

Jesus and Peter on the Shore

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[0:00] It's a good one.

All right. I want you to, just to get started, turn, find a Bible. If you don't have your own, get one out of the pew. Turn to John 21.

We're about to finish the book of John, the gospel. I've got the first half. I told Glenn, I says, I get to start the story, but you get to finish it.

You know, it's because the whole chapter is really one story. But I think I saw something that I want to share with you anyway. So John 21, first 14 verses, 1 through 14.

And this is not part of my sermon, but I'm going to do it anyway because it sets it up. Have you ever had a friend or a family member where you became estranged?

[1:17] You know, something happened and you just, the relationship was broken. And you wanted desperately to fix it, but you didn't know how. You wanted to tell them, I love you and I care for you and I want to be your friend or your whatever again.

And how can we fix this? Well, keep that in mind because that's exactly what we're talking about here today. Exactly what we're talking about today. And we're going to see how Jesus fixes it for Peter.

All right, let's read. I'm going to read 1 through 14. I'm using the New English translation. Good luck.

All right. After this, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

Now, this is how he did so. Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathaniel, who was from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples of his were together.

Simon Peter told them, I'm going fishing. Sounds like George, right? I'm going fishing. Well, we'll go with you, they replied. And they went out and got into a boat.

[2:29] But that night, they caught nothing. That sounds like George too, right? And when it was already very early morning, Jesus stood on the beach.

But the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, children, you don't have any fish, do you? And they replied, no. He told them, throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.

So they threw the net, and they were not able to pull it in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, it's the Lord.

So Simon Peter, when he heard that, it was the Lord. He tucked in his outer garment, for he had nothing underneath it, and plunged into the sea. Meanwhile, the other disciples came with a boat, dragging a net full of fish, for they were not far from land, about only 100 yards.

And when they got out on the beach, they saw a charcoal fire ready with a fish placed on it and bread. And Jesus said, bring some of the fish you have just now caught.

[3:35] So Simon Peter went aboard and pulled the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153. But although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Come to breakfast, Jesus said. But none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? Because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and he did the same with the fish.

This is now the third time Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. All right. So we've got Peter and John.

By the way, I think they were pretty good friends. It turns out, I didn't realize this, but they were business partners. So they knew each other really well, and that's why we see them paired a lot of times. Remember back at the tomb? They were the ones that ran to see if Jesus was there or not. Mary reported that the tomb was empty. And they went up on the Mount of Transfiguration together. I mean, they were close friends, I think, as well.

[4:36] And then there were Thomas. John and James, by the way, are the sons of Zebedee. And you'll notice that he never names himself. He just says the sons of Zebedee or the disciple Jesus loved. He's talking about them.

Thomas and Nathaniel and two others that are not named. They get in a fishing boat. Peter has decided he needs to go fishing. Now, that's something he knew really well. He was a fisherman. He understood fishing. And maybe I think he was probably restless. Here we have Jesus is resurrected. They've seen him twice. But it's not like he's with them all the time.

And here these guys are sitting around, and they need something. Can you ever known a guy who just can't sit still? He goes, his mind is all in turmoil.

He doesn't know what to do. And the next thing you know, he's got to do something. So Peter goes, he says, I know how to fish. Let's go fishing. Let's go get out in the boat and get busy. They didn't really know what was coming next.

[5:30] I mean, Jesus had talked to them, and he taught them some why he'd visit them. But, you know, they're just sort of waiting. Waiting for, what are we waiting for? They may have even had a concept. Jesus might have told them, I am going to descend to the Father.

And they're really not sure what's going to happen. And I'm sure Peter's a man of action, and he can't sit still. You know, if he sits still, he'd be twidgety. He'd need a fiddle stick or whatever those things are that these kids play with now.

Anyway. So here, I think also Peter was probably wrestling. Every time he saw Jesus, he was wrestling with the elephant in the room. That elephant is that he denied Jesus three times.

So far as we know, it has not been addressed. And here, that means that Peter feels estranged from Jesus. He's separated. He didn't.

How can he have a close relationship with this man that he loved as a dear friend and as a rabbi and teacher and master? And yet, with that thing there, hanging there between them.

[6:35] And he just doesn't know what to do. Now, I think that's pretty common amongst men. I don't know about women, but men really have a problem talking about those things.

And here's Peter. And I don't think he just, he doesn't know how to address it. He, in his own mind, he's thinking, you know, Jesus can't, how can he forgive me?

I denied him three times, and he looked right at me. He knew I had. He told me I was going to. And I said, no, no, no. And I let him down.

I let him down. And every time he got with Jesus, I'm sure he felt awkward. He didn't really know what to do or how to fit back into his role as a disciple.

Now, I'm pretty sure that he had repented. I'm pretty sure that he had said, oh, yeah, it's really messed up. Otherwise, he wouldn't have come back to the disciples and stayed with the group. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah.

[7:38] He had said that. He's the one that declared it. When Jesus asked, who do you say I am? Peter says, you're the Christ, the son of the living God. He knew who Jesus was.

Now that the resurrection occurred, it's even much clearer and real to him that he knows this is not just the Messiah. This is the son of God. God in the flesh has come to us.

Resurrected. But he needed to be reconciled to Jesus. For his sake, mostly. He needed to move out of that turmoil and uncertainty that he felt.

He had to do something. He didn't know what. And Jesus wasn't always there that he'd just go find him. So he went fishing. And he took along with him his former business partners, John and James, as with some others, and they fished all night without success.

Early in the morning, Jesus comes and calls out to him, children, you don't have any fish, do you? Of course, the answer is no. And then Jesus does something significant.

[8:55] He says to them, throw your net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some. In fact, they did. They found 153 large fish.

