

Series: John
Title: Peter Restored
Text: Jn 21: 14-22
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John 21: 14: This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. 15: So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16: He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17: He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. 19: This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. 20: Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21: Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

The apostles had left and gone back to fishing. The Lord appeared and filled their net with fish. He called them to himself. They did not have prepare the meal, he had it prepared--"Come and dine." He personally gave the food to each of them that morning.

John 21: 14: This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

Up to this point, the Lord has not spoken to Peter concerning his denial of the Lord. Our High Priest had interceded for Peter. He had protected Peter. Christ had called him and fed him. But he had not yet spoken to him about his denial.

This reminds us of our Lord's dealing with Elijah. The Lord had done many works through Elijah. But Elijah became lifted up in pride. Elijah later declared what had been in his heart.

1 Kings 19: 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah began thinking himself strong in the faith. But that is when we are strong in our sinful flesh and weak in faith. Elijah did like Peter did. It was pride in Elijah and in Peter. When pride is strong, faith vanishes. So when Elijah heard Jezebel was determined to kill him because Elijah slew her 400 prophets, Elijah feared her rather than God and ran away into the wilderness. He laid down under a Juniper tree, asked God to take his life and went to sleep. You might expect the Lord to send rain or a storm and to come with strong rebuke to Elijah. But the Lord sent an angel who "*touched him, and said unto him, Arise, eat. And he looked and there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head.*" After some time, the Lord spoke to Elijah in a still small voice and strengthened him in faith.

So up to this point the Lord had said nothing about Peter's denial. He first fed him. Despite his denial, despite not waiting on the Lord, the Lord came and drew Peter to himself. God said, "I loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore in lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Though we fail and sin and deny the Lord, the Lord never stops loving his people and drawing us in loving kindness.

He had brought Peter and the others to see their inability--they fished all night and caught nothing. Then he revealed himself. He filled the net--and filled their heart with revelation of him. He drew them and fed them. He first feeds us his gospel, his word--*12...Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.*" Christ reminds us that all is done! Christ first feeds us with the gospel of his glorious person and work. He is God, our successful Redeemer—he finished the work. Christ made his people Righteousness of God in him. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance; he never gives us any spiritual gift then takes it from us. Christ is our Meat, our Bread, Life. So our Shepherd finds his straying sheep and draws us to himself. He says, "*Come and dine!*"

He restores us with himself, the Bread of Life. He said, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you." He gives us the gospel to strengthen us with himself, with his word, by his presence in our hearts. HE is the Resurrection and the Life. Oh, what unchanging, unchangeable love of Christ toward his sinful people!

After this, then he will restore Peter so that Peter knows the Lord's love and grace has not changed toward Peter.

John 21: 15: So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

Later, John will walk up behind them. So it must be that after they had dined, the Lord took Peter for a walk down the beach. This is personal between Christ and his disciple. Our Master teaches us personally to follow him alone! Peter had suffered long enough. The Lord is not here to shame his servant. Our merciful Master is now restoring one he loves.

Notice the name by which the Lord addressed Peter.

John 21: 15: So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas,...

Simon was his natural name before he was born-again. That was his name when he was only the son of Jonas, the son of Adam, dead in sins. Peter is the name the Lord gave him when he gave him a new heart and called him to faith in Christ. Simon was the name the Lord used when he declared to him that flesh and blood had not revealed the gospel to him but his Father in heaven.

Those born of God have an old man of sin and a new man which is born of God. The pride and denial came from Simon, not Peter; from Adam, not from the new man Christ created within Peter. Using the name, Simon, reminded Peter that he was yet a sinner. But he was a sinner who had been born-again of God and given a new name, Peter. He was a sinner redeemed and clothed in Christ's righteousness. It reminded him of the Lord's love and grace that called him out of darkness into light. And now the Lord is doing it again.

Also, the last time Peter heard the Lord address him as Simon was when he boasted that he loved the Lord more than the other apostles and would never deny the Lord. So addressing him as Simon, here, had to have reminded Peter of that proud boast. So the Lord asked him,

John 21: 15:...Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? 15: He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

The Lord said they would all be offended and scattered, "for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." The Lord said, it was written in the scripture. "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God." But God already knows! Our falls are written. Oh, what comfort to know that our sovereign God knows what we have need of before we do.

Mark 14: 29: But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

Peter was saying, "I love you more than these other apostles; they all shall be offended, yet not I." So Peter had to experience this fall. He was too proud, too self-confident. The Lord had told him beforehand that he would deny the Lord 3 times, and Peter did it exactly. So, now, Peter knows that the Lord knows all things. So he answers differently than before his fall. "*He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.*" This time Peter did not say, "I love you more than these other apostles." Now, he knew he did not. But he also knew that the Lord knows our heart of flesh and the Lord knows the new heart he has created in us. He knows what we need before we ask him because he knows what we will do before we do it. So Peter answered, "*Yea Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.*"

The word Peter uses is not even as strong as the word the Lord used. Peter's answer was "*Yea Lord; thou knowest that I have strong affection for you.*" Peter was so hesitant now to boast in his love. He would not even use the stronger word because his fall showed him how short his love came. The trial humbles us. It teaches us the Lord knows. It teaches us we are personally still the sinner and he knows it. It makes us see ourselves as less than the least and eventually as the chief of sinners. They all denied the Lord but Peter did so three times. He learned his faith and love was no stronger, even weaker, than his brethren. "*He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee*" and he left it at that. We see here again that the Lord gets the glory. The Lord, right here, first loved Peter to restore Peter in love.

