

Setting the Scene

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 3

Introduction

- A. Given Peter's denial of the Lord, it's not too surprising that Jesus focuses on Peter.
- B. It's also true that this text is for each of us.
- C. In 1 Peter 5, Peter passes on many of the truths he learned from this incident.

I. A Wonderful Fishing Story

- A. It's a story that has remembrances of early events.**
- B. Jesus is teaching alongside the Sea of Galilee.**
- C. He looks over and sees the small boat belonging to Peter, and Peter and the others washing their nets.**
- D. Jesus gets in the boat and asks Peter to launch it out a bit. Jesus speaks to the crowds.**
- E. After he finishes teaching, Jesus tells Peter to take his boat to deep water to catch fish.**
 - 1. Peter (the professional fisherman) tries to instruct Jesus as to how/when fish need to be caught. They had been out all night and caught nothing.
 - 2. Nevertheless, Peter obeys Jesus, perhaps under protest.
 - 3. They take the boat out and lower the nets.
 - 4. They had a great harvest of fish—so many fish that the nets tore and the boats were so full they began to sink.
- F. Peter falls at Jesus' feet saying, "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man."**
- G. That story is the beginning of the disciples' following Jesus full time. From that time on they left their boats, they left their nets, and they followed Jesus.**

II. Time has passed; Jesus has finished his earthly ministry.

- A. Jesus had already been crucified and raised from the dead.**
- B. We are now in this forty-day period where Jesus appears intermittently to his disciples.**
 - 1. It's not like it used to be, not constant fellowship.
 - 2. Not constant reunion with the disciples and doing everything together. He comes and goes.
- C. The disciples are wondering what lies ahead for them.**

III. Peter decided to go fishing, it was one thing he thought he knew how to do.

- A. Six other disciples went with him. They fished all night, unsuccessfully.**
- B. It was just beginning to dawn and the disciples were making their way in the boat.**

1. They look out and see someone on the shore a distance away cooking over a fire.
 2. The person on shore stands up and says, "You didn't catch anything, did you?"
 3. Jesus was right; they had not caught anything, probably because he had prevented it.
 4. He says, "Cast your nets on the right hand side of the boat."
- C. At this stage, they do not know who is speaking to them.**
1. They must assume that he has some knowledge of where the fish might be.
 2. Without protest they do as he says.
 3. They had a large harvest of 153 fish.
- D. It's at that point that John leans over to Peter and says, "This is Jesus." Peter immediately responds as Peter typically does—he puts on an outer garment and jumps overboard, making his way to shore.**
- E. Eventually the others get to shore as well, and Peter draws the net up onto shore.**
1. What is interesting is there are no sinking boats (as in Luke 5). There are no torn nets.
 2. Rather, fish are brought up.
- F. Jesus already has fish and bread in preparation; he has breakfast ready and waiting.**
- G. Jesus gives them this incredible event, but still there was a feeling among the disciples: "Is this really Jesus?"**

IV. Lessons from This Story

- A. First, this is a replay.**
1. This is a replay of Luke 5, in that sense a reconfirmation of the calling of the disciples to the life of one who follows Jesus full time.
 2. As they go through this event it is kind of *déjà vu* in the minds of the disciples.
 - a) "Haven't we been here before?"
 - b) And so they are recommissioned by this event.
 - c) They are reminded of the call that God has given them.
 - d) They are encouraged to press on, even in the midst of these new circumstances and in the challenging times that lay ahead of them.
- B. Second, this event provided reassurance of our Lord's presence and care.**
1. Jesus was watching (controlling?).
 2. I think Jesus prevented the fish from getting to their nets as they worked all night long.
 3. He was there even when they didn't perceive it.
 - a) That's going to be the reality of the disciples in their ministry and their lives.
 - b) They're going to be going on, and Jesus is going to be absent from them, not the way he used to be present with them on a day-to-day basis.
 4. The disciples are reassured. They weren't left to themselves.
- C. Third, an assurance of abundant provision for what they are to do.**
1. Whenever Jesus provided food, he never provided a small quantity of it. Whether it was the feeding of the 5,000 or the feeding of the 4,000 or this feeding, there was more than enough food, certainly enough fish.

2. Jesus was indicating to his disciples that when they follow him, he will not only be with them, but that he will provide abundantly for them.
3. They had a bigger catch (I think) than the first time. Certainly boats did not sink and nets did not tear.
4. I do think, by the way, as they are sitting there having this breakfast of bread and fish, I wonder if it went through the minds of the disciples to think “I wonder if this is somewhat like the feeding of the 5,000?”
5. Jesus abundantly provides.

D. Fourth, being a disciple, being a follower of Jesus, involves/necessitates evangelism.

1. I see this text as a commentary on the Great Commission that the Lord gave in Matthew 28.
2. One of the things that is essential for a disciple of our Lord Jesus is to catch fish, that is, to evangelize—to lead men and women to faith in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

E. Fifth, when we pursue our own agenda in our own strength, it never works.

1. All that night of fishing was fruitless because it was initiated by Peter for the wrong reasons, not by our Lord. And it was carried out in the strength of the flesh.
2. Remember Jesus said to them, “Wait until the Spirit comes upon you to empower you.”
3. The disciples were going about their mission in their strength with their abilities. This text reminds us that when we do that, it will not be fruitful.

