

Great restorations

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[0 : 00] for the Sea of Galilee. He does use the word Galilee later on in the sentence. And we have these seven disciples and they decide to go fishing, or Simon Peter says they're going to go fishing. And it ends up with the breakfast that Jesus prepares for them, the fish and the bread that he offers them, that he's cooked for them.

And in verse 14 it says, this is now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. And we're going to look into verse 15 of this interview between Jesus and Simon Peter, and John comes in on it later on.

And I think it would be fair to say that John has made his major points already, and this is more by way of a footnote rather than making a big final point.

But he does make some points here, and hopefully as God helps us we'll be able to think about them. So this is what happened after breakfast, verse 15, when they'd finished eating.

[1 : 20] We get three questions and answers. We get a little saying about following Jesus. We get the question, what about him?

And then we get the last few verses which talk about the true testimony of John's gospel. So let's do those four things. First of all, these three questions and answers.

There are a number of interchangeable words used. So there are two different words for love.

There are two different words for lambs or sheep. And there are two different words for looking after lambs or sheep.

And some commentators will say that there are important differences between these words.

[2 : 21] But I have to say I'm not really convinced. I think they're used interchangeably. And you've got three questions and the corresponding answers.

And the words seem to be interchanged in a sort of pattern as you go through the questions and answers. So I might be missing something.

It's always possible. Or I might just be disappointing you. I'm not going to make a big play of the different words that are used. There is *agapeo*, which is the normal word for love.

Agapi. So at a Greek wedding, the bride is *agapimu*, my love. *Agapi*. And there's another word, *phileo*, which is another word for love.

So from which in English you get philanthropic. *Phileo*, or my name, *phileoipos*, lover of horses.

See, what a true insight that names give.

[3 : 29] So there's *phileo* and *agapeo*. So the first time, Jesus says, Simon Peter, do you *agape*? Which the NIV says truly love.

I think you just say love. Do you *agape* me more? More than these. And Peter replies, you know that I *phileo*, I love you. And then in verse 16, Jesus says, do you *agape* me?

And he says, I *phileo* you, I love you. The third time, he says, do you *phileo* me? Do you love me?

And Peter says, you know that I *phileo* you, I love you.

So Peter sticks with *phileo*. Jesus changes. I don't think there's a huge difference. I think the embarrassing thing is not the changing of the words, but the fact that it's said three times.

Because that's what, each time it's more or less the same, isn't it? The thing that upsets him is that it is repeated. And you get the same thing with feeding.

[4 : 40] Feed my lambs. I haven't noted this in my Bible, but there are two different words for feeding. Feed my lambs, verse 15.

Verse 16, take care of my sheep. So there's one word meaning, we would say to feed, another word meaning to shepherd or to feed. Translated, take care.

And Jesus, I think he uses the first word again in verse 17, feed my sheep. So you've got a different word for feeding.

And then the lambs and the sheep, it's two different words used there. So, *probada* and I think it's *anion*.

I don't know. It doesn't make a lot of difference. But I'm just saying there are different words here. But I think it doesn't make a huge amount of difference. It's the repetition. And the repetition is threefold.

[5 : 44] Do you love me, says Jesus to Simon Peter. First time he says, do you love me more than these? Verse 16, do you love me?

Verse 17, Simon, do you love me? And the three questions, I think we can be pretty sure, match the three times that Peter denied Jesus.

You remember these times he was under sort of sociological pressure when they were around the fire.

Let's see if we can find the verse. It's in chapter 18, where in verse 17, a girl at the door says, questions Peter whether he's one of Jesus' disciples.

And he says, no, I'm not. I don't have anything to do with this man. And then it's in verse 25.

[7 : 02] He was warming himself. You're not one of these disciples. And he denied it. Nothing to do with him. Verse 26.

One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, didn't I see you with him in the olive grove? And the third time Peter denied it. And that's what Jesus had told, had said would happen.

So, sad, sad. What should we say? He lets Jesus down, doesn't he?

He fails to say, I'm one of Jesus' people. I belong to him.

He matters to me. He denies that three times. And Jesus three times says, well, what do you think of that now?

