

Breakfast on the Beach

Detailed Outline

Part 2 of 3

I. Introduction

A. The Passover meal as backdrop

1. As I think about meals that Jesus has served, it reminds me of the Passover in Luke 22. There was a meal there as well, and I think it serves as the backdrop for our text.
2. It was at the Passover meal that Jesus tells his disciples that one of them will betray him.
3. And it's at that meal that the disciples begin to argue as to who of them is the greatest.
4. It's at that point, too, that Jesus tells Peter that he will deny him three times. And Peter affirms to the Lord that he is the one who most certainly will remain faithful to Jesus.

II. The Story

A. And so, as they eat this breakfast on the beach, the meal is a kind of setting that may bring memories back to Peter and the others about what it is that Jesus is about to do.

B. That leads us to the conversation that takes place in verses 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. 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.’ 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.’” (John 21:15–17)

1. Obviously the three repetitions of “do you love me?” take us back to the three denials of Peter that he even knows the Lord Jesus.
2. And three times when Jesus asked Peter if he loves him and Peter says, “Yes, I do,” the Lord Jesus then tells him “shepherd my sheep: care for your Master’s flock.”

C. Some observations

1. Change from catching fish to tending sheep
 - a) Image changes from being a fisherman to being a shepherd.
 - b) This may be a commentary on what it means to make disciples.
 - 1) If you are going to make disciples, the first thing you have to do is to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ, and that is evangelism. So that’s catching fish.
 - 2) We’ve moved from catching fish to tending sheep. Besides introducing people to the Lord Jesus, we need to nurture them along to maturity in their faith.
 - 3) Discipleship involves both evangelism and nurturing.

2. Jesus uses different terms for the sheep.
 - a) Notice that he uses different terms for sheep.
 - 1) The first time he says “feed my lambs.” Some sheep are lambs; they’re baby Christians and they need to be brought along from where they are.
 - 2) The second time he says “sheep.” There are others who are more mature in their faith, they are “sheep” (adult sheep) and they are to be brought along as well.
 - b) Shepherding the flock means shepherding the entire flock, and that includes a breadth of maturity that needs to be taken into account.
3. Jesus uses different terms for shepherding.
 - a) One of them is the word that means to feed. And you surely shepherd sheep by seeing to it that they are fed. Psalm 23 talks about the Lord being the Good Shepherd, leading his sheep to green pastures.
 - b) There’s another term employed here that has more of a general sense of tending to the sheep: of caring for them.
 - 1) I think that’s the broader work of the shepherd.
 - 2) The shepherd is to protect his sheep from dangers.
 - 3) The shepherd is to guide his sheep as to where they should go.
4. It’s all encompassed; all kinds of sheep and the full spectrum of shepherding.

D. That’s the kind of work that is bigger than any one person.

1. While one-to-one discipleship and interaction is important, what Jesus is saying needs to take place here is more than a one-man job.
2. It takes a broader spectrum of gifts and ministry to accomplish that.
3. I believe what he’s saying here is shepherding the flock is the work of elders. In 1 Peter 5 when Peter speaks of himself, he speaks of himself as a fellow elder and addresses elders and tells them to care for the flock.
4. Disciple-making is the work of the church, and disciple-making is under the purview and guidance and leadership of the elders. That doesn’t mean that the elders do all of the work, but that they assume responsibility for leading and guiding the shepherding process.

E. The Lord Jesus also reminds Peter that the sheep are his.

1. He says feed MY sheep, feed MY lambs.
2. We need to remember that the flock is the flock of our Lord. It is the church of our Lord. It is not ours; it is not our possession.
3. It may be ours in the sense of a ministry focus, but it belongs to him.

III. The price of following Christ

“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.” Now this he said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God.”
(John 21:18-19)

A. For Peter

1. Peter’s obedience is going to lead to death.
2. If Peter walks in our Lord Jesus’ steps, he is literally going to walk in those steps in the sense that he is going to be called upon to give up his life for the sheep, for the flock.
3. It’s clear as well that in so doing, Peter is going to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Fear and love

1. The disciples could look ahead to their future; they knew there was some uncertainty and danger.
2. Knowing the danger, Jesus emphasizes love.
 - a) I think about the words from John when he says, “Love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18)
 - b) The way to deal with fear in our lives, fear even of the reality of martyrdom, is our love for the Lord Jesus: that casts out fear.
 - c) These may sound like strange and foreign words to us, but there are believers today who take them very literally. It may well be this very day that some who shepherd the flock of God will pay for it with their own blood.
3. “Do you love me?” he says three times, and three times essentially the same answer is given: “If you love me, then you will care for that which I love.”
4. The way we are to love him is by caring for the sheep for which he has given his blood. It’s love for the Lord, then it’s love for his flock.

IV. In the end, Jesus says to Peter, “Follow me.”

- A. Ultimately, the leaders of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ are followers, and that’s why Paul says, “Follow me as I follow him” (1 Cor. 11:1).
- B. We lead by following, which may lead to death. It certainly leads to caring for his sheep.