1 John 4: 19: We love him, because he first loved us.

John 21: 15: He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. [my little, weak ones] 16: He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. [they are Christ's sheep; chosen of God in election; purchased by Christ's blood; called by his Voice, by his Spirit and he is the Shepherd] 17: He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

This last time, the Lord used the weaker word that Peter used, *Peter do you have strong affection for me?* The Lord is gracious. He did not press Peter to use the same word as he used. The Lord condescended to Peter's low estate. That is what grace does.

Romans 12:16:...Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Peter was "grieved." It does not mean that he was offended but he was sorrowful in his heart. After Peter's third denial, the Lord looked on Peter with pity and compassion and Peter wept bitterly. Now, in mercy and love and pity, our Lord drew the confession out of Peter three times. And this mercy and love of our Lord, despite Peter's denial, produced sorrow in Peter's heart like as when he went out and wept bitterly before (Luke 22:62).

Remember, the Lord said, "When thou art converted, strengthen your brethren." In each of these questions, the Lord shows the love and humility with which he restores us. The Lord is meek and lowly. He came down to Peter. This is where Peter learned to submit one to another in humility, in lowliness of mind, esteeming the other better. And the Lord not only forgave him his sin and restored him but the Lord also sent him forth to feed his sheep for whom he laid down his life.

When he washed their feet, Peter objected. The Lord said, "What I do now you know not, but you shall." Now Peter knows. Peter saw his own sinfulness, instability, and need of mercy. But he experienced the unchanging, unchangeable love of God. The Lord taught Peter to wash his brethren's feet and restore the fallen by feeding his sheep with the gospel of Christ our Redemption who never changes in his grace, love, mercy to us. He teaches us this through much affliction by making us experience his love after our falls. Christ keeps teaching his sheep that "where sin abounds, his grace does much more abound!"

John 21: 18: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19: This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter had said, 'I am ready to die with you.' But Peter thought he could do so by his own will. Peter thought he missed that opportunity by his denial. But the Lord tells Peter that there is coming a day when he shall be bound and crucified. But it will be by God's will, in God's time. So he says to him, "*Follow me.*"

The Lord had taken Peter down the shore. But they look behind.

John 21: 20: Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following;...21: Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

We are slow learners like Peter. It takes many afflictions and the Lord's continual grace to teach us. Here the Lord's word to Peter was a much stronger word than when the Lord restored Peter. The Lord was gracious and pitiful toward sinners and toward his people that fall like he was to Peter in restoring him. But the Lord was strong toward the Pharisee's who were critical of his people and tried to constrain men. So the Lord spoke much more strongly here to Peter when he began to meddle in another man's business.

It is our business to each follow the Lord personally. And while we do so we are to trust our brethren to Christ. He is their Master. He is able to make them stand. God is their Father who knows how to chasten and keep his children partaking of Christ our Holiness. We are to preach Christ to one another and pray and wait on the Lord.

Imagine if you disciplined your child and they were repentant and following you then some man came along and began to discipline them. You would be greatly offended because you are the parent of that child, not another. So it is that we offend our Master when we try to usurp his authority toward our brethren and toward lost sinners. The Lord is accomplishing the same affliction in our brethren as he accomplished in us. So believe the Lord, follow him and trust your brethren to Christ. Our Lord essentially told Peter to stop meddling in another man's business and mind his own. "*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*"

So let's summarize what the Lord taught Peter here.

Christ submitted to the Father's will—he says, "Now, Peter follow thou me in submission to my will." The Lord taught Peter, "Feed my flock as I have fed you right here today. Not lording over them but willingly, in love and mercy as I have done to you." Christ faced the cross knowing all would forsake him but he knew, "I am not alone the Father is with me." He says, "Now, Peter follow thou me by casting all your care on me because I care for you." Christ overcame the devil's temptation by looking to his Father in faith. The Lord says, "Now, Peter resist the devil by following thou me in faith." Christ waited till the Father raised him and the work of redemption accomplished then he sat down, settled, at God's right hand. He teaches Peter that in Christ's time, he will settle and strengthen his children, even as he did Peter. He says, "Now, Peter follow thou me. In my time I will exalt you and settle you." We have to read again what Peter wrote in his later years. This is all summed up right here.

1 Peter 5: 1: The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3: Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4: And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5: Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world [Peter what's that to thee, follow thou me]. 10: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11: To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.