

John Lesson 21

John Chapter 21

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

e-mail: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Memory verses for this week: *Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Introduction: In our last study, we saw Christ show Himself openly to Mary Magdalene and the disciples on two accounts after His resurrection from the grave. Thomas, who was not with the disciples when the Lord came to them the first time, doubted and said he would not believe unless he could put his fingers in the nail prints of his hands and thrust his hand into the wound on Jesus' side. But one look at the Master when He came to them, and Thomas acknowledged him as "My Lord and my God." This week we get into the last chapter of John. Chapter 21 is an epilogue in a way.

There are three specific incidents in this chapter. The first is the fishing experience at the Sea of Galilee (also called the Sea of Tiberias.) It shows the Lord Jesus as the Lord of our wills and how He directs our service. The second incident is the breakfast on the seashore where the Lord presents to them that our love for Him should be our motive to serve God. Then the last incident is when Jesus announces the upcoming death of Simon Peter. It shows that Jesus is the Lord of our minds and teaches that lack of knowledge or circumstances in no excuse from service. The whole chapter reveals that the resurrected Jesus is still God.

I. A Trip by Peter's Own Choosing

John 21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.

John 21:2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

These two verses seem to provide an overview of the event about to be described. The reference to Jesus showing Himself is a preview of the event which is recorded in verse four. The time is noted as "after these things"—the events of chapter 20—the resurrection and Jesus' several appearances to the disciples in the upper room. The phrase "shewed himself" is translated from the word (fanerow) *phaneroo* and essentially means to manifest (oneself).

During the interval of forty days between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension, there are only ten appearances of Him recorded. He appeared (manifested Himself) only

now and then according to His will and each appearance. How He occupied Himself otherwise, we are not told. At the event about to be described, John indicates that a total of seven of the disciples were at the sea of Tiberias (another name for Galilee). The sons of Zebedee were James and John himself. The two unnamed disciples are not known.

John 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

The little Sea of Galilee had much to do with the ministry of our Lord both during His life and after his resurrection. We see several of the disciples with Peter. It is interesting how Peter was so fervent at times, and yet at times walked at a distance. Thomas was a doubter. You could almost see the group as a crowd of problem children. Perhaps the disciples were many times like the church today. We have many strong and faithful, then some who have to be encouraged to serve and to get involved. While we don't specifically see the Lord condemning the men for going fishing, it does not appear that this was something that they had been directed to do.

Actually, I think we find Peter here in a bit of a backslidden position. He says in Verse 3, "I go a fishing." Peter had been called out by the Lord to become "fishers of men", but now he goes back to doing things that he wants to do. I'm afraid if we went out to the lake this morning, we might find many that are called Christians fishing. And they may truly be saved, like Peter, but their heart is not in doing the things that God has commanded them to do. We know that Peter seemed to be going fishing for selfish reasons, not for God. Perhaps this boat was owned by the father of James and John. It might be that Peter was considering going back into the fishing business.

Mat 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Mat 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Mat 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

Mat 4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

Mat 4:22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

We see that he went out fishing with Thomas and Nathanael, and James and John, and they are not very effective. They had fished all night and caught nothing. I don't know about you, but when I go fishing, and nothing bites the hook for 30 minutes to an hour, I tend to sort of lose my enthusiasm for the sport. If they are biting, it is a lot of fun. Sometimes when we are out of the Lord's will, we can toil and toil and never accomplish a thing.

Prior to becoming a disciple of Jesus, Peter had been a vocational fisherman. He had made his living catching fish commercially on the Sea of Galilee. Now in the days following Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples had returned to the region of Galilee. It was their home region. The prospect of a familiar livelihood awaited them there. Peter announced to his companions, 'I go a fishing.' The rest agreed. They therefore obtained a *ship* (i.e., boat) and spent the night fishing by net. By dawn, they had caught nothing.

