promises from Jesus that he would meet them in Galilee, but where was it to happen? Not one of them knew exactly where. Twice they had encounters with the risen Christ both times having no trouble recognizing who it was. As we jump into the boat with them in the gospel on the Sea of Galilee it wasn't be so easy. You can almost hear them asking, who is it?

**It is the Lord
His Word says it all
His providing says it all**

If only fishing were as easy as just saying what Peter did, **“I’m going out to fish.”** The concept is relatively easy. Put some bait on a hook and dangle that hook in the water until a fish bites, jerk the line to set the hook, and reel the fish into the boat. Simple. If only. Any fishermen will tell you it’s anything but easy. You have to know which is the right bait at the right time, what type of fishing line will handle the fish you’re going for, and what other tackle will you need. In the moment you need to know just the right moment to jerk the line and just the right kind of reeling to successfully land the fish. Plenty of times it ends up just like it did for the disciples. You catch nothing.

Put yourself into the disciples’ boat. There’s Peter, Andrew, James, and John scattered around the boat. Each of them brings a wealth of experience. They’ve been at it all night. Now a stranger 400 feet away on the shore shouts advice. This isn’t another boat trying to help out some friends but a stranger on the shore who hasn’t been fishing all night. **“Friends, haven’t you any fish?”** Well, no they didn’t. But how did this stranger know? **“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”** You might look at the right side and say, “Oh, the right side, why didn’t we think of that? But how could he possibly know there’s fish there?” Yet something about the man’s words says it all.

That man was Jesus, though at the moment the disciples didn’t know that. John put things together after the net full of fish came up. **“It is the Lord.”** His Word says it all, the power he spoke with, the authority he carried off. The great number of fish they caught right where he said they would. When they listened and followed his Word they were successful. Fish filled the net so full they couldn’t haul it in.

But that was Jesus on a shoreline in the early first century. That was Jesus in the moment speaking to a certain group of guys about fishing. What about the 21st century world that we live in? What about our planning meetings or our personal ministry? Does Jesus’ words still carry the same authority? We might get to thinking we’re better equipped to handle making decisions about our lives. I know what I need and where I need to go. I know what job will be best for me or who I should marry. I don’t need to consult anyone else. If someone yelled from the street, go to this neighborhood or that, visit this member or that one, we wouldn’t necessarily listen. They don’t know our church like we do, the inner workings, and needs. Plus Jesus isn’t here when I need him, he doesn’t stand beside me, he isn’t giving me a hug. Maybe Jesus’ Word just doesn’t say it all anymore.

When the word went out on April 19, 1995 that the rescue operation had needs, the response from the city was immediate. People from all over brought whatever, batteries, gloves, food, water. They brought it even if they didn’t know who exactly needed it. They brought just based on the word that was put out. Jesus’ Word proves even more powerful. The disciples didn’t recognize Jesus, but his words were powerful and moved them to action. We don’t see Jesus, but we know he’s there by his Word. His powerful Word moves us to action. They might be simple words on a page, but they tell the story of rescue. God’s rescue of us. How your problems aren’t ever bigger than your Savior. His cross was just what you needed. Love lifted out of the grave to carry your sins away. God’s mercy in a resurrection bringing you through whatever problems you face. Powerful words that mend broken hearts, even after tragedy or loss.

And if God’s Word on the page didn’t seem simple enough, he combined it with simple elements like water in baptism. That washing was rebirth for you and me. Literally washing sins away and bringing you to faith. Light from God breaking into your darkened heart with forgiveness. More simple elements in bread and wine. They seem simple and it all seems easy. Receive these and receive forgiveness? What is easy for us because of God’s grace wasn’t easy for Christ Jesus. But he gave his life willingly so that through that supper you might receive his true body and blood and be assured of eternal promises. His Word without power? No action in our time? Hardly. The risen Christ Jesus has power and his Word says it all.

Some years ago I participated in a hiking trip through a state park in Tennessee. It was a boys group from the church where I was vicaring, that's like a pastor internship. The ages stretched from about nine years old all the way up to adults. Since there were younger ones we wanted it to be somewhat leisurely. The adults even decided to carry some extra poundage in our packs to make the trip easier on the littler guys. We figured a relatively flat trail with some modest incline would be just fine. Miles of hard hiking later with about 900 feet of elevation down and then 900 feet back up again carrying thirty five or more pounds on my back watching after those littler guys we reached the campsite. Needless to say we didn't end up on the right trail. We took the extreme hikers trail by accident. Finally at camp everyone just wanted to rest and have some dinner. But with no wood gathered, no fire going, and no tents set up we still had work to do.

Six tired and hungry men dragged their net full of fish back to the shore. Normally if they wanted breakfast they'd have to sort and clean the fish, gather firewood, and cook them. To their surprise **"they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread."** Breakfast was provided by Jesus. At this point everyone knew it was him. No one asked who he was. This was all clearly a miracle. Just a few weeks earlier he died on the cross. Hours after that he was laid in a tomb. Three days after that the disciples found an empty tomb. Later that first Easter night some of these same disciples witnessed Jesus standing among them alive again. It was that power, the power that brought him back from the dead, Jesus used to provide for them. His providing said it all. It is the Lord.

Are you exhausted by life? Tired of dragging your body from one meeting to another, from one soccer practice to another, from one school project to another? Have you been operating on less sleep, cranky kids giving you trouble, or bosses who just push and push? Come up on shore, and find Jesus already there with a smile. He knows all about the drag, he had a body too. He knows all about the pushing, he too experienced people pushing him to his death. Your Savior knows, he lived life just like you. Because he avoided each and every sin his sacrifice provided you his forgiveness. His sacrifice provided you love. And God's love gave you a body, sleep, children, the boss at the job you have. More love from God, more blessings and opportunities he provides. We don't have to ask. Just like the disciples we know where the providing comes from. **"They knew it was the Lord."** Christ Jesus provides for you.

A huge catch of fish, the nets that wouldn't break, the breakfast already provided, Jesus shows that no matter what happens in your life he provides. Trust in him. An aching body, lack of sleep, and a difficult boss can't keep Jesus from providing. He's there with comfort. He's there with strength. He's there with endurance, patience, and an ear for prayers. Jesus is the victorious risen Lord. He's the Lord of the church. He has all the power. He cares for his own. He cares for you and his providing says it all.

Twenty years ago today pictures of a building and extreme tragedy appeared on TV screens. Most shocking, where did it happen? It was here, in Oklahoma City. We'll talk about the resolve of this city in a minute. The disciples were shocked at who stood along the shore shouting his word and providing for them. John said, **"It is the Lord."** Jesus continues to show his love for you with forgiveness and constant care. It is the Lord. His Word says it all in the power he displays to give you confidence and hope. His providing says it all that no matter the situation the Lord will take care of us. We remember the bombing, we will never forget. By his grace we remember it is the Lord who saves you and me, whose Word and providing says it all