

Face to Faith: Conversations in the Gospel of John

Week 7 — John 21:15–19 — “Peter”

Sermon Summary

In John 21, we witness the final recorded personal conversation Jesus has in the Gospel of John—an intimate, restorative dialogue with Peter. After the resurrection, Jesus meets His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. A miraculous catch of fish reveals His identity, and a familiar warmth settles over breakfast by the fire. But beneath the surface lies tension for Peter, who only days earlier denied Jesus three times. In this conversation, Jesus gives Peter the opportunity to reaffirm his love three times—the same number of times he denied Him. Jesus restores Peter and recommissions him for ministry: “Feed my lambs...Take care of my sheep...Feed my sheep.” Peter’s failure did not disqualify him. Instead, Jesus transforms his setback into a calling, showing the depth of His grace and the power of restoration for every believer.

Key Scriptures

- John 21:15 – “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”
- John 21:16 – “Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’”
- John 21:17 – “The third time he said to him, ‘Do you love me?’”
- John 21:19 – “Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’”

Sermon Outline

1. The Context of Restoration

After the resurrection, the disciples return to Galilee. Jesus appears on the shore, performs a miraculous catch, and shares a meal with them. The stage is set for a deeply personal moment with Peter.

2. Peter’s Failure—and Jesus’ Grace

Peter’s three denials left him wounded with guilt and shame. Yet Jesus approaches him with grace, not condemnation. Jesus addresses the wound without accusation, giving Peter a path back to wholeness.

3. A Threefold Question

Jesus asks, “Do you love me?” three times—mirroring Peter’s three denials. Each question peels back another layer of Peter’s hurt and offers fresh restoration.

4. A Renewed Commission

Each expression of love is followed by a command: “Feed my lambs...Take care of my sheep...Feed my sheep.” Jesus places Peter back into leadership, proving that failure is not final.

5. **A Call to Follow**

Jesus ends the conversation the same way He began His ministry with Peter: “Follow me.” His grace restores, His call recommissions, and His love transforms.

Key Themes & Takeaways

- Jesus restores what sin and failure break.
- Grace confronts, heals, and reclaims us.
- God recommissions wounded people for His mission.
- Our greatest failures can become our most powerful testimonies.

Application Points

1. Do you need restoration?

Reflect honestly on areas where sin or apathy has created distance between you and God.

2. Receive His grace.

Jesus initiates restoration with gentleness and truth—no condemnation.

3. Return to your calling.

God delights in using restored people for His purposes.

4. Turn setbacks into testimonies.

Share how Christ has worked through your failures to encourage others.

Self-Guided Discussion Guide

1. Read John 21:15–19. What emotions do you imagine Peter experienced during this moment with Jesus?
2. Why do you think Jesus asked the same question three times? What was He accomplishing in Peter’s heart?
3. Have you ever felt disqualified by failure? How does Jesus’ restoration of Peter speak into that experience?
4. What does it mean for you personally to “feed His sheep”? Where is Jesus calling you to serve?
5. Where do you need restoration today? What step can you take this week to return to Christ?
6. How might God turn your past failure into a testimony for His glory?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Jesus restores broken hearts and calls wounded people into His mission. His grace meets us in our failures and lifts us into faithful service again. May we, like Peter, hear His voice saying, "Follow me," and respond with renewed devotion and love. Amen.