

**Prayer of the Week:**

*Almighty God, you gave your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and an example of godly living: Give us grace thankfully to receive his inestimable benefits, and daily to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Third Sunday of Easter)*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*



**The Uprising Of  
Discipleship**  
John 21:1-19 (NRSV)  
April 26, 2020

**Do You Love Me?**

Peter fell apart the night Jesus was arrested. When armed guards arrived in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter panicked, grab his sword and cut off a man's ear. Jesus showed compassion for the injured man and healed the man's wound. Jesus showed compassion for Peter by reminding him that those who live by the sword will die by the sword.

Later that night, Peter was asked three times if he knew Jesus or was associated with his movement. Three times Peter denied knowing Jesus.

For the attentive reader, the conversation recorded in John 21 is meant to remind us of those events just a few days earlier.

Three times Peter had denied Jesus, then three times Peter had an opportunity to confess his love for Jesus and receive forgiveness.

Jesus didn't just offer Peter forgiveness, he invited him to participate in his work.

In the same way that a long night of fishing disappears with a big catch, Peter's past failures had vanished with the forgiveness of Christ and the invitation participate in his work.

In the uprising of Jesus, we aren't defined by our past, we are offered the simple invitation to "Follow him."

### **Follow Me**

The invitation to "follow me" is always caught up in the present. No matter what has taken place in the past, we can heed the instruction to follow him at this moment.

In this way, "Follow me" captures the essence of discipleship! Disciple means follower, student, learner, or one who imitates the teacher. For the uprising of Jesus to endure, we need to follow the ways of Jesus and invite others to do the same by way of example.

My encouragement to each of us is to not stop at confession our love for Jesus, but to answer the invitation of Jesus to be his disciple. To be learners, followers, apprentices. Even when it isn't easy. Even when the ways of Jesus seem to conflict with the ways of nation.

In this journey of following Jesus we must be willing to give ourselves grace. Perhaps Jesus picked a group of fisherman to be his first disciples because they knew what it was like to fail and keep trying. They had experienced long nights with no catch and were willing to go back the next night to try again. This is what the life of faith is like. It isn't just all easy growth in faith with clear answers to our deepest questions. There are seasons of doubt with no

clear answers. There are seasons of hard work for the kingdom of God with no clear results. But those fisherman kept mentoring others in the way of Jesus, kept proclaiming the good news of Jesus, kept doing their best to serve as examples of what it's like to follow him. And here we are centuries later, gathered through an internet broadcast proclaiming the good news of Jesus.

May this uprising centered on Jesus be one of fellowship that welcomes all people. And may it also be an uprising of discipleship where we stumble along the road of following Jesus.