

Today we join Jesus as he continues on his healing and teaching tour in Judea. We join him on the shore of Lake Genessaret – also known as the Sea of Galilee. The passage doesn't really exactly tell us why he went there, but we know the crowds followed him there. They were clamoring to hear his teaching.

And teach them he did. But the crowd and Jesus' teaching sort of fade into the background of the story as the fisherman pull their boats into shore.

The scene zooms in on the fishermen, especially Simon Peter. They are exhausted after a long, frustrating night. A night of no fish means no money for the basic needs for their households. They're at a low point.

It's right at that low point that Jesus shows up. Jesus convinces them to try again and you can see the result. Immediately, Simon Peter knows he is in the presence of the divine. He has received totally unexpected grace and abundance in the midst of his failure. Jesus did for him what he could not do on his own.

He knows that he does not deserve that grace. Jesus grants it anyway. And Jesus does not go away from him. Instead, he invites Simon, and his partners, to join him. It's that grace that begins his transformation.

It turns out that transformation, begun in that enormous catch of fish – was not just for Peter's sake. It was for a purpose – the purpose of following Jesus and catching people to invite into God's kingdom.

Notice the order. Jesus doesn't say to Simon follow me and I'll make you rich in fish. He certainly doesn't say follow me or something bad will happen to you. First, Jesus meets the immediate need. He makes sure the fisherman are fed. First comes grace. Then comes the call to extend that grace to others.

This of course is how it is for us too. We may be at a low point too. For whatever reason, we may also be sitting in our own disappointment or failures. But still, Jesus graces us with his love and care.

And his call to Simon Peter is now our call. We are called to fish for people, too.

But what does that even mean here...now...today?

The call to fish for people is the call to grace others with the same love Jesus has shown us. The call to fish for people is the call to love.

And right now, after a depressingly bitter, hostile election, that call to love is as loud as it has ever been.

After Tuesday's results, some of us are breathing easier. Some of us are barely breathing.

Your call is the same, whether you are elated or devastated. Your call is to love.

If you are devastated by the election results, I hope you have taken time to care for yourself and your anxiety and sadness. The need for that will likely continue. But it's also time to get back to work answering your call. And your call is to love.

You are called to love the people you are most worried about...the ones you are most concerned will be hurt by the results. You are called to love black, brown, and white people regardless of their economic or citizenship status.

You are called to love the people who live in the poorest neighborhoods in the cities. You are called to love the wealthy people who live in big houses in the suburbs and on acreages.

You are called to love the people who live in the small towns and on farms. You are called to love corporate leaders and small business owners and all people whose labor we depend on.

You are called to love the queer folks. You are called to stand with them so none of them feels the world would be better if they were dead.

You are called to keep working for a just world...you are called to challenge systems and leaders that hurt people, especially the most vulnerable.

You are called to forgive and seek understanding rather than retribution. You are called to love those who voted for Donald Trump even while you work against injustice. You are called to resist cries of hate and retribution.

You are called to be the hands and feet...and voice of Jesus. Not because of your politics but because we are Jesus people.

If you are rejoicing at the election results, your call also is to love. You are called to love the vulnerable. You are called to love black, brown, and white people regardless of their economic or citizenship status.

You are called to love the people who live in the poorest neighborhoods in the cities. You are called to love the wealthy people who live in big houses in the suburbs and on acreages.

You are called to love the people who live in the small towns and on farms. You are called to love corporate leaders and small business owners and all people whose labor we depend on.

You are called to love the queer folks so that none of them feel the world would be better if they were dead.

You are called to work for a just world...you are called to challenge systems that hurt people, especially the most vulnerable.

You are called to forgive and seek understanding rather than retribution. You are called to love people who voted for Kamala Harris and not yield to cries for hate and revenge. You are called to be the hands and feet...and voice of Jesus. Not because of your politics but because we are Jesus people.

Notice that I did not say any of that would be easy. The voices that urge hate will not fall silent. If we want to be the Christians we say we are, the work of loving we'll need to do over the next days, weeks, months, and years, might be some of the hardest work we will ever do.

We may not feel like we're up to the task. But Jesus' call is not dependent on our own qualifications or confidence in our abilities.

Those failed fisherman on the shores of Lake Genessaret were ready to call it a night...to admit defeat and go home.

Jesus had other ideas. Jesus turned that defeat not only into abundance, but into a whole new life. Jesus meets us too, wherever we are. Then he calls us into a whole new life. But like Peter and James and John, we'll be called to leave something behind.

The fisherman left their boats and their livelihood and their families behind to catch people with Jesus' love.

You may not have to do that – your call to catch people with Christ's love will most likely be where you already spend your time. But you will need to leave something behind.

Think about it for a minute...whichever group you are in, the list of people you are called to love is exactly the same. Which of those groups I mentioned will be hardest for you to love?

What will you need to leave behind in order to answer that call? What prejudices will you need to lose? What will you need to learn...what will you need to unlearn?

There is some urgency in this call. Jesus did not have time to wait for Peter to feel like he was capable and worthy enough for the mission. That urgency is there now – the urgency to love.

And most of all, whichever group you're in, we are also called to hope. We are not called to a hope that comes from a president's victory or plans. We are called to a hope that knows that

whether things go great or turn into a dumpster fire, we belong to Christ. And in Christ, whatever looks like victory may or may not be...but for sure whatever looks like the end...isn't.