

Introduction

In Ecclesiastes 12, Solomon wrote that the words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.” This is part of a book I wrote called, Solomon’s Seven Principles of Teaching.” Well driven nails speak of fastening things together. Wise teachers tie things together in an effective way. Most people that teach about teaching say that conclusions should tie things together. The conclusion serves as a summary and review of the main points and tie things together.

(Ec 12:11) “The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of *these* collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.”

We have come to John 21, the last chapter of the John’s Gospel. It is no surprise that he does exactly what Solomon taught; he summarizes some of the main points in the book, and ties things together. Our text is about the third manifestation of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection. In the first section, Jesus appears to the disciples who have fished all night and caught nothing. He tells them to cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, which they do, and they were not able to bring in the nets because of the great number of fish. In the beginning of His ministry, when He called the disciples, they had fished all night and caught nothing, and He told them where to cast their nets and their nets were full. He told them to “follow Him and He would make them fishers of men.” This scene is a reminder to them that Jesus is the Fisher of Men, and of His call to them to be fishers of men.

The second section is when the disciples get back to shore. Jesus invites them to have breakfast, and He already has fish and bread ready for them, and He feeds them. This is a reminder that He is the Bread of Life. In His ministry, He had twice fed the multitudes with fish and bread.

The third scene Jesus manifests Himself as the Good Shepherd. In John 10, He had taught them that He was the Good Shepherd. It is also the restoration of Peter, where He asks Peter three times if he loves Him. He tells Peter to feed His lambs, shepherd His sheep, and to feed His sheep. Peter has denied Jesus three times by a campfire, and now in front of a campfire, Jesus has Peter tell Him three times that he loves Him. Finally, Jesus gives Peter some parting prophetic words about faithfully fulfilling his calling, and about how his life will end.

Jesus' Third Manifestation to His Disciples

1. Fisher of Men
2. Bread of Life
3. Good Shepherd

1. Fisher of Men

After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. In verse fourteen, we find that this is the third time that Jesus manifested Himself to the disciples.

(Jn 21:1) “After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way.”

(Jn 21:14) “This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.”

What were the things that John was referring to? The first manifestation was to the disciples on Sunday evening. All the disciples but Thomas were there, and they were gathered in a room with the doors shut, and Jesus came and stood in their midst. They thought they were seeing a spirit and were troubled, so Jesus said, "Peace be with you." He showed them His hands and side, and again said, "Peace be with you." Then, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Then He said that if they forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them. It was a reminder that they were to preach the good news, that there is forgiveness available in Christ.

(Jn 20:19–23) "So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." {20} And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. {21} So Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." {22} And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. {23} If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained."

The second manifestation takes place eight days later, when Thomas is with them. He was not with the disciples when Jesus manifested Himself the first time. When they told him about everything, he said he would not believe unless he saw the imprint of the nails and put his hand into His side. When Jesus manifested Himself the second time, He told Thomas to reach over and touch His side and to look at His hands. Then, He said, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

In this third manifestation, the disciples are in Galilee at the Sea of Tiberias, which is another name for the Sea of Galilee. (It is also called Lake Tiberias, Genesareth Lake, Sea of Kinneret, or Lake Galilee.) Tiberias is a town on the western bank, and was named after a Roman emperor. John tells us that Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples were there, seven in all.

(Jn 21:1-2) "After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way. {2} Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

In John 1:44, we learned that Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. In Luke 5:10, we find that James and John were fishing partners with Peter and Andrew, so they were probably from there also. Bethsaida is on the Northeast side of the Sea of Galilee, which is probably where this takes place.

(Jn 1:44) "Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter."

(Lk 5:10) "and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

Peter said to them, "I am going fishing," and they all said they would come with him. They went out that night and caught nothing.

(Jn 21:3) "Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing."

At the break of day, Jesus stood on the beach, yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered, "No." Then, Jesus told them to cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." The disciples cast the net on the right side and were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

(Jn 21:4-6) "But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. {5} So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." {6} And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish."