John Phillips, in his book "Exploring the Gospels", told of how due to circumstances that he resigned from fulltime Christian work after 15 years of faithful service. "The situation was not a happy one, so, discouraged and in a measure disillusioned, I went back into secular employment. I worked for a large corporation owned by a very good friend of mine. The work was interesting, my friend was supportive, I had some good friends in the corporation, and my immediate boss was a very close friend. And the salary was attractive, the possibilities were inviting. I stayed there trying to convince myself that I was through forever with fulltime Christian work. And I was thoroughly miserable. Like Peter, "I toiled all night" so to speak and "caught nothing."

One of my colleagues came one night when I was preaching in a local church near where he lived. He said, "If I could preach like that, I'd sure not waste my time working for a trucking company even if the big boss was my friend." The Lord allowed me to toil on at the job for a year, allowing me to become more and more dissatisfied with my decision. Then one day a Christian friend of mine took me out for lunch. He was a retired and successful businessman, a wise man, the elder in one of the churches where I ministered on weekends. He was blunt about it. "John", he said to me, "you are wasting your time." I knew he was right. Within a month I was back in fulltime Christian work. The Lord was no more in my decision to go back to secular work than he was in Peter's decision to start fishing again."

John 21:4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

John 21:5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

John 21:6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

As the grey light of dawn overcame the darkness, Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples evidently only saw the form of a man and "knew not that it was Jesus." Jesus called out over the water (they were at least three-hundred feet from shore).

The word translated as saith (legw *lego*) can among other things have the sense 'to call.' In effect, Jesus asked them if they had had breakfast. They said, *No*. Jesus then said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." The first impulse to

these professional fisherman may have been, 'Who does He think He is telling us how to fish?' But nevertheless, they dutifully cast their net on the starboard side of the vessel "and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." Where God guides, He certainly provides!

When you are away from the Lord, you become spiritually blinded. Here, Jesus comes right to them, and they do not recognize him. This was the third time that Jesus had come to the disciples since His Resurrection. Perhaps the reason that Jesus addressed them as "children" was to make them truly recognize their failure. When we try to do anything, particularly with work in the church, and fail to let God lead in it, we are destined for failure.

They had toiled the whole night through, and had no fish to show for their efforts. Sometimes God uses a night of toiling to do us some good and to teach us a lesson. These men actually knew how to fish, they had made their living fishing. But this night of failure was for a reason and purpose. Now these men at this time don't know that it is Jesus who commanded them to throw the nets out on the right side of the ship.

I dare say if the first day someone had told them to do that, they would most likely have ignored them. But after a whole day and night of toiling, we tend to listen a bit quicker. See why God sometimes allows things to wear us down, it allows us to be in a position where we will listen. When we are humble, we can best be used of the Lord. Jesus tells them the reason for their failure was they were fishing on the wrong side of the boat. I'm sure they had cast the net down many times, but they don't argue a cast it one more time. Sometimes when you don't think you can try one more time, you are one try away from great success. Even when we may feel beaten, we need to pick ourselves up and let the Lord help us to win the battle we are facing. Cast the net down on the right side and ye shall find. And the spiritual connotation to that could be made to do anything for God, we must do it the right way.

2 Tim 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Tim 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Tim 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

2 Tim 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

2 Tim 2:7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

The day will come when God will ask us this question about our lives. Did we catch anything while we were fishing in our lives. We are to reach souls for the Lord. I hope that no one will ever have to answer, "No.. not a one."

Notice the results when they listened to the Lord. There were so many fishes that they could not be drawn in. They might not have been able to pull in the net, but notice it does not break. That is true of the Gospel. Our Gospel, of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord will never fail. When God is involved, the blessings we receive sometimes overflow our capacity to understand. You know about the promises God makes to those who give cheerfully to the church.

Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

2 Cor 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

2 Cor 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

2 Cor 9:11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

John 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

John once again proves to be perceptive. Perhaps, by Jesus voice and no doubt by the obvious miracle they had just witnessed, John no doubt excitedly exclaimed to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter evidently was busy tending the overflowing fish net and only heard John's proclamation, evidently not seeing Jesus himself. The reference to him being naked probably does not refer to total nakedness. The word so translated as (gumnov *gymnos*) can also have the sense of being stripped down to under clothes.

That probably is the case as Peter had been fishing all night and now was furiously trying to draw the near bursting net into the ship. He therefore put on his fisher's coat (ependuthv *epen- dutes*—evidently a work shirt or utility garment). He then jumped overboard, probably because they were in shallow water and evidently headed for the beach.

John recognized Jesus and knew that it was the Lord. Peter may not have had the discernment of John, (and we all must really study our bible to have true spiritual discernment), but the one thing about Peter is that he wanted to be near the Lord. He goes on and swims to shore to be close to the Lord. I love the whole-hearted way that Peter served God, even though he failed the Lord at times. We should be so gung ho as

to want to be right in the place where Jesus is today. If I know my heart, I want to be in the Will of God, and serving Him in spirit and truth. But to do that, we must obey the commandments, study the Word of God, and stay in close personal contact with our Lord.

John 21:8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

John 21:9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

The other disciples apparently set the anchor on the larger vessel which perhaps now was close to beaching in the shallow waters, got into a “little ship” (i.e., a row-boat type of vessel), and came ashore “dragging the net with fishes.” John notes that they “were not far from land”—about two-hundred cubits. A cubit was approximately eighteen inches, hence the larger vessel was laying offshore about three-hundred feet.

Upon arriving onshore, “they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid there on and bread.” Jesus had breakfast waiting for them as the sun rose. Where Jesus got the fish and bread is not noted. The presumption is He miraculously created both the food and the other necessities.

This is the last recorded miracle of the Lord, and the only one after His resurrection. This should be important to us, because we serve a Risen Lord today, not the baby born in Bethlehem or the body that lay lifeless in the grave. It is the Resurrected Christ.

2 Cor 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Cor 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

2 Cor 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

2 Cor 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

John 21:10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

John 21:11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Jesus directed them to finish getting their catch of fish ashore. Peter went and finished dragging the bursting net up on the beach. It contained not just fish, but “great fishes.”

The word translated as great (megav *megas*) speaks for itself. The fact that one hundred-fifty-three fish are noted, clearly implies that Peter (or another) took the time to specifically count them. It may be that he took them out of the net and laid them out on the beach. Probably never before in their career as commercial fishermen had they ever caught such a catch.

It is interesting that the Lord always used what people had to bring forth his miracles.

J. Vernon McGee had several good points about this and the lesson of the men being able to bring those fish in to land without breaking the net.

“The disciples were fishing and caught nothing before Jesus came on the scene. The Lord gives them a harvest of fish. At Cana the water pots were empty. The Lord has the pots filled with water and then changes the water to wine. He asks Moses what he had in his hand. Moses said that it was a rod, and with the rod, God performs His miracles for Israel.

David is faithful as a shepherd with his shepherd’s crook, and God gives him a sceptre to hold in his hand. It is interesting that whatever is in your hand, God can use. So many people wish they were somewhere else or in some other circumstances. My friend, if God can’t use you right where you are, I don’t think He can use you somewhere else.

Besides, have you ever noticed that what God does He does in abundance? The water pots were full of wine. There were baskets of food left over after the 5,000 were fed. The nets were filled with fish.

Also, notice that although Jesus had fish laid on a bed of coals for their breakfast on the shore of Galilee, He also asks for some of the fish which they had caught. He accepts their service. When they had fished at His command, He accepts what they bring. What blessed fellowship there is in this kind of service!

There was another time when Peter caught a miraculous number of fish, records by Luke. It was in the early days of Jesus’ ministry, and He was calling Peter to be a fisher of men. That time the net broke. I think Peter was to see that many would follow Jesus, but they would not all be believers. The net would break and many fish would swim away. This time the net did not break, but was drawn to land, “full of great fishes.” Peter is being called to feed the sheep and feed the lambs. With what?

