

RESTORATION BY THE SEA – John 21

Luke reveals in **Acts 1:3** that after His resurrection Jesus revealed Himself to many of His followers, for **40 days**. He appeared to **Mary Magdalene (John 20)**; in **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** – Paul reveals Jesus also *appeared* to **Peter** (privately), the **“twelve”** (actually eleven, but as a group referred to as the *twelve*); He also appeared to **James**, and **500 believers** at one time, and the **“apostles,” the 70** He *commissioned* in **Luke 10:1** *a number which included the disciples*.

Here in **John 21**, Jesus appears to His *disciples* (twelve) for a **“third”** time, *the other two times*, **John 20:19; 26**. In this chapter we find one of the most loving acts of “restoration” found in scripture. **It involves Peter**. Peter, *along with the other disciples had betrayed the Lord*; but Peter’s sense of guilt threatens to neutralize His faith! It was Peter who *often* boasted he would never betray the Lord. **But Jesus knew better. (Matthew 26:34-35) Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples.**

I was reading where minutes before one of the suicide bomber at a church in Sri Lanka detonated his bomb, a Sunday School teacher asked a classroom of children, *“How many of you are willing to die for Christ?”* Every hand was raised, moments later half of the children were dead! (Christianity Today). These precious babies “died” not knowing that minutes after their “confession of faith,” they would answer the call, to do just that! **Matthew 26** tells us when Peter was *accused* by a “servant girl,” *at the trial of Jesus, of being a follower of Christ; not only did he “deny” the accusation, but swore by an “oath,” he did not know “the man!”* He also began to “swear” and “curse” the name of His Lord, to further denounce the Lord!

Lesson: A little servant girl caused the mighty apostle to deny His Lord. When we deny Christ we can be intimidated by the least thing. But when the weak “acknowledge” Him they become strong and can conquer anything!

Despite Peter’s failure, Jesus makes it a point to *restore* him. We can all identify with Peter. Again, Paul in **1 Corinthians 15** tells us Jesus had appeared to Peter privately before this time; yet, *like many of us*, he was still in *need* of “assurance.” Jesus **did not** want his faith to be *swallowed up* by past “regrets”; “*would of’s*,” “*should of’s*” and “*could of’s*.” **I pray this message will remind us, that Christ is “risen” for our continual “restoration!”** In our text we find four of *aspects divine* “restoration.”

First, Restoration means heeding the voice of Jesus. (v.1-5) They went fishing on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee (Tiberius), along the Tabgha Beach. There are seven springs that emerge at the Sea of Galilee (six have been discovered so far today); these springs produce water warmer than that of the Sea of Galilee. The warmer water helped to produce algae, which in turn attracted fish; fishermen have frequented this area for thousands of years. Thus, fishing here should have been a piece of “cake!” **But these “professional” fishermen, *after fishing all night*, caught “nothing!”** **Spiritual lesson:** when your own *efforts*, (expertise) produces an “empty net” (nothing); perhaps, God is trying to tell you something!

When the morning had come Jesus stood on the shore! Indeed, *metaphorically*, Jesus stands on the shore every morning; with mercy, ***new every morning***, and joy, ***weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning!*** Better than a cup of *coffee* in the morning, is the ***overflowing*** “cup,” of His mercy and joy! **Jesus asked:** “*Children have you any food?*” When we’ve caught nothing, it’s time to “listen” to His voice!

Secondly, Restoration means casting your net of faith. (v.6-10) Jesus *instructs* them to cast their net in a different direction! He's challenging them to **activate** their faith! John declared; ***"It is the Lord!"*** He recognized that what "happened" was *beyond* their "expertise," their *ability to perform* or *comprehend* it! **Some of us need a "It's the Lord experience!"** You've tried to change things, but you are in a place where the ***"supernatural" needs to exceed the natural!*** Here's a promise! **(Psalm 34:19) Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.**

Peter responds by diving into the water and *swimming* toward Jesus! ***He had fallen, but He was swimming in the right direction! (v.8)*** They weren't that far from shore, around 300 ft (200 cubits); but Peter couldn't wait to be in the "presence" of the Lord! God's love always "draws" us, "condemnation" only "repels" us from the presence of God! Paul reminds us: ***"Nothing will ever separate us from His love!" Romans 8:37-39.***

