Forgiveness

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[0:00] Someone you love very much. Oh, wait a minute. Before I do that, y'all can be thinking. Let's tell everybody your name. I'm Fiona. Oh, I'm Elias.

Can y'all hear them okay? Okay, good, good. Okay, who is someone you love very much and what makes them special? Someone you love very much and makes them special.
We're going to let you start off. I'd say my parents because they're always there to me. All right, very good. Here we go, sir. My mom and my dad because they put a reserve in my head all the time and they make sure I put it on the table.
Good. My sister because I say they're helping me come up and stuff. All right, all right. Well, very good, very good.
Now, here's another question. How do you know when someone loves or cares about you? We're going to start off with you. How do you know when somebody loves and cares about you?
[1:04] Oh, cool. Well, whenever, for my dad, he'll take me to deer hunting and let me explore and find beer.

Oh, cool. Very good. When they help you. Okay. And who? I'd say their actions. Their actions. Any particular one? Um, when they do things to help me and care for you. Oh, very good. Very good. And our last question. And we're going to be starting with you.
What is your favorite way to show someone you love and care for them? What's your favorite way to show somebody that you love them? Helping them. Helping them? Okay. Telling them and showing actions.
Okay. I'm going to say helping them too. All right. Because I like helping people at school. Wonderful. Very good. Very good. Now, let me put this up here.
[2:06] Oh, I got to get, let's get untangled here. I won't be needing this no more. Let's give them a hand. Oh. And everybody always deserves a prize for coming up and doing something.

So you get a bus full of cookies. See, it makes the rest of you, you wish you'd have volunteered now, wouldn't it?
You know, I imagine some of you parents might have got a little nervous, you know, because you just never can tell what a young person might have to say when they come up. Well, today, our message, we're finishing up John, the gospel of John, and we're finishing up our, also finishing up the devotional that we've been using.
So if you want to, you can go to chapter 21 of John and if you want to follow along. But today's message is going to kind of be like a reader's digest. How many of y'all know what a reader's digest is?
Yeah. You know, it's not like reading a whole book. It's a bunch of stories, all kinds of stuff in there. So I hope I don't confuse a lot of people this morning when I share with you. I had the opportunity to speak on chapter one of the book of John.
[3:23] And now, today, I have the opportunity to share with you from the last chapter and the last part of chapter 21. Pastor John did the first part of chapter 21 last week.

And so I'm going to be finishing up. You know, it's kind of like two bookends when you're reading this. You know, John, and first John, and John 21, they kind of serve as like a prologue and an epilogue to the gospel of John.
And so we're kind of looking at two bookends here. In the beginning in John chapter one, Jesus is introduced as the eternal word, God incarnate, and the light shining in the darkness.
And matter of fact, the scripture starts off and it's one of my favorite scriptures. It says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

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All things came into being through Him. And apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and life was the light of men.
[4:27] And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. Here, the incarnate word is spoken and witness of Christ. As a matter of fact, in the same chapter, in the first chapter, in verse 18, it says, No one has seen God at any time, the only begotten God, who is the bosom of the Father.

He explained to Him, and when He's referring to Christ. And then He also says another thing in chapter one of John about Christ, He refers to Him about His grace and truth. He says, For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth was realized through Jesus Christ.
So that's kind of the beginning when we start out in the beginning of His ministry. and now we're coming to the end, to the other bookend of this. And this is kind of an epilogue. You know, when you read chapter 20, really, just about, it kind of stops.
And it's like, you know, we have to remember that John was the only living disciple of the twelve. He had, and he lived a lot longer.
All the other ones had died, you know, in an earlier age because of, you know, because of persecution, had been put to death in one way or another. But John was permitted to live to an older age.
[5:43] So he saw all the early church. He saw a lot of things that the other disciples didn't see. And so, when he wrote his gospel, which was written later than the other ones, his look at the gospel, what he shared, is a little bit different.

