

Interrupted: Who you are in a folding chair

Small Group Discussion

John 21:1-19

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Today's title comes from a ballet dancer who, due to injuries, was forced to watch from the sidelines in a folding chair. A friend advised her to spend some time thinking about who she was "in a folding chair."
 - What do you think this metaphor means?
 - Prior to the COVID crisis, have you had any seasons in life that you would call "folding chair moments," when you were forced to think about your identity in the absence of things you were unable to do? Share about one.
 - In what ways has the COVID crisis created a "folding chair" moment for you, so far?

Read John 21:1-14, then discuss the following.

- In John's Gospel, the last time we saw Jesus and the disciples was in Jerusalem, a week after the Resurrection. Now, seven of the disciples are fishing in Galilee. What can you tell about them from this one observation?
 - In what ways have the events of the preceding two weeks been an "interruption" for Peter?
- What does it say that Jesus came to meet them, early in the morning, by the Sea of Galilee?
- Why do you think that Jesus gave these disciples another miraculous catch of fish?
- What do you make of the specific details that John records in this scene (e.g., Peter's outer garment, 153 fish, a fire of burning coals, etc.)?
- What significance do you find in the way John describes Jesus' action in v. 13?
- What meaning would this lakeside breakfast with Jesus have had for those seven disciples at this moment in time?
 - What encouragement for yourself do you find in this scene?

Read John 21:15-19, then discuss the following.

- What is unique about Jesus' first question to Peter, in v. 15? Why would he ask it this way?
- Why do you think that Jesus' questioning focuses on Peter's love for him?
- Why do you think that Jesus asks essentially the same question three times?
- What assignment does Jesus give to Peter in each of his three replies?
- Jesus indicates in vv. 18-19 that Peter's assignment will involve future sacrifice. What would be the net effect of this interchange?
- On Sunday, we considered that like Peter, our interruptions are **invitations to come away with Jesus**.
 - Peter actually had Jesus' physical presence to walk with him by the lake. What might it mean for you, absent his physical presence, to "come away with Jesus" during this season of interruption?
 - Have you already done this? If so, what value has it had for you?

- Pastor Josh also said that like Peter, ***we are invited to examine our true loves.***
 - In what way had Peter's "interruption" exposed his true loves, or true aims?
 - In what way does our current season of interruption expose what our true loves are?
- As he did Peter, ***Jesus invites us to simply love him for him.***
 - What does it mean to love Jesus for Jesus? How do you do this?
 - In what way can the COVID experience help us to do this?
- For Peter, this interaction with Jesus was absolutely necessary in order for him to be ready for what would happen at Pentecost (Acts 2). In what ways might your current interactions with Jesus be crucial for what happens in your/our life beyond COVID-19?

Sharing/Prayer

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another.
- Specifically pray for needs of which you are aware in relation to COVID-19, such as sick relatives/friends, or front-line medical workers.