

# THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

## (A Study of the Gospel of John)

### Restoration!

TEXT: John 21

The more I read and study the Gospel of John personally, the less I am amazed that it is the favorite book of the Bible to most people.

- It is a mine full of precious gems.
- Many of those jewels are near the surface, so you do not have to dig deep or work hard to grab them.
- That being said, there are veins of gold in the mine of this gospel which are inexhaustible. You did and dig, ever extracting the precious metal, only to realize there is still more beyond your reach if you are just willing to dig longer and study harder.
- May I just remind you of some of these precious passages we have read, and as we read these words again let us worship the Lord Who gave them to us.

John began by reminding us that **Jesus did not begin as a baby in a manger.**

**He has always been, as He always shall be.**

John 1:1, 3 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

**This eternal Son of God, who created all things, entered the world as a man.**

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

**And Jesus Himself explained why He left Heaven and came to earth.**

John 3:16–18 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Throughout His life, Jesus described Himself to us and told us what kind of life we could have in Him.**

John 7:37–38 37 ... “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

John 8:12 ... “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 8:31–32 31 ... “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 11:25 ... “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

John 14:1–3, 6 1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 6 ... “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

John 20:21 ... As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

**And finally John concludes near the end of his book**

John 20:30–31 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

If you have not yet believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and trusted Him as the Lord and Savior of your life, may today be your day. May today be the day of faith for you and the day you receive His gift of eternal life.

And for those of us who have believed, let us declare it! Let us share it! Let us worship our wonderful Lord by singing about it.

INTRODUCTION: I invite you to look in your Bibles at **John 21:1-17** either now or this afternoon, but I want to begin our consideration of the final chapter of John's gospel by just telling you this amazing story.

After the resurrection, Jesus had appeared twice in Jerusalem to the eleven remaining disciples, although Thomas missed the first time. But Jesus had told them before He died that He would also meet them in Galilee, so to Galilee they went.

The Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias, was their old stomping ground. This is where Jesus called several of them to leave their fishing business and become fishers of men.

But now Jesus was gone.

- Yes, He had appeared to them briefly to show Himself alive.
- Yes, He had promised to appear to them again here in Galilee.
- But Jesus had also said He was returning to the Father, going back to Heaven. He was not going to
  - live with them every day,
  - lead them every day,
  - provide for them every day.
  - It wouldn't be the same.
- On top of that, Peter was down in the dumps.
  - He had bragged about his loyalty and fortitude.
  - When Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him, Peter dared tell the Son of God He was wrong.
  - But as Jesus is never wrong, He wasn't wrong about Peter.
  - Peter denied His Lord – three times. **THREE TIMES!**

So now, what is he to do? Peter had been the unofficial leader of the disciples. He had been the one to make the great confession.

- He was the leader of the inner circle, but he had fallen.
- He had forfeited all right to lead wicked men to a righteous Savior,
- much less lead the remaining disciples in the spreading of the gospel.

But he had to eat. He had to earn a living. He had to do something.

So he said the others, “I’m going fishing.”

- Peter didn’t mean that like Bro. Mark does when he says that to Kim on Saturday morning.
- No, Peter meant he was returning to his former life as a fisherman.
- And he went down and launched the boat he and James and John used to take out.
- And James and John and four others went with him.

They fished all night, because night fishing was what was productive on the Sea of Galilee, but they caught nothing. Nada, Zip!

As morning broke, Jesus appeared on the shore and called out to them. They couldn’t tell who He was, not only because of the distance to the shore and that it was barely light, but because people couldn’t recognize the risen Christ unless He revealed Himself to them.

Jesus called out, “Hey guys, you haven’t caught any fish, have you?” Talk about rubbing it in! But then He says, “Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will catch some.”

- Who is this guy that he thinks he knows more about fishing than we do?
- Like the water is different on one side of the boat than the other.

Why did Peter and the others even obey? I don’t know, but they did.

When they did, the net suddenly filled with fish, big fish! Later they counted – 153

(Do you know the significance of the 153 fish? It means this is an eyewitness account of a true story. Fishermen count their fish!)

(Back in the good old days of fishing in S. LA. before there were limits on speckled trout, a deacon friend of mine took me and my two brothers trout fishing on the southern edge of Bayou Biloxi in the Gulf. We caught 347 speckled trout, most of them two at a time all day long. You can believe we counted every one of them, kept every one of them, cleaned every one of them, and ultimately ate every one of them! Fishermen count their fish.)

So, as they start pulling in this net loaded with fish,

- John looks up at the distant man on the shore.

- John says to Peter, “It’s the Lord!”
- Now it is hot in the spring in Galilee, and Peter has stripped down to his skivvies for the hard work. So he grabs his outer garment, throws it on, and dives into the sea and swims to the shore, where Jesus is.