That's one reason I really like reading John because it is. And you know what? None of the gospels or anything that was written speaks of love as much as John does. He speaks of it, I can't remember how many times, but it was many times.
And even in his first epistle, he has that word love in there all so many times. And it's just encouraging to me when I read anything that John has written. So in this epilogue, John, I always wondered what he was doing.
He had kind of finished and then something come up and made him think, you know what? I think I need to add this very end to what I'm writing. And so in what we're going to look at today, we're going to see this is where Jesus takes time and he's restoring Peter.
And in his restoring him, he's commissioning him and the disciples to care for his flock. And he's also authenticating the testimony that he is giving in this gospel.
[6:56] In John chapter 21, 24, it concludes the book by validating the eyewitness testimony that he's the disciple whom Jesus loved. And I think you've heard that spoken of many times and stuff.

And he said, confirming that what he has written is faithfully written to what about Christ. And in John chapter 21, also, he speaks in verses 15 through 17, Jesus demonstrates his grace practically by asking Peter three times if he loves him, reversing the three denials that Peter makes.
So, all through this, at the very beginning too, and at the end, you're going to see that Jesus speaks, follow me. It's also spoken of. But one of my favorite scriptures wasn't even in what I had to say, but it's in chapter 21, so I wanted to share it with you and everything.
And most of my brothers that know me pretty well know my favorite scripture from this. Jesus said, come and have breakfast. And I love that. Because you know what?
There is a time when you get together with others. I don't know, there's something refreshing about being with other people in the morning. And Pastor John shared with you last week that Peter and the other disciples had gone fishing and they were out in the boat and someone had called out to them about their catch and everything and he had told them to throw the net to the other side and they caught a bunch of fish and then somebody said, I think that's the Lord.
[8:29] And Peter got so excited about it, he just jumped in the water. He grabbed some clothes, some of them said he put around them, others said he just might have tied it around them to get over there and get to Jesus.

So now we're going to kind of be looking at this kind of restoration and this situation that we're going to see in this last bit of scripture in the book of John.
Now, Jesus called them and said, let's have breakfast together and he says after they had finished breakfast and everything they were having breakfast together.
One of the things I want to say is that I imagine that was kind of awkward for Peter. Now if we think about what has happened with Peter you're going to say, well why was it so awkward?

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Well let me kind of share and we're not in we're not back in chapter 21 yet. I know I'm kind of, like I said, I might be going down some rabbit trails but I want you to think about how it was probably awkward for Peter because see Peter on the night that Jesus was betrayed denied Christ three times and all the gospels speak about it.
[9:38] So what I'm going to do is I'm going to kind of share you a little bit of what happened in those denials so you make sure you understand what it might have been like for Peter at that breakfast because I don't know although Peter rushed up there to get to Jesus I don't know if he was right there.

I kind of wonder when they were having breakfast if he kind of sat back behind the other guys kind of had his head down because you know what? That's, when you betray somebody which basically he denied Christ when you do that it would be harder to be in his presence again realizing what you did.
And I hope as we speak about that we can understand a little bit. So let me just talk about what happened that night when Christ was taken prisoner. It said Simon Peter had followed Jesus and so did another disciple.
Now that other disciple happened to be Jesus I mean be John and since that disciple was known by the high priest he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.
But Peter stood outside. He stood outside the door. So the other disciple who was known by the high priest went and spoke to the servant girl who kept the watch at the door and brought Peter in.
[10:54] Now this is his first recognition. It said now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard when a servant girl seeing him as he sat there in the light and looking closely at him said and this is different sayings that were said in different gospels.

One of them says you also were with Jesus the Galilean. Another one another gospel says this man also was with him.
And then in another gospel it says you also were with the Nazarene Jesus. And then in another one it says you also are not one of this man's disciples are you? And this is what Peter said in the different gospels.
One of them he said woman I do not know you or know him. Another one says I do not know what you mean. And then another one said I neither know nor understand what you mean.
And that was his first denial. Then in his first second recognition where he was recognized in the group and when he went out to the entrance another servant girl saw him and said to him said to the bystanders this man was with Jesus Nazareth.
[12:07] And then another gospel says you also are one of them. And that same words are repeated in another gospel. And then another one phrased it this way. You also are not one of the disciples are you?

