

## **Encouragement for Broken Christians: John 21:1-17**

**Text: John 21:1-17** "After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes...**9** As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. 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. 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. 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..."

**Summary:** Even when we have failed our Lord, He is gracious and ready to help us get back on track.

**Proposition:** God wants us to refocus on Him when we have stumbled.

**Interrogative:** How can we do this?

### **Part 1: Background:**

- **There are two "large catch" miracles recorded in the gospels.**
  - **Luke 5:4-8** "Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they

inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake... When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord..."

- **John 21:4-6** "When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes..."
- **We know these are different events for the following reasons:**
  - **Timing:**
    - **Luke 5:** The beginning of Christ's ministry
    - **John 21:** After the resurrection
  - **Christ's command:**
    - **Luke 5:** "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught..."
    - **John 21:** "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find..."
  - **The result:**
    - **Luke 5:** "When they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake..."
    - **John 21:** "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken..."
  - **Christ's calling:**
    - **Luke 5:** "Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men..."
    - **John 21:** "Feed my lambs...feed my sheep...feed my sheep..."
- **The similarities between these two events make the second highly impactful.**
  - Christ demonstrated His power over creation.
  - Peter felt the weight of his inadequacy.
  - Christ affirmed and reaffirmed His purpose for Peter.

## **Part 2: A complicated man with huge potential:**

- **Peter first met Christ through his brother: John 1:35-42** "The next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus...One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus..."

- **Jesus personally called Peter to follow Him: Luke 5:1-11** "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land...When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him..."
- **Peter was passionately convinced that Jesus is the Christ: John 6:67-69** "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God..."
- **Peter was willing to die for Christ: John 13:36-38** "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord...I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice..."

### **Part 3: His humbling failure:**

- **A few hours later: John 18:25-27** "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples?"
- **His crushing response: Luke 22:61-62** "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly..."
- **His humbling return to fishing: John 21:1-3** "After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing..."

#### **Part 4: God's grace:**

- **Grace pursued Peter: John 21:2-11** "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No..."
- **Grace led him to face his initial calling: 21:6** "And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes..."
- **Grace invited him to fellowship: 21:9-12** "As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread...Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine..."
- **Grace reaffirmed God's purpose for him: John 21:15-17** "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. 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. 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..."
- **Grace assured him he would finish well: John 21:18-19** "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me..."

#### **Part 5: God's power through a weak man:**

- **Peter's powerful witness: Acts 4:1-13** "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day...Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man,

by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus..."

- **Peter's shepherding legacy: 1 Peter 5:1-4** "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: 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; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away..."
- **Peter's enduring legacy: 2 Peter 1:12-16** "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things...as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty..."

### **Applying the Passage:**

- **God always uses flawed instruments:**
- **The ground we serve Him upon is always grace:**
  - We will all stumble like Peter.
  - In those vulnerable moments, His faithfulness and grace shine the brightest.
  - His grace calls and sustains us.
  - It pursues us in our lowest moments.
  - It calls us to fellowship.
  - It reminds us of His unchanging purposes.
  - It tells us to get back up and move forward.
- **Do not allow your failures to define you.**
- **Do not wallow in them.**
- **Get up and purpose to walk with the Lord.**
- **Delight in His presence.**
- **Purpose to be faithful wherever He has planted you!**