[8 : 10] With hindsight, do you love me or what? And Peter three times says that he loves Jesus.

And what do we make of Peter? Different people have different temptations. I guess for many people, the temptation is timidity.

But I think with Peter, his problem was overconfidence. Because he had said, even if everybody else denies you, I'll never do that.

Because I'm a strong man. He might well have been very physically strong. But in this occasion, he has to learn that physical strength, your own strength, psychological strength is not enough.

We need humbly to depend on the Lord Jesus for every spiritual battle, every spiritual victory in every spiritual situation.

[9 : 20] Remember in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for strength. And he said to the others, you should be praying too. But they didn't quite catch the significance of that.

And they let sleep overtake them. So here's Peter in this, I think, humbled from what you might say bluster.

Bluster meaning he's saying, oh, I can do this. I can do this. I'm not like these weaklings who can't do it. I will never deny you, Lord. And he comes to realize, he's just the same as everybody else.

That he can let the Lord down. He needs strength from the Lord. And he's humbled from his bluster and arrogance.

But I don't think he is shamed. I don't think Jesus sort of makes him feel shamed.

[10 : 19] Jesus doesn't say to him, you awful man, look what you did. He simply says, where are we now? Do you love me? Peter says, yes, I do. And in this episode, I think we learn the way that the Lord is able to restore people from when they've stumbled.

Which is a great thing, isn't it? The Lord is not counting Peter's sins against him. But he's giving him the opportunity to come back.

And that's one of the wonderful things about the Lord Jesus. That he restores those who stumble.

He restores my soul, it says in Psalm 23, doesn't it?

And we also see that Peter is given a work to do. And the work, which is repeated three times, like everything else, is that he's to feed the lambs.

He is to look after the sheep. He is to shepherd the sheep. And that's Peter's work. That's what he's to do. We could learn lots of things from that. Not least, that Christian people need looking after.

[11 : 39] We need looking after, don't we? We need shepherding. We don't run on our own. We need shepherding. And I'm going to leave that for us.

The restoration of Peter. Who didn't realize how weak he was. How much he needed Christ's strength to win through.

And here he is humbled. And here he is restored. Let's go on to the next bit. In verse 18. Jesus says to Peter.

I tell you the truth. When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted. When you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And then he said, follow me. Well.

[12:48] Interesting that Jesus says to Peter, when you are old, this will happen. Now, not everybody reaches old age, do they?

He seems to be saying this to Peter. You will serve me. And at some point when you are old, this will happen to you.

What will happen is, somebody else will bind your hands and lead you where you don't want to go. And this is indicating the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.

We don't get any more detail about that. I mean, there are traditions, aren't there, about how Peter died. But Jesus just says, follow me. That's what you have to do.

Follow me. And our Savior went to the cross. And he's saying to Peter, you need to follow me. I was pondering. The way this is put, it sort of climaxes at some unspecified point in the future.

[14:01] At some unspecified point in the future, following me, Peter, will mean that you will be bound in a certain way and led where you don't want to go. And that is the sort of death you will die.

And I'd like to compare that with what Jesus says, every day we take up a cross. Because that's where it comes from, isn't it?

He says that we're to follow him every day. And whether we... So, the idea of taking up our cross isn't something that Jesus says, well, for some people, that doesn't happen until you're old.

And then that will become an issue. In fact, for Christian people, it's an issue every day, isn't it? Isn't this the way we're supposed to live every day? To take up our cross and follow him?

Peter denied Jesus for the sake of himself. And he said, I don't know him.

[15:03] He's not on my radar. I don't care about him. He denied Jesus. And what we're called to do is deny ourself for the sake of Jesus.

To say about ourselves, I don't know him, her. That person's not particularly on my radar. The point is I want to follow Jesus. That's what Peter was called to.

The cross as a pattern of life. And that's what we're called to, isn't it, as Christians? Am I right? Let's look at the next few verses.

Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, Lord, who is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him? So the fact that John is following behind gives you the impression that Peter and Jesus are talking as they walk along side by side.