And again in the second denial Peter said man I am not. And he denied with an oath I do not know the man. But again he denied I am not.
And that was repeated in another gospel. The second time he denied Christ. denied Christ. Then the third recognition. It says that now Peter was standing and warming himself one of the servants of the high priest a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off asked did I not see you in the garden with him?
In another gospel it says certainly this man was also with him for he too is a Galilean. And then it's spoken of in another gospel certainly you too are one of them for your accent betrays you.
And in a third denial Peter said man I do not know what you are talking about. And then he said I am not. And then this coming from the gospel is one that speaks to me a lot.
[13:22] But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear I do not know this man whom you speak. Now what were the results for Peter though at this time? And immediately the gospel says when he was still speaking the rooster crowed and Peter again denied it and at once the rooster crowed.

And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus behold the rooster crows you will deny me three times. In another gospel it says and immediately the rooster crowed a second time and Peter remembered how Jesus said before the rooster crows twice you will deny me three times.
This is the one that I always would when I think of Peter how he must have struggled and the Lord turned and looked at Peter and Peter remembered the saying that the Lord had had the Lord how he said before the rooster crows stay you will deny me three times and he went out and wept

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bitterly and all the gospels say that he went out and wept bitterly or broke down and wept you know when I read chapter one I get such a joy out of reading chapter one but when I read the last chapter I have to struggle through it a little bit because you know I had an experience in my life too I didn't know I didn't I didn't do this I had a point in my life that when I was probably close to the same age as John maybe even Peter at that time that I got saved when I was 13 years old and I just I loved the
Lord and I still love the Lord and so I did everything in my life to try to be a good follower of him do the right things all the time but I got in a point in my life when the situation come up when I knew what I wanted and I knew that's not what the Lord wanted me to do but because my own selfishness I denied him and when I did what I did knowing the consequences that might happen could possibly happen I still went through with it because that's what Glenn wanted I became so self centered and it was at that time that I you know have you ever done something that you know when you're doing it and it's wrong you know God sees it and that's that's the way it was with me you know even when you think back in the Old Testament when David was up on that on top of that hump his castle his place that he lived and saw
Bathsheba he knew what he was doing wrong when he did the things that he did afterwards he knew he was doing wrong but he went ahead and did it and I imagine that when Peter was saying the things and denying Christ as he did he knew it was wrong he knew what was happening he did not want to do it and he knew he'd done it so when he stands here as we go into chapter 21 verses 15 understand that he looked Christ saw him he knows that Jesus literally saw him what he did when he denied him so in chapter 21 starting off in verse 15 Jesus said to Simon Peter Simon son of John do you love me more than these yes Lord you know I love you and he said tend my lambs he said to him again a second time Simon son of John do you love me yes Lord you know that [17:12] I love you and he said to him shepherd my sheep and 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 and Jesus said tend my sheep you know one of the commandments that Jesus gave or a leader religious leader come up to him and he said teacher which is which is the great command and law and Jesus said to him you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind this is the great and foremost command and the second is like it you shall love your neighbor as yourself loving Christ loving God is should be the utmost in our life he should be put!

before all things but you know sometimes we get in situations and we forget that and that's we don't necessarily forget it but we we just we disobey see when we look at this here when Jesus speaks to Simon the first two times when he says Simon son of John do you love me he's using that word in his in the word agape which agape is kind of like a selfless universal divine!
love that God has for us now the love that that Peter shared back with him when he says yes Lord you know I love you that was a different kind of love that love was more of a brotherly friendly love that is shown so there's a difference in the two loves and each time Jesus asked him that the first two times that's what he uses but on the last one Jesus uses the will get on our level to reach us to help us where we're at and even when we see this we see he says to tend my lambs shepherd my sheep tend my sheep when he's speaking this he's telling Peter that he says I want you to take care of my new take care of the new believers take care of the the broad flock he's saying supply their spiritual food and take the full role of a shepherd and he says one of the things that
I noticed I don't know if y'all noticed this too that in the very beginning when he says Simon sing of what these are I've often wondered when Jesus says do you love me more than these if he's pointing to the other disciples with him or maybe he was pointing to the fish because they had just had a big load of fish and that's what Peter was he was a fisherman and that was a success story for him that was something to have that many fish and everything and so when we think about our love for Christ and our love for other things what is our love is our love for maybe fish or is our love for our work for our position what we do in!
is Jesus was pointing to the disciples in the relationships that Peter had with these other disciples is that something that we may have put above God and so when he says that you think about what is it you love do you love these more than you do Christ we see here that what Jesus is doing is restoring Peter see Peter he's been with Jesus three years and now he's restoring him to that now I want to kind of go back to my story now if you don't mind see my story I denied God and I knew it and I got caught in the consequences of it and I was devastated that I had done it but the part that I