John wrote, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.'" That is the primary way that John refers to himself. John recognized that it was Jesus because of the great catch. When John said this to Peter, Peter put on his outer garment and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the little boat, which was about a hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

(Jn 21:7-8) "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. {8} But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish."

How did John recognize that it was Jesus on the bank? Jesus has recreated the scene and miracle that He did when He called them to follow Him. In Luke 5, Jesus told Peter to put out into the deep water and let down their nets for a catch. Peter answered, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they let down the nets, they caught a great quantity of fish and the nets began to break. The disciples were amazed, and then Jesus said, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they got to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

(Lk 5:1-11) "Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; {2} and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. {3} And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and *began* teaching the people from the boat. {4} When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." {5} Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say *and* let down the nets." {6} When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets *began* to break; {7} so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. {8} But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" {9} For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; {10} and so also *were* James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." {11} When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."

In Matthew's and Mark's accounts of that incident, they both record that Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

(Mt 4:19) "And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

(Mk 1:17) "And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

Jesus has recreated the scenario where the disciples fished all night and caught nothing. Then, He tells them where to cast their nets and they again bring in a great catch. John recognized that it was Jesus by the miracle that just happened. Jesus has brought back to their memory the time when Jesus called them to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men. This was the time that they left their nets and followed Him.

After Jesus was crucified, the disciples had gone back to the Sea of Galilee. What are they doing? They are fishing once again. Jesus has manifested Himself again as the Fisher of Men and Master, and is reminding them of their decision to leave behind everything and to follow Him. Jesus has called them to be fishers of men. Since the disciples had gone back to fishing, He is calling them again to return to the work that He has called them to do.

2. Bread of Life

In the second scene of this third manifestation of Jesus, He is the Bread of Life. When the disciples got back to the shore, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. He told them to bring some of the fish which they had just caught. Some scholars point to the fact that we have to bring our part, and God does His part. While that is true, Jesus already had the fish and bread for them to eat. I believe it was more of a picture to remind them of His past provision of bread and fish.

(Jn 21:9-10) "So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. {10} Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught."

Peter went up and drew the net to land, which was full of large fish. He counted them, and found that there were one hundred and fifty-three, and the net was not torn. The Sea of Galilee is known to have tilapia and barbel, and they usually run two to five pounds. A large one could be five to seven pounds. If we use a conservative number of four pounds per fish, that would be more than six hundred pounds of fish in the net, and yet the net was not torn. That would also be an awful lot of fish for Peter to draw to the land by himself. It was a miraculous catch, and nothing was lost.

(Jn 21:11) "Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn."

Then Jesus said, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. His appearance must have been different, or they could have easily identified Him by His looks. They were recognizing Jesus by what He had done and was doing, rather than by appearance. Jesus then took the bread and the fish and gave it to them. John then tells us that this was the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

(Jn 21:12-14) “Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples ventured to question Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. {13} Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. {14} This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.”

While fish and bread were common foods to eat, I believe there was significance to this. Jesus did not buy the fish or bread; He did not catch the fish. He miraculously provided the fish and bread to the multitudes on two separate occasions. All four gospels include the account of feeding the five thousand: Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6:32-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-13. The people had been listening to Jesus teach all day, and rather than send them away hungry, Jesus told the disciples to feed the multitudes. They did not know where or how to do this. They found a young lad who had brought two fish and five loaves, and Jesus took it, blessed it and then multiplied it, so that after everyone was fed, they picked up twelve baskets of leftover fragments. His message to the people the next day was that He is the Bread of Life, and that He is the bread that came down from heaven, and that they must partake of Him. Some of the disciples left Jesus because they found His words of eating His flesh and drinking His blood to be difficult.

Although John does not give the account of feeding the multitude of four thousand, the other three gospels include that account. Then, after feeding the four thousand, they picked up seven baskets of leftovers. After feeding the multitudes, Mark records that they entered a boat to go to Dalmanutha, which was on the other side of the lake. They began to discuss the fact that they had not brought any bread with them. Jesus was aware of it, and said, “Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?” He brought up the feeding of the five thousand, and the feeding of the four thousand, and the leftovers that had been gathered up afterwards. He concluded by saying, “Do you not yet understand?”

