

Read John 21 verses 1-3 *“Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing...”* Verse 3 (NRSV)

Dear Friends

We are thinking about the period of “waiting” between the ascension of Jesus and the day of Pentecost. That 10 day period of uncertainty and unknowing for the disciples who had been instructed by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem. From what we know of the characteristics of some of the disciples, we are going to reflect on what “waiting” might have been like for them. Today we consider Simon Peter.

What do we know about this disciple? From the gospel accounts we get the impression that Peter had an impetuous and impatient nature. He perhaps isn't best known for thinking things through. Rather he is a man of deeds – a man of action. In today's short passage, Peter has already encountered the risen Lord, but instead of considering the implications of the resurrection for either himself (he has not yet been restored to his place as “The Rock upon whom the church will be built” See Matt. 16 verse 18) or others, he decides to do something – and goes fishing.

Other occasions when we see the impetuous nature of Peter include his attempt to walk on water (Matt.14); his babbling about building booths at the transfiguration (Matt.17); and his cutting off of the soldier's ear when they come to arrest Jesus in John 18. He is undoubtedly a “do-er.” And this is the man who now has to wait. I would suggest that waiting would be Peter's worst nightmare – and that he would let the others know about it! I imagine Peter constantly asking how long they would have to wait, frantically pacing around like an expectant father outside of a maternity ward, asking the others if they remember Jesus giving any indication or time-scale for this comforter to arrive. Not only would Peter very quickly get to the stage of being fed-up, the other disciples would probably be fed up of listening to him!

The frustrations that Peter perhaps felt while having to wait are no doubt mirrored in countless homes at this time of national crisis, where we are all limited to what we can do, where we can go, and who we can see. Those among us who love to be doing things or going places will share Peter's angst at not being able to do them. Perhaps the “do-ers” among us are letting others know in no uncertain terms how they feel. I wonder what affect that in turn is having on others?

Many of us find it difficult just to wait or just to be. We perhaps feel guilty if we are not doing something. In these strange days, which may or may not become the new normal, may I suggest that seeking the will and purpose of God is the most important thing we can be doing. And to do that, we may have to wait and be still. Being still does not mean we are doing nothing. After waiting in Jerusalem, Peter and the others found a renewed purpose on the day of Pentecost. May we too find a new sense of God's purpose for our own lives as we patiently wait on Him.

Blessings

Peter