Then it was John. Now this is the same John that when he got to the tomb, looked in, he didn't go in, he looked in, and he believed. He understood Jesus was resurrected. Peter went in and didn't know what to make of it.

The tomb is empty. Grave clothes are there. I don't know what happened. Not sure. But John got it. John, all of us, John's by there a little bit. He says, it's the Lord.

It's the Lord. Now Peter had been working all night long. And depending on who, the Greek says he was naked.

Well, Hebrews didn't like that idea of being naked in public. So he was probably wearing something, but probably not a lot. Something, my translation assumes he was wearing an inner garment, sort of like a short tunic.

[10:04] Didn't have anything else underneath it. Other people say, well, he may have been wearing a loincloth or something and nothing else. And the Greek actually says that when he, he didn't put his clothes on, it says he grabbed his outer garment and tied it around him because he didn't want to be naked in front of Jesus.

And he jumped into the sea and swam the shore. Now that, that's Peter, right? Here's a boat full of fish and these guys got to get it to shore. And he says, no, I'm swimming.

I got to get there. I got to get there. And he probably arrived about the same time the boat did, by the way, because it's only 100 feet, 100 yards, rather.

And Jesus directs Peter to bring some fish that they had caught. So he goes and he helps the other pole and net ashore while Jesus is fixing breakfast for him. And I can see Peter bringing the fish over and giving it to Jesus and just standing there by the fire, looking down at Jesus, working on the fish and cooking and just wondering, what am I going to do?

How do we fix this? How do I, how do I go about this? Desperately wanting to speak to him and, and tell him how sorry he was and how much he, he regretted what he did and how much he really wanted to restore the relationship.

[11:22] But he wasn't able to speak. He didn't know what to say. He's a man of action, not words. He doesn't know.

But there's something else going on. You see, I think that when John said, it is the Lord, you know what triggered that thought in his mind? He remembered something. And Luke recorded it.

And I think when John said, it's the Lord, it popped back into his mind, Peter's mind too. And he goes, that's why he was so erred. He get, get in the water.

Yeah, it has to be. This is, this only happened one other time. Let's read it. It's in Luke five. So you want to turn back one gospel to Luke chapter five, verse one.

Okay, pages have stopped rustling, so I'll read.

[12:29] Now Jesus was standing by the lake of Gethsemane, right? And a crowd was pressing around him to hear the word of God. He saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats, which was Simon. Who's Simon? Peter. And asked him to put out of the way from the shore. Then Jesus sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

And when he finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch. And Simon answered, master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing.

Does that sound familiar? But at your word, I will lower the nets. And when they had done so, they caught so many fish that in there, that their nets started to tear.

So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats that they were about to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.

[13:37] For Peter and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. And so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were also Simon's business partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people. And so when they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Do you see what happened in the first time the nets went down? The first time the net, he told them to put the net down and they caught a huge amount of fish.

Peter fell on his knees. And he had first addressed Jesus as master, which is just a nice way of saying, sir. He fell down on his knees and he said, go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man. Lord now is a title that says, I understand you are a holy man, a man of God. God is with you. This could only happen by divine action. And I'm a sinful man.

[14:45] You need to move away from me because I'm in danger of judgment. I'm sinful. And what does Jesus say?

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. You're going to start catching people instead of fish from now on. All right? Jesus said, your sin is not the issue.

We'll handle that. I've got a task for you. I'm calling you to be a fisher of men. Now go back to the original story that we started with. Jesus is cooking.

Peter's standing there. In his mind, he remembers. Jesus forgave him the first time and told him, you're going to, I'm calling you to follow me and be a fisher of men.

And Jesus is cooking. And I can't tell you the rest of the story, guys. Glenn's sermon. But I just see it, that there's an unspoken thing happening here, which happens between men a lot of times.

[16:05] You don't say words like, I'm sorry and forgive me. You say, you want some fish? And so they, that relationship is being repaired.

Peter is coming to understand that as far as Jesus is concerned, and hopefully Glenn will confirm this next week, the call that he gave him back in Luke at the beginning is still valid now.

He is still called to be a fisherman of men. He's still called to follow Jesus. He's still part of the whole thing that Jesus is doing.

He has a role. All because of the flashback brought it back to his mind and reminded him of how it all began.

He knows it isn't over with yet. Well, maybe sometime you have had to turn from, you've turned from Jesus. You feel estranged from him for some reason or in some way.

[17:13] Maybe something's happened and you just don't think he can forgive you or that maybe you feel angry at him because he didn't do what you asked. Somehow you become estranged in your relationship to him.

You have an unresolved issue with him. I'd tell you to look at Peter and see that the elephant can be banished. Peace and relationship can be restored.

And it's Jesus who quietly waits for you to come and stand beside him, before him. And see that he loves you and cares for you.

He never turns you away. He never denies you as his. He loves you. He accepts you. He does so without reprisal, reprimand, or rebuke.

He says, don't fear. Don't fear. Don't worry about your sin or your shame or your fear.

[18:16] Don't. Just come back and let's restore our relationship with one another. He has so much for us, each one of us.

He loves us so intensely. And each one of us has a future with him. He's never left us. He's never forsaken us, nor will he ever. No matter what we've done.

No matter what we've done. We can't separate. He says nothing. No one can snatch us out of his hand. And yet sometimes we try to crawl out of his hand out of shame or guilt or fear because we've done something we're sure has disqualified us.

And that's never the case. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that in you there is nothing but love and grace, hope. As long as we'll cling to you, you'll cling to us.

And when we wander, you're the good shepherd that goes and finds the one who's lost and gone astray. Help us, Lord, to remember that and to quickly come back and be with you.

[19:29] And tell you that we are sorry and that we do want to be yours and we want to be with you, knowing he's already accepted us. And let us find our life in him, our hope in him, our future in him, our existence in him.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.