(Mk 8:16–21) “They *began* to discuss with one another *the fact* that they had no bread. {17} And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you discuss *the fact* that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? {18} Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, {19} when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?” They said to Him, “Twelve.” {20} “When *I broke* the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?” And they said to Him, “Seven.” {21} And He was saying to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is the Bread that was sent from heaven that we must partake of to have eternal life. He is also the provider and supplier of all of our needs. He wants the disciples to know that He will continue to supply all of their needs and to trust Him to provide for them.

3. Good Shepherd

The third scene that Jesus sets up is that of Peter's denial of Jesus at the courtyard of the high priest. Jesus prepared a charcoal fire, and had the fish placed on it. The disciples saw it when they got out of the boat onto the land. When Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest, the slaves and officers were standing by a charcoal fire warming themselves, and Peter was also with them warming himself. Peter is once again by a charcoal fire.

(Jn 21:9) “So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread.”

(Jn 18:18) “Now the slaves and the officers were standing *there*, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.”

Jesus invited the disciples to have breakfast, and after they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” And Simon Peter answered, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My lambs.” Then, Jesus said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Again Peter said, “Yes Lord; You know that I love You.” And Jesus said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” Then, for a third time, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” Peter answered Jesus, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” And Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

(Jn 21:15–17) “So when 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, “Tend My lambs.” {16} He said to him again 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, “Shepherd My sheep.” {17} He 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 all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

When Jesus was being condemned by the chief priests, he was outside the door, and because of John, Peter was let in. The slave-girl at the door said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” Peter denied Jesus for the first time.

(Jn 18:16–17) “but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. {17} Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

Afterwards, Peter was standing and warming himself by the charcoal fire, someone asked him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” Peter denied it and said, “I am not.” Then, one of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed, just as Jesus had prophesied to Peter earlier that evening. The charcoal fire was a reminder that he denied the Lord three times.

(Jn 18:25–27) “Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?” He denied *it*, and said, “I am not.” {26} One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” {27} Peter then denied *it* again, and immediately a rooster crowed.”

Now, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter may not have got it the first time, but by the third time that Jesus asked him, Peter understood what was happening, and he was grieved. Peter understood that he had denied his Lord and Master. He knew he had let Him down. Earlier that evening after they had shared the Lord’s Supper, Jesus told Peter that he could not follow Him now, but would follow later. Peter said, “Lord, why can I not follow You right

now? I will lay down my life for You.” Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.”

(Jn 13:36–38) “Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” {37} Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” {38} Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.”

John does not record this, but in Matthew’s account, Peter denied Jesus and began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” Then, the rooster crowed, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Peter knew what he had done. He knew that what Jesus prophesied had come to pass. He felt remorse. He felt like a failure. He was ashamed of what he had done. He was broken.

(Mt 26:74–75) “Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. {75} And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.”

We have one more bit of information given in Luke about Peter’s denial. When the rooster crowed Jesus turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord to him, that before a rooster crows today that he would deny Jesus three times. And then Peter went out and wept bitterly. He knew that the Lord knew that he had denied him. He knew that the Lord knew that he let Him down. He knew that he was guilty. He was upset with himself. He was ashamed of what he had done. He was grieved over what he had done, and he went out and wept bitterly.

(Lk 22:61–62) “The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.” {62} And he went out and wept bitterly.”

When Jesus had prophesied to Peter that he would deny Him three times, He had also said that Satan had demanded permission to sift him like wheat. Then Jesus told Peter that He had prayed for him, that his faith would not fail, and that once he had turned again, he would strengthen his brothers. Peter has been sifted and broken by his denial of the Lord. His faith has not failed; he is still following Jesus, but he has not been restored. Jesus is now restoring him so that he can begin to strengthen his brothers.

