



I. Know that God Loves You _____
(Mark 16:6-7; John 20:4; Luke 24:33b-34; 1 Corinthians 15:5b)

II. Remember How God _____
(John 21:1-6)

Luke 5:1-3 "On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat."

Luke 5:4 "And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.'"

Luke 5:5 "And Simon answered, 'Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! 'But at your word I will let down the nets.'"

Luke 5:6-7 "And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink."

Luke 5:8 "But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'"

John 21:7 "That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea."

John 21:8 "The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off."

John 21:9 "When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread."

John 18:18 "Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself."

John 21:10-11 "Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn."

John 21:12-14 "Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead."

III. _____ for the Lord

A. The First Question

John 21:15a "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?'"

Mark 14:29 "Peter said to him, 'Even though they all fall away, I will not.'"

John 21:15b "He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'"

1 Peter 5:1-2a "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you"

B. The Second Question

John 21:16a "He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'"

John 21:16b "He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'"

C. The Third Question

John 21:17a "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'"

John 21:17b "Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

John 14:15a "If you love me, you will keep my commandments"

IV. No Matter What Happens, _____ Christ!

John 21:18-19 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, 'Follow me.'"



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1. Familiarize Yourself With the Passage and the Gospel

- a. Read John 20-21

2. Introduction to the Passage (Feel free to use this as a reference guide as you discuss the passage)

Literary Context: We have just witnessed the worst point of Peter's life, his denial of Jesus. His denial was not a small act of disobedience. It was a public act of apostasy in the moment. The same word for "deny" (Matthew 26:70, 72) is used by the Roman historian, Lucian, to describe Christians who refused to worship the Roman gods in order to show total loyalty and allegiance to Christ.1 As we read through this narrative, the reader (apart from knowing the end of the story) would think that all hope was lost to Peter. This is why he stands as the "archtype" of the Christian who rejects his Lord under persecution.2 However, the gravity of Peter's choices intensifies Jesus' restoration to Peter. Peter's reconciliation with his Lord shines so much brighter because his denial is the black backdrop to this story. If there is that much hope for someone who committed apostasy, how much more hope is there for us who may not have committed apostasy. Thankfully, the act of apostasy is a redeemable sin. Jesus seeks out his own, even in their worst moments of turning their back on their Lord. Seek Christ, even when you feel most unworthy, because our worthiness is not dependent on our obedience. It is dependent on Christ's obedience in our place.

Historical Context: It is thought that the three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him may have been an ancient Israelite custom where a matter was asked three times to an individual before witnesses to confer rights or legal dispositions within the courts.3 Jesus asked Peter three times not to neglect his calling and if he loved him. The threefold petition to Peter, from Jesus, confirms Peter's commitment to fulfill his Apostolic responsibilities in the birth of the church to lay the church's foundation as the leading Apostle (Ephesians 2:20). Peter would go on to have a critical teaching role in the early church so that the church could fulfill its mission from a foundation of sound godly teaching (John 21:15: "Feed my lambs"; John 21:16: "Tend my sheep"; John 21:17: "Feed my sheep").

3. Questions About the Passage

- a. It was not until the fourth appearance that Jesus addressed Peter's denial (John 20:11-18; 19-23; 24-29, 21:1-19). Why do you think Jesus waited until the fourth time to talk with Peter about his threefold denial?
b. Jesus' threefold exhortation (encouragement) to Peter was "Feed my lambs", "Tend my sheep", "Feed my sheep". What was Jesus trying to teach Peter in these statements? What does the imagery mean?
c. What was the significance of Peter's grief (John 21:17)?

4. From the Passage to Life

- a. Like Peter, how does God use grief in our own lives to restore us from sin or grow us in our relationship with Christ? Share a story how God did this.
b. Do you see the word of God and the intaking of His truth as spiritual food for your soul? That is exactly what Jesus meant through the imagery of "feeding sheep." How has the continual feeding on the word of God helped you grow spiritually?
c. Jesus claims that persecution glorifies God (John 21:19). How do you feel or think about that statement. How might God get glory out of our suffering for Him?
d. Jesus ended the discussion with Peter with the same statement that he called him, "follow me" (John 21:19).4 Do you struggle with being concerned about other people's Christian walks, rather than your own? How is Jesus calling you to follow him in this moment?

Blank lines for writing responses to the questions in section 4.

1 G.W.H. Lampe, "St. Peter's Denial," (paper presented at the Manson Memorial Lectures at the University of Manchester, 21 November 1972), 354.

2 G.W.H. Lampe, "St. Peter's Denial," 354.

3 Andreas J. Köstenberger, John, Acts, ZIBBC, Vol. 2, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 194.

4 I want to thank Pastor Kevin for this observation from our discussion about this passage.