

John 21

- I. 21:1-14 Peter Goes Fishing
- II. 21:15-19 Jesus Recommissions Peter
- III. 21:20-25 Peter Asks about John

- I. 21:1-14 Peter Goes Fishing

- A. 21:3 Language indicates:

"I am going off, breaking my former connections, to my former fishing business"
(Kenneth Wuest, Expanded Translation)

- i. In other words, Peter's intention was to be a fisherman again from here on.

- ii. But they met with complete failure that first night. I can identify with this.

- B. 21:4 It's appropriate that Jesus and the light appear together.

- C. 21:5 The Real Miracle: The fisherman admitted they had caught nothing.

- D. 21:6 Success was only a few feet away. They achieved it by listening to Jesus.

"The night of failure was not without its lessons and its benefits. We can do worse than fail. We can succeed and be proud of our success. We can succeed and burn incense to the net. We can succeed and forget the Hand whose it is to give or to withhold, to kill or to make alive." (Quoted by Ray Stedman, <http://www.raystedman.org/john/pdf/3878.pdf>)

"People who think they have done it all themselves are common today ... a 'self-made man'. I have discovered ... that most self-made men worship their creator!" – Ray Stedman

"Success -- yes, even spiritual success -- can be a snare and a ruin, while failure can be an unspeakable benefit. Failure is often the only test by which the real worth and quality of a man or woman can be tried. It is in failure that a man begins to think, to wonder whence his failure comes, to look around and seek for the reasons, to put into his work double watchfulness and double energy, and to look upwards to Him who can turn failure into a glorious achievement." (Quoted by Ray Stedman)

- E. 21:7 John now knows it is Jesus. He may have been thinking about a similar incident that happened the day the Lord first called them. (See Luke 5:1-11)

- F. 21:9-10 *fire, fish, bread* Jesus has already provided for them, but He still allows them to participate by adding the fish they caught – under His direction.

- G. 21:11 Significance of 153 fish? Lots of conjecture, little agreement among commentators. Suffice it to say that's how many they caught.

II. 21:15-19 Jesus Recommissions Peter

A. 21:15 *more than these* Two valid ways to understand this:

- i. “Do you love me more than these other disciples love me?” This would push a button on Peter. Earlier he had said the following – and we know how that went:

Matthew 26:33 (NKJV) ... “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”

- ii. “Do you love me more than you love these fish?” Another button. He had just made clear that his intention was to return to his fishing business – and caught absolutely nothing that first night out. He could no longer rely on himself or his own abilities.

B. Language indicates:

First and Second Times Jesus: *“Simon, son of Jonas, do you have ... a devotional love that impels you to sacrifice yourself for me? Do you consider me more precious and thus love me more than these [fish]?”*

First and Second Times Peter: *“Yes, Lord, as for you, you know positively that I have an emotional fondness for you, a friendly feeling for you.”*

Third Time Jesus: *“Do you have a friendly feeling and affection for Me?”*
(Kenneth Wuest, Expanded Translation)

- i. So the first two times Jesus asks if Peter loves Him with a volitional, self-sacrificial love and Peter responds by saying, “I am Your friend.” The third time Jesus, in effect, asks, “Are you even my friend?”

C. God requires of us *agapeo* kind of love. Jesus was asking nothing more of Peter than the Scriptures already commanded.

Matthew 22:35-38 (NKJV) Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love [agapeo] the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment.

- i. Peter had to face the true feelings, motives and commitment in his love for Christ.
- ii. **Application:** We have to do the same. This explains why I feel a lot better singing songs about God's love for me than my love for Him. Love = sacrifice **and obedience**

John 14:15 (NKJV) “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

1 John 5:3 (NKJV) For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

- iii. How would you respond if Jesus asked you the same questions: “Do you love Me with a love that drives you to sacrifice for Me - a love that expresses itself by complete obedience to Me? Do you love Me [again!]? Are you even My friend?”

- The above two sections illustrate the two main ongoing ministries of the church:
 - Fishing: Evangelism: That's what Jesus meant when He said He would make His disciples "fishers of men".
 - Shepherding: Pastoring: The "feeding" is the teaching the Word. The "tending" has to do with other types of pastoral care: leading, helping, comforting, correcting. In many situations a pastor isn't called upon to talk or teach, but to be there. A true shepherd spends a lot of time just hanging out with sheep.

III. 21:20-25 Peter Asks about John

A. 21:21 Peter was beginning to fall into a very common trap. Comparing his life, ministry or calling with that of someone else. This is a common mistake and easily leads to one of two problems: jealousy or pride.

B. The problem in the church of Corinth: competition and rivalry among teachers.

2 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NKJV) For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

Paul rightly saw that they were unwise to compare themselves with one another. What Paul wanted to do was to measure himself by the calling God had placed upon him. How was he doing compared to what the Lord had asked him to do? This is the only 100% healthy comparison.

C. 21:22 **Obedience in the present is better than obsessing about the future.**

i. Obedience is one of the best medicines for worry, fear, distraction, confusion, stress. Just obey the Lord. He loves you and only commands what is best.

D. 21:23 John is no doubt correcting a false rumor that had gotten started about him.

E. 21:24 *we know* Perhaps added by the Ephesian elders distributing John's work.

Investigate the claims of the Bible. Your conclusions about Jesus are more important than life and death – more like eternal life and the second death.

Acts 17:10-12 (NKJV) Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

F. 21:25 And Jesus isn't done working yet.