



“Peter’s Restoration”
John 21:15-19
Sermon Date: May 9th, 2021

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Prayer

As you begin your study, spend some time thanking the Lord for being the Good Shepherd who always tends to His sheep. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of the greatness of His shepherding care and His goodness in providing under-shepherds to lead His church. Pray for His continued grace to guide you as you follow after Him. As you pray, make the following words your own before the Lord (prayer written by Robert Hawker and taken from Piercing Heaven: Prayers of the Puritans).

“Precious Lord Jesus! You, and you alone, give life, purity, and sweetness to our poor persons and offerings. Everything in us is corrupt, and we decay. But in you, and by you, as the manna was preserved, we are preserved. We are made clean and holy in your holiness and purity.

You are still the bread of God, the living bread, which that manna represented. You still feed your church above, and lead them to fountains of living waters. And surely, Lord you will no less feed your church below, which yet remains in this dry and barren wilderness, where there is no water...

Precious Jesus! May my soul always look to you as my faithful, everlasting, unchangeable high priest...I am sure, Lord, that everything in me and from me will remain dry. So I look to you for life and grace to my poor soul, to bring forth fruit—by your grace and for your eternal glory.

Sovereign Lord! Almighty King! I gladly acknowledge you as my King and my God. I by the appointment of God, by your conquest of my heart...since you brought me under the power of your grace, am yours, and no longer my own.

Oh, for grace to acknowledge you, to obey you, to love you. And as the Father has set you upon your throne, may his grace also give you the throne of my heart! And while all your enemies must bow before you, may all your friends and followers rejoice in your service! Even so, Amen!”

Scripture

John 21:15-19 – (English Standard Version)

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” 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. ¹⁸Truly, 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.” ¹⁹(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.”

Handling the Word

1. The context for this passage is crucial to our understanding of this conversation between Jesus and Peter. Go back and read Matthew 26:33-35, John 13:37-38, and John 18:17-27, and write down what happens in those verses.

Understanding and Applying

1. As you ponder this passage and have already looked at Peter’s denials and his failure to live up to what he had promised Jesus, can you relate to Peter at all? How? What promises or commitments have you made to Jesus that you have not lived up to? How did/do you feel about not living up to those promises? How does it encourage you that despite Peter’s failures, Jesus shows grace and mercy to Peter?
2. In v. 15, Jesus begins his questions for Peter by asking, **“Do you love me more than these?”** While it’s not obvious what Jesus meant by the phrase, **“more than these”**, most commentators would agree that Jesus is asking Peter if he still thinks he loves Him *more* than the other disciples do. Peter has made those claims in the past and exemplified it by his rash actions (John 13:37 & John 18:10). Why is it not a good idea to compare our love for Jesus to others’ love for Him? What are the potential negative results of comparing ourselves to others? Why is it more beneficial to focus on our own love for Jesus instead of worrying about everyone else?

3. In this narrative Jesus asks Peter the same question, three times, **“Do you love me?”** First, in light of Peter’s denials, why does Jesus ask this question three times? First, notice that he asks this in front of the other disciples. Why might this be important that the other disciples hear Jesus’ question and hear Peter’s response? Second, of all the questions that Jesus could have asked Peter, why does Jesus focus in on Peter’s *love* for Him? What is it about Peter’s love for Jesus that is so important?

4. Why is our love for Jesus foundational to our obedience to Him? What are some other motivations that we may have to be obedient to Jesus? Why is love the best motivation? As you search your own heart, is love truly the *main* motivation for your service and obedience to Jesus? If not, how can that change? Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about the importance of love as our motivation.
 - a. 1Corinthians 13:1-3 –
 - b. 2Corinthians 5:14-15 –
 - c. 1John 3:17-18 –

5. After Jesus’ three questions, Peter responds three times by saying, **“Jesus, you know all things, you know that I love you.”** In all three responses, Peter acknowledges that Jesus *knows all things*. Why is this so important for Peter to understand? How does the fact that Jesus knows all things (even the good and bad in your own heart) encourage you to follow Jesus?

6. Next, Jesus gives Peter three commands, **“Feed my lambs”, “Tend my sheep”, “Feed my sheep.”** According to Jesus, whose sheep are they? Why is it vitally important that Peter understands that the sheep (the future people in the church) don’t belong to him but they belong to Jesus? How is it encouraging to you that you don’t belong to earthly shepherds, but to the Great Shepherd? Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about your Shepherd and how you should be following Him. Spend some time thanking Him and worshipping Him for being such a loving and caring Shepherd.
 - a. Psalm 23 –
 - b. John 10:11-16 –
 - c. John 10:27-29 –

7. Finally, Jesus gives Peter another command in v. 19, **“Follow me.”** The command is in the present tense and literally means, *“keep on following me.”* How would these two words have been both an encouragement and a challenge for Peter, especially in light of his previous failures?

8. Of course, Jesus asks the same of us. Are you a true follower of Jesus? How is this manifested in your life? Might it be true that you are a follower in name only? Spend some time with the Lord and seriously consider your own spiritual life and what potential changes may need to take place to be a more faithful follower of Jesus. Consider sharing some of these things with your group.

9. What truth in this passage has altered or enhanced your view of Jesus Christ and the good news about Him? In what ways might the Lord use this truth to bring forth spiritual fruit in your life?

“If we are following Jesus, then our eyes will be on Jesus...If we have our eyes on Jesus, we will see not only something about him but something about ourselves as well. What we will see about ourselves is that we are at best ‘unprofitable servants.’ There will be no room for boasting, no room for arrogant self-sufficiency. We are inadequate, unprofitable. What we need is Christ...”

James Montgomery Boice