

April 26, 2020

The Resurrected Lord Confronts Peter

John 21:13-23

Sermon Notes – Pastor Marvin Singh

The Life of Simon Peter is extraordinary. We can learn many lessons from his life. We can have many sermons on Simon Peter.

Here we will learn together how Jesus confronted him, reinstated him, and commissioned him for mission and service.

I have divided his life span into three segments:

1. Life without Christ.
2. Life with Christ.
3. Life in Christ.

1. LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST

a. His life began in Galilee. He joined the fishing business of his father. His brothers, Andrew and John, fellow Galileans were disciples of John the Baptist. One day John the Baptist made the announcement about Jesus, *“Look the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29-34, 35-39). Verses 40-42: *“Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing he did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah,’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas’ (which, when translated, is Peter).”*

b. Mark gives us a different version of Simon becoming a disciple in Mark 1:16-18. Andrew and Simon were both casting their nets into the lake, and were invited to follow Jesus.

c. Luke gives another view regarding Simon’s response to the call of Jesus. Luke 5:1-10: Jesus borrowed the boat of Simon and spoke to the crowd from

the boat to the beach. Later he asked for a fishing update from Simon and his fellow fishermen.

“Simon answered, ‘Master we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.’”

They were surprised to catch such a large number of fish that the boats of Simon and his friends were filled to the full and began to sink.

Simon saw this miracle and fell on his knees and said,

“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

Jesus gave them the call and commission then and there, *“... from now on you will catch men.”*

What did we learn:

- (i). Simon was a fisherman.
- (ii). Simon was a sinful man. (His own confession.)
- (iii). His brother Andrew shared with him the good news about Christ.
- (iv). He was a struggling fisherman - the nets and the boat were empty even after whole night of work.
- (v). Jesus intervened: Peter accepted the word of Christ, obeyed it and experienced miracles. He knew who Jesus is.

2. LIFE WITH CHRIST

a. Simon learned the three pre-conditions of following Christ, and the cost of discipleship.

1) Deny yourself, 2) Take up the cross, and 3) Follow him.

b. Simon was one of the trio who went with Jesus all the time.

Though Jesus called twelve disciples, these three were with him for certain revelations: Peter, James, and John.

(i). Raising of Jairus daughter - Mark 5:37 (35-43), Luke 8:51 (40-56)

(ii). On the Mount of Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1 (1-8), Mark 9:2 (2-8), Luke 9:28 (28-36)

(iii). The Garden of Gethsemane - Matthew 26:37 (36-39); Mark 14:33 (32-36)

c. At the Last Supper when Jesus said one of you will betray me, John was provoked by Peter to ask, who will be the one? John 13:24. Later Peter made the statement that all can leave him, but he will not leave his master. But Jesus said, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. John 13:37-38

Though he self-proclaimed boldness in chopping off the ear of Malchus, high priest's servant at the garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10), yet he was also the one who denied Christ, not just once but thrice.

d. He saw miracles, was with Jesus, but when the testing came he left him. He followed at a distance, and when questioned about his relationship with Christ, he totally denied it because of his fear of the people, and also forgot the three pre-conditions set by Christ:

1) Deny yourself, 2) Take up the cross, and 3) Follow him whole-heartedly. (Matthew 26:57-58, 69-75)

e. He took the privilege to know him (Christ) and to be known as having powerful connection to the top leadership, being the member of the inner circle, but end of the day he hid himself and locked himself in.

3. LIFE IN CHRIST

After the resurrection of Christ, the eleven disciples (Judas Iscariot has already committed suicide) met him. Saw his wounds, but went fishing again.

The passage we are meditating on in John 21 will show us the light, how Peter was confronted by the Lord through reminding them that He is same yesterday, today, and forever. He instructed the dejected, disappointed, experienced fishermen, they need the expert advice just as they had in the beginning.

Put the nets on the right side. They again obeyed and had 153 large fishes. Their nets could hold them now. They immediately recognized when John, the beloved disciple, said, "It is the Lord!" Look at the reaction of the people.

John 21:7. *"As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he wrapped his outer garment around him and jumped into the water."*

William Barclay writes, in his commentary on the Gospel of John:

Many ingenious suggestions have been made regarding the 153 fishes.

(i). In the fifth century, Cyril of Alexandria said that the number 153 is made of three things:

100 - represents the fullness of the Gentiles, the shepherd's full flock is 100 (Matthew 18:12),

50 - represents the remnant of Israel who will be gathered in,

3 - stands for the Trinity.

(ii). Saint Augustine suggests that 10 is the number of the Law (ten commandments) and 7 is the number of grace, for the gifts of Spirit are seven fold.

$7+10=17$; and 153 is the sum of all the figures, $1+2+3+4 \dots$, up to 17. Thus 153 stands for all those who either by law or by grace have been moved to come to Jesus.

(iii). The simplest explanation is that given by Jerome, the fourth-century biblical scholar.

There 153 different kinds of fish in the sea; and that the catch is one which includes every kind of fish, and that therefore the number symbolizes the fact that someday people of all nations will be gathered together in Jesus Christ.

William Barclay, *The Gospel of John, Volume Two, pg. 330-331*

Jesus had breakfast with them and then confronted Simon Peter.