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hated so much was because of the people I hurt the people I love because of what I had done and so it was during this time and afterwards
[21:29] I finished school college I got married I had a young son and I told the Lord Lord I don't know if I would ever be worthy to come into your court but I am going to do everything I can to raise my family and we will talk we will share scripture we will do all these things and I pray that what I have done will not impact my family or any of those I love because I was really worried about it and before that time I had been very active in my church and doing a lot of things but after that I just felt like I was that cup that could be used for the Lord but afterwards I was damaged and I didn't think the Lord could use me anymore well during that time Renee and I moved up to Montgomery County and we started going to a little country church out there and of course being in church you know if you're in church all ask responsibilities!

Well my problem was if I did that I might have to share my past and I didn't want to do it and I knew I was to be honest with you I felt like I was broken I could not do anything for the Lord he would have no use for me so when I think Peter I think Peter probably felt the same way finally the Lord came to me in the person of a pastor my pastor come to talk to me and he said I noticed you're very hesitant when we asked you to do things you seem to pull back and of course I had all the good excuses I'm busy working I'm raising a family you name and I came up with it he said but it seems like something else and I finally broke down and told what had happened in my life and how it impacted me and he looked at me he said
Glenn have you asked him for forgiveness I said yes many many times I said yes I've asked him for forgiveness he said Glenn do you believe he forgave you I said yes I do and he said he probably forgave you the very first time and I said well you're right but I keep coming back to him he said the problem is Glenn he's forgiven you you just ain't forgotten he said you you have come to him and he has restored you and so he said it's not the Lord keeping you from doing things it's you so at that point I again went to the Lord and I said Lord I am so sorry but if you can use me in any way please do because I want to do whatever you would ask me to do and that was a change in my life at time and it was my experience that helped me to grow you know even when you get called to and you restored as
Peter was restored here because Jesus said we've just seen where Jesus has asked him several times do you love me and Peter said yes Lord I love you and he tells him what he wants him to do well he's restoring him back in John chapter 21 verse 18 it says 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 which we're talking about Peter he would glorify God and when he had spoken this he said to him follow me so the Lord is restoring him and he's letting know follow me you know this kind of what he's done is kind of basically stripped!
Andrew his brother run and brought Peter to Jesus and Jesus looked at him and he said you are Simon son of John you shall be called Cephas which is translated Peter you know when we look at the names that are used for Peter you know you all see them different ways Simon Simon Peter Peter well Simon is giving us the idea of when it's most often used by Christ it's referring to his natural man his human frailty Jesus often used that name Simon during moments when Peter acted out of fear or doubt or fleshly impulse and it's kind of like when he was he used that when Simon was walking on the water to him and he took his eyes off Jesus and he started to sing and he's gone so he has gone back to the starting point it highlights that Jesus met Peter precisely as he was an ordinary unpolished fisherman with common human weaknesses which we all have and then he changed his name and it wasn't because of who he was at that time
[26:41] Jesus called him the name Cephas or Peter one is Aramaic another Greek and both of meaning rock upon this very meeting Jesus makes a confession of his faith This name was a!

declaration of what Jesus was going to be building in Peter it points to the eventual leadership that he would take in the role of the church you know that's the wonderful thing about the love of God when he looks at us he looks at us as we are but he sees us what we can be and I know for me my struggle was he had me!
a certain! point he wanted me at and I was having trouble doing it because I kept looking at in the past and so this is kind of like what was having Peter and so Jesus was pulling him back there and sometimes he would have to use both names with Peter he would say Simon Peter this compound use is used often by the gospel writers and John used it a lot in his gospel they had that desire but