V. Conclusion

- A. My question is this: We live in a day where we have not seen Jesus—when we have not walked with him. How near do you perceive Jesus to be?
- B. We may live in a day when we think our resources are few, but the reality is our Lord’s resources are always abundant. When he provides for us, he provides more than enough. And he makes that clear by that provision of fish.
- C. I wonder if we need a refresher course in our own calling.

Breakfast on the Beach

Detailed Outline

Part 2 of 3

VI. 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.

VII. 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.

VIII. 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.

IX. 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.

Hindrances to Leadership (Caring for the Flock)

Detailed outline

Part 3 of 3

X. Introduction

- A. It would be easy for us to take these words in John 21 as individualized instruction for Peter—until we read 1 Peter.
- B. There he applies Jesus' words to Christians, and in particular to elders, whom he calls fellow shepherds over the flock which God has called them to lead.
- C. Look especially at John 21:18–23 where Jesus is now bringing into focus two major challenges; major dangers for the one who leads and the one who will make disciples.

*"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." 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!" 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?" So Peter seeing him *said to Jesus, "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!" 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?" (John 21:18–23 NASB)*

XI. The danger of comparing ourselves with others

A. Peter's previous comparison

- 1. If you go back to Peter and his bold affirmation of his faithfulness to Jesus, then you know he was saying to Jesus:
- 2. "Lord, these men may fail you, but not I. I am more faithful than they are."
- 3. Which is another way of saying, "I am the greatest."
- 4. Each of the disciples apparently would argue with each other as to who had the greatest standing in the kingdom.
- 5. That's why Jesus says to Peter, "Peter, do you love me more than these?"

B. Peter's response now

- 1. Jesus was referring to the people whom Peter had compared himself with earlier and said, "Even if they betray you, I will not. You can count on me."
- 2. Peter will not claim greater love than his peers, but simply says, "You know I love you."
- 3. This has been an issue for the disciples. Who is the greatest? Who loves the most?

C. “What about John?”

1. Jesus and Peter were walking along, somewhat separate from the group, and John sort of tags along from a distance.
2. Peter looks back and sees John following and asks, “What about him? If I’m going to die, what does that mean for him?”
3. Jesus simply says, “Look, if I should choose for him to remain alive until I come, that’s my business, not yours.”
4. Jesus says, “You simply follow me. I have a calling for you, and I have a calling for him and they’re not the same. Don’t compare your calling with his.”

D. What about Peter, James, and John (those three in closest proximity to Jesus)?

1. James dies first, in Acts 12. John dies last. Peter dies in the middle.
2. We can’t explain why God has a particular path for each of those men, but they’re different paths—that’s up to Jesus.
3. The apostle Paul writes:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. (1 Cor 12:4–6)

What he is saying is every believer has a unique gift, a unique function or place of ministry for that gift, and each has a unique degree of effectiveness or success with that gift.

4. When you put all that together you have to say that every single Christian has a unique role to play. You cannot compare one Christian with another, even those who have the same gift. God has sovereignly bestowed gifts, places of ministry and degrees of success. And so, we don’t compare ourselves with others.

“For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. (2 Cor. 12)

E. The habit of those not following Christ

1. So this seems to be a habit, a pattern of those who are not following Christ as they should.
2. They’re comparing themselves with each other.
3. We need to compare ourselves against the perfection of our Lord. That will humble us.

XII. The danger of maintaining control

“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.” (John 21:18–19)

- A. **The text clearly says that Jesus is telling Peter that he will die. Not only will he die, it seems clear that he will die a martyr’s death.**

B. Applications for us?

1. We can't walk away from this portion of Scripture believing that the meaning and application is that all of us are going to die a martyr's death. That's not going to happen.
2. He contrasts the way things were when Peter was younger with the way things will be when he grows older.
3. The issue here is an issue of control. We live in a day where we are challenged to take control of our lives. And we want to do that; we really want to be in control.
 - a) Here's the problem: when we choose to follow Christ as our Savior, he takes control. We surrender that control to him. It's he who's in charge, not we.
 - b) There is something here that may be age related, that we should think about.
 - 1) I've seen this as I've watched myself and others around me grow older: it is very difficult for us to feel like we are losing control. Losing control of the car keys, our bank account, our freedom to go where/when we wish.
 - 2) It seems that what is being said here is that as you grow older, your realm of control gets smaller and smaller.
 - 3) There's the illusion at youth that you are in control, but that's not true.
4. I believe that what he may be saying is this: The more mature the Christian becomes, the more they are aware that it is he who is in control, not us.
 - a) What a great example Barnabas is to us. He goes to Antioch, sent by the leaders in Jerusalem and he rejoices that Gentiles have come to faith in the Lord Jesus.
 - 1) Then he looks at that church and says to himself, "You know, what this church needs is not just my gifts, they need the gifts of the apostle Paul as well."
 - 2) So they looked high and low, the same expression that's used of the parents of the Lord Jesus looking for him when he was lost in the caravan at age twelve.
 - 3) Barnabas looks high and low. He is not trying to maintain control; he is not trying to preserve his turf.
5. I fear that many of us as we get older are trying to protect our turf, rather than realize that life is a matter of surrendering control.
 - a) In the process of recognizing that, we realize that we must pass the torch. We must make disciples and prepare men and women to take positions that will fill our shoes.
 - b) This is what Peter has come to understand. That's why in 1 Peter he's instructing how to go about that process of leading others in knowing and serving the Lord.