

The Lakeside (2) – John 21: 9 – 14



The most memorable breakfast I have ever eaten was on a deserted beach near Bamburgh on the Northumberland coast. Carole and I had driven there the previous day with our two small daughters, and had spent the night in our car with the intention of catching an early boat to the Farne Islands in the morning (we were young, foolish and broke in those days).

Not long after dawn we gave up any attempt to sleep and drove down to the beach, where we set up our little camping stove and made the most delicious fry-up of bacon and eggs I have ever tasted. The smell of breakfast in the fresh morning air was wonderful.

The last chapter of St John's Gospel tells of another memorable early morning breakfast, eaten by Jesus and His disciples on the beach by Lake Tiberias, an alternative name for the Sea of Galilee. After bringing their amazing catch to shore, the disciples saw that Jesus had already started cooking a breakfast of bread and fish, and He called them over to get something to eat. As Charles Wesley puts it (Singing the Faith 590), His presence made the feast. Toast and kippers could never have tasted as good as it did for them that day!

This story emphasises the reality of the Resurrection. Ghosts, hallucinations and figments of the imagination don't light fires and cook breakfast. This is really Jesus, really alive. And there is something remarkably human and matter-of-fact about the way the risen Lord

provides for the physical needs of His friends. He knows they'll be ravenous after a night's fishing out on the lake, so He prepares a meal for them.

This is a tasty breakfast, but it is a sacred occasion too. The Gospel writer tells us that Jesus took the bread and gave it to the disciples, and did the same with the fish. There are echoes here of the Last Supper. The Lord who sits on the beach and shares a simple meal with His followers is the One who gave His own body on the cross, sharing our death in order that we might share His risen life.

A prayer:

King of Glory! Soul of bliss! *Alleluia!*

Everlasting life is this, *Alleluia!*

Thee to know, thy power to prove, *Alleluia!*

Thus to sing, and thus to love: *Alleluia!*

Image: Greg Olsen