When we cast our faith, *dare to believe, hope, love again*, The presence of God becomes real again! (v.9, 10). Biblical scholar and historian Ray Vander Laan points out the significance of the "fire of coals," mentioned here. "Coals" in the O.T. represent the presence of God! A *"live coal" was taken from the altar of God in the temple, by a seraphim (angelic being) who touched the mouth of Isaiah with it. The presence of God, like a smoking oven, and a burning torch passed between the sacrifice, signifying His covenant with Abraham; burning coals burned "perpetually" before the Lord on the "altar of incense" in the temple, as well* - **Isaiah 6:6, 7; Leviticus 16:12; Genesis 15:17-19.**

Thus, Jesus invites the disciples to *break bread* with Him, in the presence of His Father, and *their* Father! The Lord *invites* "failures" to His table, because His love **never fails!** **(2 Timothy 2:13) If we are faithless, He remains**

faithful; He cannot deny Himself. *You can cast your faith today in a “new direction,” on the “other side,” trusting in the Lord’s love to sustain you!*

Thirdly, **Restoration means helping others.** Now Jesus zero’s in on Peter.

Read: v.11-17. Notice two things: (v.11) First, Like Peter we’d rather be busy for the Lord, than deal with the issues of our heart before the Lord! **Secondly,** what we gain in Christ is sustained by Christ; the net **did not** break! **Jesus asked Peter three times, “do you love me.” First, “do you love me more than these?”** I believe He was speaking about the other “disciples.” **(Luke 14:26-27) “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”**

The next **two** times Jesus asked, **directly, “Do you love Me?”** *It is believed Jesus asked Peter three times because Peter denied the Lord three times!* What’s amazing here is Jesus knows fully who Peter was, *and where He came from, Simon son of Jonah, (John); yet, He asked the question!* **Jesus is asking the same question today; because He doesn’t want our past to define us; but rather, our love for Him!** It doesn’t matter what the world and the other believers think of you Peter; because if you’ll love me above all, I’ll make **everything alright! (Romans 8:28) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

In **(v.15, 16)** the Greek word for love, which Jesus used is, **“love” – agapao:** (aga-pah-o) **to love, in a social/moral sense; to be contented at or with a thing.** In **(v.15b, 16b, 17b)** when Peter used the word, it’s the Greek word

“love” – phileo: to be a friend, fond of, affection for. It’s a fondness like that which one might have for *Disneyland, Broncos, Av’s, Nuggets, a movie or a car!* But it’s not a love which governs our every *social and moral* behavior; nor can it *produce true* contentment! *“Do you love Me?”* Is the question we must answer daily! It’s the difference between victory and defeat! **Without** this being the believer’s goal, our faith will never rise *about* the *level* of “fondness,” for sports!

But notice (v.17a) Jesus uses the word **“phileo”** the same word Peter used. Many of us cannot honestly say, **Lord I “agapao” you.** But as the Lord *demonstrates* here, if our hearts are sincere Jesus is *willing* to meet us, where we are; and lift us to where we need to be! God is not looking for perfection but people headed in the right direction; a man or woman after His own heart! **Thus, Jesus calls him to “feed and tend” His lambs and sheep.** The word **“lamb” – arnion: a little lamb; (vulnerable, weak) – “sheep” –** (pra-ba-taun) **a tame animal accustomed to grazing.** Minister *both*, to the weak and the strong. He *refused* to allow Peter to spend the *rest* of His life licking His wounds!

(Luke 22:31-32) "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." This is the same *prescription* the Lord prescribes for us! **How? Don’t bogart the comfort! (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Notice: (v.18) Jesus **did not** *promise* Peter a rose garden. Yet, despite the future challenges he would face Peter became an *ambassador* of God's restorative **mercy** and **love**! Restoration is found in, not feeling sorry for one's self, but in losing one's self, by helping others! This is where restoration can be found! **(Matthew 10:39) He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.**

Lastly, **Restoration means following Jesus.** (v.19-25) Herein we find one of the greatest hindrances to *running* our race in Christ; ***worrying about, or trying to manage the course others are "running!"*** Peter's response is typical of many believers today. When God starts getting "all up in our business," we want to make sure He's in other people's business as well! But the Lord's reply to Peter is the same for every believer today; ***"What is that to you...you follow Me!"***

(Acts 20:24) But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Note: What Christ said was taken out of context, just as scripture is taking out of context today.

CONCLUSION: Restoration by the *Sea of our failure* begins with; *heeding the voice of Jesus; casting our nets of faith; helping others; following Jesus.*

Christ is risen for our restoration!