[16:13] That's the impression it gives me anyway. And we're told a little bit about this person. He's not given a name, but it's always assumed that this is John.

This is the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had had that conversation with him. And Peter says, what about him?

What about John? And Jesus says, well, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what's that to you?

You must follow me. And John tells us that a misunderstanding of that became a rumor that there was a promise that Jesus would return before John died.

But that wasn't what Jesus had actually said. He said, if I want him to return, what's that to you? And I simply want to draw from that this whole question of comparisons and gifts and provision.

[17:24] So I don't think we're not looking at Peter in terms of his salvation historical context. We're just looking at him as a person who's saying to the Lord, what about this other person here?

What about them? And Jesus says to Peter, what's that got to do with you? Maybe I have a plan for this person. Maybe I have another plan. But that's not your business.

And we can find ourselves in the same position as Peter, can't we? We can say, what about so-and-so? What about so-and-so? So if you're a single person, you might say, well, what about so-and-so?

They're married. Or if you might be in a position where you look at somebody and they've got children, grandchildren coming out of their ears and you don't have very much in the way of family.

What about them? What about such and such a person? Or you might be saying, so-and-so, they've got such a steady job or they've got a fantastic job or whatever it is and here's me.
[18 : 35] I've got, my finances are very dodgy. What about this comparison? And Jesus, I think, says to us, what's that to you?

I've called that person to walk in a certain way. I've given them certain gifts, certain place in life. That's what I've given to them.

I've also given something to you. And what point is there in making a comparison? What about them? Do you see what I'm trying to say? You could apply that in all sorts of ways.

So-and-so has such and such health and I don't. Such and such, et cetera, et cetera. And Jesus says, look, don't do the comparison thing. I am calling you to follow me.

Some people, if you think about the future life, a number of us know Jenny Long. She died, I would say, at a young age. What was she?

[19 : 43] She'd just retired, hadn't she? I'm sure it would have been 62, something like that. Yeah. Jamie's mum and dad are 101 and 99.

We say, well, what about them? What about her? What about them? And Jesus simply says, what's that got to do with you?

Your job is to follow me. That's what he says. Let's look at the last few verses. This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.

We know that his testimony is true. Now, who's the we? Is it his companions who also sort of sign? Is it witnesses? Is it the apostolic group? Is it the people that John gathered around him?

You know, his sort of Bible study students when he was in his older age writing these things down? I don't know. But they say, we know his testimony is true.

[20 : 50] And this last bit is a claim to authenticity and confirmation. And it's helpful to us to know that, isn't it?

People will say to us, can you trust this ancient book? And the ancient book says in a number of places, trust what's written down, because the people who've written it down have taken trouble to make it accurate.

Luke says this at the beginning of his gospel, doesn't it? I've carefully researched this so that you may know the certainty of what's been written. And here is the same thing said at the end of John's gospel.

We haven't just made this up. It isn't cunningly devised fables. It isn't just nice stories. We've seen this. John's written it down. We, companions of John, we testify that he's got it right.

We know that his testimony is true. And there's an additional reference to the fact that the things that have been written have been selected on purpose.

[22 : 09] So Jesus did many other things as well, verse 25. And if every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world wouldn't have room for the books that would be written.

He says there's loads of things that Jesus did. Loads of things that he said. And if you were to stop and think about each of them and what they implied, you'd just be doing that, filling the whole world with books.

He says, what's written down here in the gospel has been selected. And it's been selected for a purpose to make a particular point.

And of course, that's what's said in chapter 20, verse 30. Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book.

So, I didn't try and write down everything. These are sort of edited highlights. But what I have written is written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

[23 : 16] So, it goes like this, and we know this very well, it's just repeating something we know. We have eyewitnesses in the first case. They were there. They saw it. Like Thomas, like John.

It's written down. And that's what the Holy Scriptures are. It's the writing down. That's among other things. It's the writing down of what these people saw.

And there is enough in this book for you to believe. In other words, the Bible is, you would say, self-authenticating.

You don't need something else to prove to you the Bible is true because the Bible has enough in it to convince us that it is true. It's self-authenticating. And that by believing this, by having faith, he says, you may have life in his name.