With the Word of God and with the gospel of a risen, glorified Christ. The gospel will not only save, but it will hold. Even in their failures, believers are kept by the power of God through faith. We see in this incident that Jesus Christ has a purpose for His own. He wants to direct our lives. If we obey, He will bless and have wonderful fellowship with us. He is the Lord of our wills.”

John 21:12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask

him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

John 21:13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

After they finished the evident chores of getting the fish out of the net, Jesus in effect said, 'Let's eat breakfast.' ("Come and dine.") The word translated as dine (aristaw *aristao*) literally means 'to eat breakfast.' None of them had the courage to in effect ask, 'Are you really Jesus? They meanwhile had perceived that this indeed was Jesus.

In fashion similar to Luke 24:30, Jesus took the cooked fish and bread and gave it to them. There is no record whether Jesus actually partook of this earthly food with them in His glorified body. It would be his last recorded meal with His disciples (in this case, seven of them).

We have a song that we sing in our hymnals called "Come and Dine". Come and dine the master calleth, come and dine, you may eat at Jesus table all the time. We truly can, and we should look every day of our lives to God to provide the provision for that day. The disciples started this morning out looking like they would have no food, but soon, with the Lord in the picture, they were eating a great feast on the sea shore. All of the disciples recognized the Lord for who He was, and no one asked Him who He was. And in similar fashion the last time they had eaten together (when they partook of the Lord's supper in the upper room in church capacity), the Lord takes the bread and gives it to them. Now let me be clear on this. This was not in any way the Lord's supper, because the elements were wrong.

I've heard some preachers say that if you wanted to take the Lord's supper with coconut juice and a banana, that would be ok since it is just typifying the death of our Lord. We were given exact instructions of what is to make up the Lord's supper, and to do it right, we must follow those instructions. Here, the men are enjoying a great meal with Christ. And I'll close with this thought. If the Lord is in the food we are given, we should partake of it and be joyous in receiving it. Christ gave the apostles some special instructions on eating what was given to them, and they were to be thankful for whatever it was. A little with the Lord in it will go a long, long way.

Luke 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Luke 10:4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

Luke 10:5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

Luke 10:6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

Luke 10:8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

Luke 10:9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

II. Jesus Feeds the Disciples

*John 21:13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.
John 21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.*

As we look back over our past few studies, we know that Jesus came to the disciples the first time when they were assembled together in a locked room on the first day He arose from the grave. He had talked with Mary Magdalene, and told her to go and tell them that He would soon appear to them. And later that day, He came to all of them. (Except for Thomas, who doubted and refused to believe.)

John 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

John 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

John 20:20 And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

We know that by Thomas not being there and doubting, God used this as a great opportunity to witness to everyone who hears the Gospel. After eight days had passed, Jesus appeared unto them all as we saw at the end of Chapter 20.

John 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless,

but believing.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

John 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John indicates that this was the third instance that Jesus had “shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.”

III. A Test of Peter’s Love

John 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

After they had finished their breakfast, Jesus turned His attention to Peter. The words recorded by John are insightful. In addressing him as “Simon, son of Jonas,” Jesus asked him, “lovest thou me more than these?” The *these* likely was a reference to his home region, his profession as a fisherman, and the pride of catching a record catch of fish. It is very easy for one to become attached to a home area and the fulfillment of an enjoyable situation.

With the sun rising over the beauty on the sea of Galilee and an obvious success in their catch of the day, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than all of this. Jesus used the word (agapaw) *agapao*, the verbal form for the highest level of spiritual love. Peter answered, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.” The word Peter used for love (filew *phileo*) is a lesser degree of love. It is akin to friendship or admiration. In effect, he said, ‘You mean a lot to me Lord.’ Jesus replied, “Feed my lambs.”