While John and the others row to shore towing the net that is so heavy they can’t lift it into the boat, Jesus starts a fire and starts cooking breakfast. They eat their fish sandwiches for breakfast, and when everybody was full, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and said,

“Simon, do you love me more than all this?” indicating the boat, the nets, the fish, the sea.

- And there is an important subtlety here that we cannot see in the English, but in the Greek there are three words for love, and two of them are used in this conversation between Jesus and Peter.
- Jesus said, “**Peter do you love Me with a Godlike unconditional, steadfast love?**” - that’s what the word here, agapao means.
  - Wow, is Peter on the spot or not?
  - Jesus knows what Peter has done.
  - His fellow disciples know that Peter denied the Lord.
  - How can Peter say, “Lord I love You unconditionally and with steadfast commitment.”
  - He cannot.
  - So he says, “**Lord, I love You like a dear friend.**” That’s the Greek word phileo.
- So Jesus says, “Feed My lambs.”

Then Jesus asks Peter again, “Peter do you love Me?” and He used that same word meaning with a Godlike, unconditional, steadfast love?”

- Maybe I’m wrong, but I picture Peter, looking around at the group and then back at Jesus like, “You talking to me?” We just had this conversation.
- Peter repeats the same answer, “**Lord, You know that I love You like a dear friend.**”
- Jesus responds with a virtually identical command, “Tend My sheep.”

Before Peter even has time to think, “Man I’m glad that’s over,” Jesus asks a third time.

“Peter, do you love Me?” Only this time, Jesus uses the same word Peter has been using. Jesus is asking, “**Peter do you even love Me like a dear friend?**”

- And Peter, the Bible says “grieved” at Jesus question now the third time and watered down says
- “**Lord, You know everything. You know I love You like a friend.**”
- Jesus said once again, “**Feed My sheep.**”

And do you know what just happened in that soul wrenching conversation between Jesus and Peter?

- Jesus communicated to Peter, that he was **still called** by the Son of God to be a fisher of men.
- Jesus let Peter know that he was **forgiven** of his sin of denying his Savior.
- Jesus let Peter know that He still had a **plan and a purpose** for Peter in the work of the Kingdom of God.
- And the next time we see Peter he has taken again the mantle of leadership among the apostles and is leading them to select a replacement for Judas.
- Then the next time we see him is at the feast of Pentecost, when filled by the Holy Spirit, he proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ and more than 3,000 people get saved.
- I would say, Peter got restored, wouldn't you?

Brothers and sisters in Christ, all of us walk in Peter's sandals one time or another.

Some of us make a lot of trips with Peter's sandals on our feet.

We have been saved, but we still fall back into sin. We messed up. Sometimes we mess up in a really big way like Peter did. And when we do,

## I. **GUILT AND BROKEN FELLOWSHIP LEAD US TO TURN FURTHER AWAY FROM CHRIST.**

If we know the Word of God, we know we don't lose our salvation, but like David when he committed adultery and murder, we sure enough lose our joy.

But not only that, we sometimes like Peter, lose our sense of calling to serve the Lord, to work in His kingdom, to be a witness for Him.

We think that by blowing it, our role in Christ's family and work is over, and we turn to other things to fill our lives, just like Peter went back to fishing.

But friend, let me ask you something. After Peter denied the Lord, who went after whom to set things straight? Who initiated the restoration of Peter?

Jesus did!

And when we, the children of God, mess up in our lives and allow sin to win out,

## **II. JESUS TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO RESTORE US.**

Sometimes He shows us that the things we retreat to are not productive, just as Peter and the others fished all night and caught nothing.

Sometimes He begins to work, and at first we don't even recognize it is Him.

But then He does something in our life or around our life that gets our attention, and the Holy Spirit Who lives within us says just like John said to Peter, "It's the Lord."

And when the Holy Spirit said that to Peter through his friend John, Peter dove in the water.

And that is what we must do!

## **III. WE MUST RETURN TO OUR FIRST LOVE.**

**A. When we have allowed sin and guilt to break our fellowship with the Lord, and we are feeling rejected and useless, we must dive in and swim to Jesus as fast as our little arms will carry us.**

**B. And declare our love for Him.**

- 1. We can be honest that our love at this moment **may not be all it should be.****
- 2. It **may not be all it ought to be.****
- 3. It **may not be all that we believe it will be.****
- 4. But it is our love now,**

**and we want it to grow,**

**and we want to act upon it.**

**C. Jesus says,**

- 1. Then get back to what I called you to do.**
- 2. Feed My lambs – make disciples.**

### **3. Tend My sheep – be a witness.**

CONCLUSION: Some of you are where Peter was right now.

- Feeling the guilt of sin
- Feeling like you have ruined it all
- Depressed, broken hearted
- Maybe you have already begun to retreat to something else.
- Jesus is calling. He is saying, “You’re not really catching much are you.”
- He wants you back. He wants to restore you.