Look how Jesus is addressing him and asking the same question three times:

a. Jesus: Simon son of John, do you truly love (*agape*) me more than these?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) you.

Jesus: Feed my lambs.

b. Jesus: Simon son of John, do you truly love (*agape*) me?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) you.

Jesus: Take care of my sheep.

c. Jesus: Simon son of John do you love (*phileo*) me?

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him third time.

Peter: Lord, you know all things; you know that I love (*phileo*) you.

Jesus: Feed my sheep.

Love is the foundation of Christian service. Love to Christ alone will inspire men and women truly to do his work.

A. Jesus was using the word agape for love in John 13:34, 15:15-17, and when asking Peter the question here. Peter was responding with a different word.

Jesus was demanding that “if anyone loves me it should be true love.” This agape word in Greek means deep affection, including something of reverence which will be absent from any self, complete dedication. He has instructed the disciples in John 13:34 that they should love each other, the same demanding love, true love, dedicated love, selfless love. This is the reason Jesus was wondering about Peter that he has not come to his expectation. Simon has not yet attained to be Peter, the rock/stone (John 1:42).

B. Jesus is also asking another question “MORE THAN THESE?”

(i). Peter, after following Christ, drifted back to the Lake of Galilee for his old passion and profession of fishing for fish though he was expected to catch men now (Luke 5:10).

(ii). “More than these” also means, do you still want to be number one among the disciples, still love to be self-centered? Do you love me more than these disciples? Why are you not denying yourself and putting Christ first in your life? Put first the mission and command of Christ, then your plans etc.

(iii). Peter was hurt when he was asked the same question again and again. He is remembering what he did to his master and Lord. Denying him three times. Peter’s trust in self alone is broken. So the third time, Jesus used the same word which Peter used for love. He was doubly grieved as he realized that the Lord is not yet able to accord him the higher love and remembered his repeated denials.

(iv). Now Peter realized and cast himself in utter self-renunciation on the omniscience of the Lord, “Lord you know everything.”

C. Jesus is also categorizing the people in need.

(i). Feed my lambs - little lambs. Care for and feed with the Word and doctrine the young ones of the flock, the children and young converts.

(ii). Take care of my sheep - Remember they are **my sheep**. You are the under-shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd, and I have laid down my life for them (John 10:11). I am assigning you to take care of them. Feeding, nurturing, strengthening, protecting them. Feed with the Word and sound doctrine.

(iii). Feed my sheep. Spiritual guidance, advance and mature Christians.

Pastoral responsibilities were given to him.

Peter later writes to elders and young men:

1 Peter 5:1-5

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

So Peter cannot be the chief Shepherd, as Augustine writes. Peter was instructed to Feed **my** sheep. Tend **my** sheep not as yours. 1 Peter 2:25, “For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” Augustine IN JOH 123:5; PL35:1961

This authority was also given to others, not only to Peter. Matthew 18:12-14; Acts 20:28-29; and 1 Peter 1:1-5

D. Jesus provided them breakfast, talked to Peter, asking three questions, and then said, "Follow me." John 21:19

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. He was the same one who had leaned back against Jesus at the Last Supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?" Peter then did say that "I will never betray you or deny you." The Lord told him, You will deny me, Peter, three times.

So now Peter again enquired "**what about him?**"

Jesus had to confront him again, "WHAT IS THAT TO YOU?"

Peter is with Christ and does not want to be displaced by any other disciples, or replaced by any other in the position he had with Christ.

Many times, we do question, "**WHAT ABOUT?**" If the Lord is using others or blessing their homes, business, ministry, families, why do we have to envy them or covet them?

Discipleship is all about me and my relationship with Christ. I am responsible for my own words, thoughts and deeds. Why do we judge others and point our finger at them, and not realize the rest of the fingers' direction is towards us? Remember, what did Jesus ask the crowd of accusers, when a woman, who was caught in the act of adultery, was brought to him? Let the one who has no sin cast the first stone. (John 8:7 (1-11)) We have many self-righteous and self-declared holy people, who write about people in high places misusing their power and authority. They should look within and follow Christ. The judge is the Lord and He will judge everyone, which includes me and us. Don't become a judge like Peter, saying "What about him?"

Jesus asked them to come together in one room, wait for the endowment of power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5, 2:1). Let CHRIST COME INTO YOUR LIFE. No more of your spirit directing and controlling you, but let the Spirit of Christ, His spirit, dwell in you, and then you will have a successful ministry. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*"

Paul again writes to in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "*Don't you know that you are the temple of God?*" and in verse 6:19 "*You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.*"

The result you will find is that after the baptism of Holy Spirit, Peter and John's rivalry has turned into camaraderie. You will see Peter and John together doing ministry.

Acts

3:1 - going to the temple for prayer

3:11 - Peter and John with beggar and healing him in Jesus' name

4:1 - to the Sanhedrin

4:3 - were seized and put in the jail

4:13 - courage of Peter and John

4:23 - Peter and John going to their own people

5:40-42 - they were flogged and then let go, and went on preaching that Jesus is the Messiah

Closing Hymn: Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

View or print the music which includes lyrics, or turn to #381 if you have a United Methodist Hymnal, play the video with piano music, and sing verses 1-3. (All links are on website below sermon video.)