(Lk 22:31–32) “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; {32} but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus does not condemn or shame Peter. He simply asked Peter if he loved Him more than these. Scholars differ on what these mean. Some say it refers to the other disciples, while others say it refers to the fishing business. I side with those that believe Jesus was referring to the net full of fish that he had brought up. God does not want us comparing ourselves to others, so I don’t think Jesus would have asked Peter if he loved Him more than the other disciples. Jesus wants to know if Peter is still willing to give up his fishing business to do God’s work.

The first two times that Jesus asked Peter, He used the Greek word, *agapao* (Strong’s G25), which refers to God’s perfect love. Peter did not answer with *agapao*, but with *phileo* (Strong’s G5368), which means the love, affection, or fondness of a friend. Peter did not have a perfect

love yet, but he did love the Lord. When Jesus asked Peter the third time, He used the same word that Peter had been using, *phileo*, and I believe that when Peter heard Him change the love to *phileo*, that also grieved Peter. Peter had denied Jesus three times, and now he has affirmed his love for Jesus three times. This was the restoration of Peter.

There was another element to Peter's restoration. When Peter answered the first time, Jesus said, "Tend My lambs." The ESV and KJV say "Feed My lambs." The Greek word is *bosko* (Strong's G1006), which means to feed, graze, or keep, so I believe that "feed" is a better translation. First, notice that the lambs belong to Jesus; He is the Good Shepherd. Any pastor of a flock is an under-shepherd; the flock does not belong to him, but to the Lord. Second, a pastor must feed the flock out of a love for Jesus. Any shepherd that does not love Jesus cannot love the sheep the way that God intends for them to be cared for. Third, Jesus used the word *lamb*, which is a young sheep. We have to feed the young believers, who may not be able to feed themselves the way an older sheep can. We need to make sure that we give them food to help them grow.

When I was in prison ministry, and I was discipling new believers, I was teaching them to read the Bible, and how to have a quiet time. I was teaching them to memorize scripture and how to meditate on God's word. I was teaching them to renew their minds with the Word of God. I was teaching them basics about prayer. I was teaching them about love and forgiveness. I was not teaching them how to preach; these were young believers, not aspiring preachers.

After the second time that Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, He told him to "Shepherd My sheep." Again, the sheep belong to Jesus, the true Shepherd. This time, the Greek word for shepherd is *poimano*, (Strong's G4165), which does mean to shepherd or tend. The English word pastor is one of three words used for an elder or overseer. To pastor means to shepherd. A shepherd tends, watches over, cares, leads, protects, and feeds the flock. Jesus tells Peter to shepherd or tend His sheep.

After the third question and response, Jesus tells Peter to tend or feed His sheep. Again, I believe that the ESV and KJV are better translations of this verse. One of the primary jobs of a pastor is to feed the flock. Much of his time spent each week is on preparing messages to feed the flock, and it is an important aspect of pastoring.

Then, Jesus continued speaking to Peter, and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." Jesus was telling Peter that in his older years he would become a prisoner, and be taken where he did not wish to go. Then, He said they will stretch out his hands, which was a term used for crucifixion. Jesus said this to indicate what kind of death he would glorify God. At the Last Supper, Jesus had told Peter that he would follow Him, not now, but later. Peter was going to be crucified. Tradition tells us that Peter was martyred in Rome at the same time as Paul. Since Paul was a Roman citizen, they cut his head off, but since Peter was not a Roman citizen, they crucified him. Because Peter did not feel worthy of being crucified in the same way as the Lord, he requested to be crucified upside down, and they granted the request.

(Jn 21:18–19) "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." {19} Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

(Jn 13:36) “Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.”

And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me!” One of the most important things that a leader must do is to follow Jesus. We cannot lead people to Jesus if we are not following Jesus. We have to continue following Jesus and helping others to follow Jesus. Shepherds must love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; to serve Him; obey Him; and to humbly walk with Him. They must be an example to the flock, and these are things that God wants all of us to do.