The Lord calls Peter, the one who at times faltered and failed, to service. Jesus wants Peter to feed His lambs. True love, the agape love, is total and unfaltering love that God gives to man.

When Peter replied, in the Greek, he used the word “phileo” Phileo’s definition was “to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), i.e. have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling; while agape love is wider, embracing espec. the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety: the two thus stand related very much; the former being chiefly of the heart and the latter of the head); spec. to kiss (as a mark of tenderness):--kiss, love. In other words, Peter replied that he loved Jesus more like a friend would love another friend. Not near the emphasis that Jesus’ love was to us.

In the English language, we have only one word that translates to love. In the Greek, they had three words. "Agapao" meaning a true and noble perfect love (God's love for man), "Phileo" meaning the love of man or brotherly love or friendship, and "eros" denoting the sexual love between a man and a woman. The Greeks had degraded this word and made "Eros" a god as well as Venus and Cupid. Unfortunately in this degraded world we live in, many have no knowledge of any other type of love due to the portrayal of bad movies and advertisements being driven by sexual innuendoes. I want to make it clear that this type of love was never mentioned in Jesus' discussion with Peter.

John 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Jesus asked him a second time, "Lovest thou me?" Implied is a note of reservation. It is as if Jesus said, 'Do you *really* love me?' Again, Jesus used the word (agapaw) *agapao*. Peter replied in effect, 'Well of course, Lord. You know that I love you.' Again, Peter used the lesser word (filew) *phileo*.

This time Jesus used a distinctly different word in instructing Peter to "feed my sheep." Here, the word translated as feed is (poimainw) *poimaino* which is the verbal form of (poimen) *poimen*, 'the basic word for 'shepherd.' Essentially, Jesus said to Peter, 'Shepherd my sheep.' This the precise word which Peter later used in I Peter 5:2 where the text reads, "Feed the flock." In verse 17, Jesus said to Peter the third time, "Lovest thou me?" However, this time Jesus used the lesser word (filew) *phileo* himself. In effect, He asked, 'Are you my friend?' Peter's mind must have spun back to his denial of Jesus on that fateful night and how he had fled. He was grieved that Jesus had asked him three times if he loved Him. He did not miss the implication in Jesus' choice of words this final time. Yet in acknowledging that Jesus knew all things, he nevertheless still clung to the word *phileo* in again proclaiming his friendship and admiration of Jesus.

I find it quite interesting that Peter denied the Lord three times, and now Christ asks him if he loves Him three times. Sometimes we need to be questioned and asked if our love is true. If we are not careful, our heart can grow cold and we can be in church going through the motions and not living the life that honors and glorifies the Lord. Jesus makes Peter affirm his devotion to Him three times. And when God repeats anything in the Bible, it has reason and meaning. For the lambs to be fed was very important to Jesus. We have discussed before how much the Church means to Christ. The Jewish nation was called the wife of God, and the church will one day soon be the bride of Christ. God wants us to be found perfect and without spot when Jesus returns to take us out of this old world.

Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:
Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

It is interesting that the second time Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, he asks if he loves Christ with “agape” love. Each time, when Peter replies, he replies with “you know I love you” using the “phileo” love or the friendship type love. When Peter was grieved at the third question, Jesus did use the “phileo” type love. Peter may not have been able to love at this great level, and honestly I don’t know if any of us can. “Agape” love is pure and perfect, and we in our human form are so imperfect that perhaps it is beyond our grasp. But we should keep trying to understand that kind of love and show it one to another. A love that seeks not to be rewarded, but gives and gives with no expectation of anything in return. That is the kind of love God gives to us. As the song says, “Oh for the love of the One up above, oh for the love of God.”

Jesus gives a direct command to Peter, and he was to feed the lambs and the sheep. When you think about it, Peter lost his commission in a way around a little fire of coals the night the Lord was betrayed. And here, sitting around a campfire of coals, Jesus gives him a new and direct commission.

