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***Worship and Discipleship by Margo Geesing***

***“We are an Easter People”***

In the month of May, as we are still in the Easter Season, we hear from the Gospel of John. John’s Gospel was written for those who already believed in the Divinity of Jesus as proof and to strengthen their faith. We, as believers in the resurrected Jesus, should also grow in faith as we listen to the words from the Gospel of John.

**The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter 21 verses 1-19**

Who doesn’t like a good fresh fish fry on the beach? In today’s Gospel lesson Jesus repeats some of the highlights of his journey with the disciples. The first part of the Gospel begins with recommendations on where to find fish, which led them to producing a great catch (the great catch in Luke 5/calling of the disciples), and ending with Jesus feeding the disciples with fish and bread (miracle of loaves and fish/Last Supper). The last part of the Gospel is a reflection of Jesus abundant mercy and forgiveness. Rather than calling Peter out for denying Jesus three times during the Passion, Jesus gives Peter a chance to renew Peter’s love of Jesus by asking Peter if he loves Jesus, three times. After each affirmation of his love, Jesus gives Peter a directive: feed my lambs, tend my sheep, and feed my sheep. Jesus ends with, follow me. We as Christian believers and with love for Jesus are also given these directives: to feed the lambs and sheep, to tend to them, and to follow Him.

**The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter John 10 verses 22-30**

We hear a lot about sheep and being a shepherd in the Gospel of John. This is an image that continues on the second Sunday of May. Jesus is at the Temple and, again, is being questioned about “who are you?” This passage is one of the few occasions where Jesus states outright that he and the Father are one. This passage is also a challenge for us. While Jesus promises his sheep eternal life, it requires us to hear his voice, to listen, to follow him. Over Easter we had family and friends over. This included all four grandchildren. I realized that I could listen and distinguish first, who was crying; and if it was the “I’m hurt” or the “I’m frustrated” or “I’m overwhelmed” cries. We also need to distinguish Jesus’s voice over all the other ones we hear: family, friends, society, and our own selfishness.

### **The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter 13 verses 31-35**

The third Sunday in May we have the sad situation that Judas has left the others to betray Jesus – and Jesus's knowledge that it is about to happen. How much harder is it for Jesus, with the foreknowledge of exactly what he is about to willingly go through, not for his own sins or wrong doing but for EVERYONE ELSE. When he addresses his followers, it is not to condemn Judas or anyone. Rather, Jesus calls his followers to love. It seems such a simple request but it is one of the hardest to truly fulfill. To love in spite of as opposed to because of. In spite of how you are treated. In spite of what they say about you. In spite how they look, act, how they are different. It's easy to love those who agree with you, who love you back, who praise you. It is said that the greatest love is to lay down one's life for a friend. Actually, the greatest love to lay down one's life for an enemy. This is what Jesus did. He laid down his life for sin and death – to conquer both for the sake of all.

### **The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter 14 verses 23-29**

The fourth Sunday of May we hear of a few different ideas. First, Jesus speak of the love of the Father and the Son for those that love them. We show that love in how we treat one another. The way we fulfill the request of Jesus to keep his word. For us to answer the call to love, forgive, repent, pray, and listen. The second part is the promise of the Advocate. This is the promise that is fulfilled to each person at baptism. We receive the Holy Spirit to come and dwell within us and, hopefully, to guide us. Again, we need to listen. We will celebrate the coming of the Advocate in two weeks (second Sunday in June is Pentecost Sunday). The third gift that Jesus leaves with his disciples is his peace. It is not the peace of no troubles or problems, it is the peace of his love. The knowledge that you are love by God. You have an inheritance with Jesus. You have a place, and this is not the end.

### **The Gospel Lesson is from John chapter 24 verses 44-53**

The last Sunday of May we hear the beautiful prayer Jesus makes to the Father. Jesus not only prays for his followers to be united at that time but also prays for those who will follow because of their word to be united. Jesus is praying for us! In the here and now! He ends with the hope that the love he and the Father share, is shared with those who follow him.