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we're still in this frail physical body that we have each one of us and it's something hard and that we can struggle with you know it also shows the patience of Christ it demonstrates that Jesus does not discard a person from their failings because of their failings he holds both their present weakness and their future glory together in his grace now he goes on further in chapter 21 verse 20 he says Peter turning around saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them the one who 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 what about this man and then Jesus said to him if I want him to remain until I come what is that to you you follow me you know he is telling Peter that he's got to keep his eyes on him he's saying you follow me don't let the distractions of the others be a concern to you and he's saying so focus on me and follow on me and that's what we have to do we have to look at him and focus on him and so he goes on to say in verse 23 therefore this saying went out among the brethren that disciples would not that that that disciple would not die yet
Jesus did not say that he would not die but only if I want him to remain until I come what is that to you you know sometimes we get eyes off Christ we get eyes off God and we get seeing other things around we start looking focusing I wish I and it gets around the whole church everybody is thinking oh pastor John has done left Teresa when all he was saying he is leaving home and he is coming to have breakfast with me and that's how we can get distracted sometimes and it does sound funny but that's what people remember
[30:25] John is getting older and people are thinking John is getting ready to go so Jesus is getting ready to come back because they think that he is not going to die until because Jesus is going to come back beforehand and so we can sometimes let other things get distraction for us and then it finishes up the chapter and it says this is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things that we know that this testimony is true and there are also many other things which Jesus did which if they were written in detail I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written you know there is so much about Christ and about what our God has done for us and it's up to us to seek it and read it and to have a desire for it so as you listen to what we've spoken about this morning I hope I haven't do you feel like

Peter need restoration after a failure or a time when you turned away from God are there places in your life that you need to get straightened out with him that you feel like have done that to you then I would ask you who are the sheep and the lambs in your life that God is calling you to tend care for or to feed he may be calling you to be a head of the shepherd of congregation he may be calling you to shepherd your family he may be calling you to shepherd a friend or even possibly someone a stranger on the street but who are those that you should be shepherding and then let me ask you where do you find yourself distracted by comparing your life to others are there places that kind of distract you and that you struggle with the Lord not good to me I sure would like to have a new car for some reason he is letting them have a car but
I don't know why he's not doing that for me are there places that we allow to be distracting because we're comparing our lives to others and how does Jesus command to follow him refocus your daily priorities each day when you get up and you wake and you're taking time maybe to look in your word look in the scripture to have a prayer it may be riding your car whatever how does his command to follow him change the way you live through your day and are you living as if Jesus is going to return see John said you know I may not be here when he returns don't take that literally but are you living that way we should be living that way every day of our life that he could possibly come at any time and so the good thing I always think of is that we reach one hand to Jesus and with the other hand reach out to a friend and bring somebody with you now some of us have a relationship with the
Lord already and mostly what we've been speaking about is having fellowship with him because sometimes that fellowship can get damaged or fall apart in some way but there may be others too that haven't made a decision of where they stand you know making a decision to accept Jesus Christ is really an instantaneous thing something that happens I know a lot of times I hear spoken about different but I think it's an instantaneous thing it's something that happens it's just like physical birth when it happens it happens it may take a little bit to get there but when that baby comes that baby is coming and everything and so it's kind of that way so let me just kind of share this idea with you and then we'll be closing this up here it's kind of like suppose!
realize the item you need it you found it and you had the understanding that I need to purchase it well then you make the decision to buy it and that's what you do well it's kind of the same thing

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you've come here to church this morning maybe feeling that you're something that you need in your life and understand and believe!
[35:00] that you have found it that understanding that Jesus Christ is the answer is what you need and you want to be saved well now all it is make the decision to accept him as your savior there doesn't have to be any kind of special thing for you you just have to make decisions I am going to follow the Lord when I accepted Jesus Christ I was in a smaller church and when I walked down the aisle to give my life to the Lord I had no idea all I knew there was something there that I wanted and I was kind of scared because I was thinking I don't know all this is going to well that's not the thing you got to start somewhere and that's it so if you have not never made that decision and you feel the Lord is speaking to you to make that song now in this room right now we have Pastor John is here

Pastor Matt is not here we also have some of our prayer team Miss Teresa and Miss Pat but you can also tap somebody else on the shoulder if there's something you know this altar is opened up it is a place of prayer we don't see it done like that much anymore but if there's something that you want to pray about then come up here if you've got making a decision that you want to accept Christ then come tap Pastor John on the shoulder and I'm sure he'll be glad to pray with you I would be glad to pray with you about it too and so as we do this as you sing these words as you take time to think about your relationship with Lord and where you're at with him is there something that you need to have reconciled is there needs to be a change in your life here's an opportunity if you've not made that decision already

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