Every preacher, every pastor that is called of God to be in the ministry, are all to feed the Lord’s lambs. Not only are we to reach the lost, but we are to disciple them. Their soul may be secure when they get saved, but they have a life to face. And that life can be a life of joy, peace and happiness when they know how to live for God. If not, it can be a life of failures and disappointments as Satan leads them down a primrose path of one mistake after another. Only by growing in God’s word daily can we hope to fight off the fiery darts of Satan. Satan does not want a young Christian to be disciplined. A lamb on its own is easy prey for wolves. But with a shepherd around that lamb, it can be protected and nourished. That is is God’s plan.

Every believer should immediately present themselves for baptism, giving them the opportunity to be in a local church. And then, get involved in Sunday School, church,

and every bible training program available. And not limit it to that. On your own, day after day, dig into the Word and find deeper meaning. Three hours of nourishment a week will not suffice for seven 24 hour days. Compare the spiritual food to the physical food we eat. Eat once or twice a week and see how strong you'll be. The same principle applies without spiritual food.

Remember the words of Jesus when he had fasted forty days and Satan came unto Him.

Luke 4:2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Luke 4:3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Note not only are to know some of the word of God, but it says "by every word of God."

In J. Vernon McGee's commentary, he said that if it had been left to him, he would have chosen "Faith" as the supreme word of Christianity. But it was not left to Him, and God chose "love" to be the most important of the three. Love and charity are the same meaning in this verse.

1 Cor 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

So as Christians, we are to be known for our love one to another. If people do not know you love them, you need to make them understand. It is a command from our Lord. Sometimes we may be misunderstood, but if we do what Jesus tells us to do, everything works out right in the end.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

IV. A Task for Life

John 21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

John 21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Jesus then presented a mini-parable to Peter how when he was young, he dressed himself and went where he pleased. However, when he would become old, he would have to have help even in getting dressed, putting his hands out for another to help him dress, and take him about. It might even be against his will (as any nursing home worker will understand). However, Jesus intended this small parable as a fore view of how Peter would die. Jesus clearly implied that Peter's death would glorify God.

Later tradition claims that Peter was sentenced to die by crucifixion. Yet, he requested to be crucified upside down, not considering himself worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord. Jesus' simple injunction to Peter was "Follow me." It is of note the first and last commands which Jesus gave to Peter were, "Follow me."

Mat 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Mat 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Mat 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

Jesus starts out on this using words that Peter could relate to concerning being young and old. We start out as babies and can't do a thing for ourselves, and we grow and become independent over time. But when we get old, many times we have to look to others for help. In our Christian walk, when we see things accurately, we know that Jesus carries us many times when we can't make it on our own. I wonder how many times just this week that we were protected by God in various ways that we may not even know.

Jesus was forewarning Peter that he would have to soon die for the honor and glory of God. A lot of us like to be involved in Christianity when we get to benefit from all the good that we receive of God, but when He asks of us to suffer, many times we want to run and hide. We need to be willing to go forth and be used, and be willing to go that last mile of our life for God if He so chooses. Along the way, be sure you will be attacked and maligned, because they misunderstood Jesus and ultimately hung Him on the cross to die. How much less do we deserve when we really stand up for the Lord. God help us to be willing to go as far as He wants us to go.

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Rom 8:20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

Rom 8:21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

John 21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following;

which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

John 21:21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Peter turned and saw John (who modestly describes himself indirectly in the third person) and asked, "And what shall this man do?" Peter in effect said, 'What about him?' Jesus said in so many words to Peter, 'He is none of your business, just follow me.' Don't worry about John, Peter. You just do as I have told you. Follow me!