After Jesus said these things to Peter, Peter turned around and saw John following them. Then he asked, “Lord, and what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!” Jesus essentially told Peter not to be concerned about when John would die, but to concentrate on following Jesus himself.

(Jn 21:20-23) “Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” {21} So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?” {22} Jesus said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!” {23} Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

The question and answer remind me of Acts 1:6-8, where the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” The disciples had a job to do, and they were distracted by wanting to know about the timing of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Sometimes we lose focus on the things that God has called us to do. This is a reminder that we need to stay focused on the job at hand.

(Ac 1:6–8) “So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” {7} He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; {8} but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

The disciples heard Jesus, yet they did not hear Him. They misunderstood what Jesus said. John is writing about himself, and he said that a saying went out among the brethren that John would not die. John corrects that misunderstanding by saying, “yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

John was the only one of the twelve disciples that died a natural death. The other eleven apostles were all martyred. According to the Foxes' Book of Martyrs, he was arrested in Ephesus by the Roman Emperor, Domitian, and brought to Rome, where he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, and was miraculously delivered by God, without any injury.¹ After that, Domitian banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he was in a prisoner camp. There are no historical documents by

¹ Foxes Book of Martyrs, XVI. John, page 10

historians that confirm this widely-held church tradition. There is much historical evidence that John returned to Ephesus after being released from Patmos, where he lived until he died in AD 98, at a very old age of. One church father wrote that John had become so old and physically worn down that he had to be carried into the church services. I am appreciative of the commitment to not forsake the assembling of the saints, and the effort that he made not to miss, but to be a part of those services.

Conclusion and Applications (Jn 21:24-25)

John ends the book by saying, "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true." He adds, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."

(Jn 21:24–25) "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. {25} And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."

In the Gospel of John, he had only included a few of the signs that Jesus had done, and the purpose was for people to believe. He did not try to write a comprehensive biography about Jesus and the miracles that He performed. He was selective and only included a few. These were written so that we may believe.

(Jn 20:30–31) "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; {31} but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

Our first application is to believe in Jesus. If you have never received Jesus Christ into your life, but you now believe that He came to die for our sins, was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, then the next step for you is to receive Christ into your life by confessing Him as your Lord and Savior. Simply pray something like this.

Jesus, I do believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for the sins of the world, were buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I want You to rule and reign in my life, so I confess You as my Lord and Savior. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In our passage, Jesus recreated three scenes from His time of ministry with the disciples. The first scene was a reminder of when He called them. They had fished all night and caught nothing. He told them where to fish, and they caught so many the boat began to sink. Jesus called them, saying, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They were amazed and put down their nets, left the fishing business and followed Jesus. Jesus was the fisher of men, and He wanted His disciples to return to following Him and doing what He had called them to do.

Our second application is to follow Jesus, and to take heed to the ministry that God has given to each of us. Jesus came to the disciples and reminded them of when He had called them. In His discussion with Peter, He restored Peter and exhorted him to shepherd His sheep. He wanted them to get back to the ministry He had called them to do. God did not plan on just using the

twelve apostles, or certain leaders. He has prepared good works in advance for each of us to do. This passage is a reminder to consider what God has called us to do, and to follow Jesus by being faithful to that calling. He does not want us to get distracted or worrying about what is going to happen to someone else. He wants us to focus on doing the things that He has called us to do.

(Col 4:17) "Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

(Eph 2:10) "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

(1 Pe 4:10) "As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

In the second scene, Jesus fed them bread and fish, which was ready for them when they came from the boat. Jesus had fed the multitudes of five thousand, and four thousand with bread and fishes. Afterwards, when they forgot to bring bread with them, and were concerned about not having bread, Jesus rebuked them for having hard hearts and not learning from the two earlier occasions where He fed the multitudes. At that time Jesus had been teaching the multitudes that He is the Bread of Life, and that they must eat of His flesh and drink of His blood in order to have life. Once again, Jesus is reminding the disciples that He is the Bread of Life. He is reminding them that He will always provide for them.