Jesus commented that if He determined that John should live until He returned, what is that to you, Peter? John goes out of his way to clarify that Jesus never said (as was erroneously reported) that he would never die. He emphasized that Jesus merely postulated, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Peter now asks the Lord what will become of John. He knows that he will die for the cause of Christ, but he now asks about John. He basically tells him that what happens to John is not of consequence to Peter. We need to realize that each of us will face different things in this life. God may choose one of us to suffer and die for His glory. He may let 10 of us die in the upcoming week, or may let the majority live until He calls us out with that shout of the archangel. But whatever our lot is in life, we need to realize that it has been planned and made by the Sovereign God of the universe, and it is the best for us. We may not realize it, and when bad things come our way, we may not always deserve them, but if we keep looking to Jesus, we have the victory.

John 21:23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

John 21:24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

Some of the disciples jump to conclusions and say John will never die until the Lord comes back. That was not what Jesus said, although John was one of the few who did not die a martyr's death in the early days of the church. Some people say they will not serve the Lord until they get all their questions answered. If that is the case, most likely they will never ever serve God, because I've been studying this blessed book now for over 40 years, and I sure still have a lot of questions. The one thing I have learned, is "Trust God".

Nothing He has ever done to me has ultimately worked out for my own good. It may have brought sleepless nights or great pain, but in the end I've been a better Christian because of all the things that have happened to me. If you are honest and look deep into your heart, I think you'll have to admit the same. Sometimes the results are bad and we deserve them for wrong actions on our part. But many times, we are falsely accused just like Jesus was in His ministry. But if that is what has happened, be sure that you

have a greater reward on the other side.

1 Pet 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

1 Pet 3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

1 Pet 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1 Pet 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

1 Pet 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

1 Pet 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

John concludes his lofty account by noting that others (the first person plural *we*) can verify his report is true. He then ends on a note that if everything Jesus had done were recorded, “even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” Perhaps, John had more in mind than just the three years of Jesus ministry of which he had been an eyewitness. Maybe, he had in mind all the infinite detail of creation and the eternal working of our Lord. In any event, our Lord’s work is infinite and eternal.

What a testimony to the life of Jesus Christ. If everything that he did was written, not all the books could contain them. I don’t know about you, but I’m looking forward to sitting one day at the feet of Jesus, and hearing about some of those “unwritten things” that He did. But while we wait for His return, let us all be busy spreading the Gospel, and doing good works to God’s honor and glory.

Albert Barnes in his commentary spoke of the true inspiration of the word of God.

John 21:25

Many other things - Many miracles, Joh 20:30. Many discourses delivered, etc.

I suppose ... - This is evidently the figure of speech called a hyperbole. It is a mode of speech where the words express more or less than is literally true. It is common among all writers; and as the sacred writers, in recording a revelation to men, used human language, it was proper that they should express themselves as men ordinarily do if they wished to be understood. This figure of speech is commonly the effect of surprise, or having the mind full of some object, and not having words to express the ideas: at the

same time, the words convey no falsehood. The statement is to be taken as it would be understood among the persons to whom it is addressed; and as no one supposes that the author means to be understood literally, so there is no deception in the case, and consequently no impeachment of his veracity or inspiration.

This gospel contains in itself the clearest proof of inspiration. It is the work of a fisherman of Galilee, without any proof that he had any unusual advantages. It is a connected, clear, and satisfactory argument to establish the great truth that Jesus was the Messiah. It was written many years after the ascension of Jesus. It contains the record of the Saviour's profoundest discourses, of his most convincing arguments with the Jews, and of his declarations respecting himself and God. It contains the purest and most elevated views of God to be found anywhere, as far exceeding all the speculations of philosophers as the sun does the blaze of a taper. It is in the highest degree absurd to suppose that an unlettered fisherman could have originated this book. Anyone may be convinced of this by comparing it with what would be the production of a man in that rank of life now. But if John has preserved the record of what has occurred so many years before, then it shows that he was under the divine guidance, and is himself a proof, a full and standing proof, of the fulfillment of the promise which he has recorded that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth, Joh 14:26.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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e-mail: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.