Our third application is to trust God to meet your needs. If you have a need in your life, ask the Lord to provide it. He is the Bread of Life. He promises to provide us with our necessary food, clothing, and shelter. When we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, He said He will add all these things to us. Ask the Lord to give you your daily bread.

(Mt 6:33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

In the third scene, Jesus recreates the campfire where Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Now, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Each time Peter replied, "You know that I love You." Jesus was restoring Peter. He was not just restoring Peter's soul; He was restoring him to his calling as an apostle and a leader. Upon each answer by Peter, Jesus told him to feed or tend His sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and He had called Peter to shepherd His sheep.

Our fourth application is to be committed to restoration. God wants us to be healthy, and for our souls to prosper. We will all fail at times. Solomon said the righteous man falls seven times and rises again. Jesus forgives us. Jesus restores us. Jesus does not condemn us, but forgives and restores us. Have you been hurt or wounded by someone, and in particular, a church leader? God wants you back in church. He wants you to be healed of that hurt. He wants you to forgive, and He wants you to be forgiven. He wants you to get back up, take your place in the body, and to follow Him again.

(1 Th 5:23) "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Pr 24:16) "For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity."

Paul wrote in Galatians 6 that if see a brother who has fallen, we who are spiritual are to restore them. We are to bear their burden and help restore them. Do you know someone that has been offended or hurt or has fallen away? God wants them restored and to follow Him. Pray for the person, and pray for God to give you wisdom in restoring them. Go to the person with the intent to win them and restore them. It is not to condemn or judge, but to restore the person. Go gently, humbly, and carefully, but go.

(Ga 6:1) "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for the Apostle John, and for the book that You led him to write. Thank You for all the truths that we have learned studying the Gospel of John. Thank You for the summary passage today, where John reminds us that Jesus is the Fisher of Men, and has called us to fish for men. Help us to win people to Christ. Help us to care about the lost. Help us pray for them, and to be intentional in reaching them with the gospel. Thank You for being the Bread of Life, and for always providing for us. Thank You for not only providing for the material things that we need, but also the spiritual things that we needed, like forgiveness from our sins. Thank You for making a way for us to have fellowship with You. Father, thank You for this passage about the restoration of Peter. Thank You for Your forgiveness and cleansing. Thank You for second and third chances. Thank You for not condemning us, but always loving us. Thank You for the calling on each of our lives. Help us to focus on the things You have called each of us to do, and to be faithful. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- Was there ever a time in your life where you turned away from following the Lord, just as Peter did? What helped you come back to Christ? Was there a person that God used in your life to help you come back?
- Why did God allow Peter to be sifted by Satan? What was God's purpose in allowing it?
- Peter grieved and wept over denying Christ? What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? (See 2 Cor 7:7-11.)
- What was Jesus' attitude toward Peter when He restored Him? Did He hammer him about the things that He did, or how awful it was? What are the things that Jesus focused on?
- Why did Jesus wait until the third time that He manifested Himself to the disciples to deal with these matters?
- Why is a shepherd's relationship with Jesus so critical in tending, shepherding, and feeding the flock?
- If Jesus already had fish on the fire for the disciples to eat, why did He tell them to bring some of the fish that they had caught?

Jesus' Third Manifestation to His Disciples

Introduction (Ec 12:11)

- 1. Fisher of Men** (Jn 21:1-11, 21:14, 20:19-23, Jn 1:44, Lk 5:1-11, Mt 4:19, Mk 1:17)

- 2. Bread of Life** (Jn 21:9-14, Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6:32-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-13, Mk 8:16-21)

- 3. Good Shepherd** (Jn 21:9-23, 18:18, 18:17, 25-27, 13:36-38, Mt 26:74-75, Lk 22:61-62, 22:31-32, Ac 1:6-8)

Conclusion and Applications (Jn 21:24-25, Jn 20:30-31, Col 4:17, Eph 2:10, 1 Pe 4:10, 1 Th 5:23, Pr 24:16, Ga 6:1)

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