



LOVE FORGIVES John 21:1-19 – The Savior Who Forgives

- This morning if I asked you to begin our time by picturing your favorite breakfast, what would come to your mind?...
 - perhaps you just have simple tastes...so cereal is your breakfast of choice...there's nothing wrong with that...
 - maybe you're more of a cinnamon roll person...nothing wrong with that...
 - would you like to see one of those up close and personal?...
 - by the way, I hope you had your breakfast this morning...
 - now, you might say...I'm a straight up bacon and eggs kind of person...
 - ..
 - **Perhaps you like** some sausage thrown in there too to help you with that problem of your cholesterol being too low...
 - now, have I hit the basics?...have we covered everybody's favorite breakfast?...
- I would like to suggest to you this morning that for one man in the Bible, we read about what would have reminded him of the best breakfast He ever had...not necessarily because of how it tasted (though I am sure it was delicious), but because of who prepared it, and what it represented...
- with that in mind, would you open your Bible to John chapter 21? - by time we get to John 21, Christ has arisen...and He's appeared to several groups of people...and the promises and prophecies of the OT that were at times obscure and hard to understand now come together with incredible and breathtaking clarity...
- but a few crucial questions remain...like "what happens to Peter"...
- after his colossal failures both in the Garden and at the trials...what happens to him?...
- the answer is...its time for breakfast...

- read John 21:1-19

...The Savior Who Forgives...

- John 21 is a marvelous passage of Scripture not only because its a great story though it is surely that...but it is especially important because it contains crucial truth for people who want to grow in their relationship with the Lord...who are serious about reaching new heights...
- let's spend the rest of our time thinking about...**Three lessons from the restoration of Peter.**

I. Sometimes you Have to Come to the End of Yourself before You See the Need for Forgiveness.

- events never occur in a vacuum...Peter would not have been ready for this kind of interchange...and this kind of advancement, were it not for what had already occurred...
- please think for a minute about...

A. Putting this breakfast in context.

- Most of you know that Peter's former occupation was that of a commercial fisherman...in fact that was true of many of the disciples...
- when Christ called Peter, it was in a similar situation, where he had been out fishing and caught nothing...
- you read about this in Luke 5 ..
- **Luke 5:6-7 - When they had done this, (followed Christ's direction) they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets *began* to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.**
- do you remember how Peter responded to that?... **Luke 5:8 - But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"**
- Do you remember what Jesus said?...
 - **Luke 5:10 - Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.**
- that was a common phrase in that day...but the point was, the things I've just been teaching on the seashore...you are now going to part of the team to give that truth to others...to feed them with the Word just as I have done...
- and do you remember how they responded...
 - **Luke 5:11 - When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.**
 - they burned their bridges not because there was anything wrong with being a commercial fisherman, but Christ had clearly called them to something else...
- it was no accident that Jesus' breakfast of choice was...fish.
- there are other aspects of the context that play into this story...
 - in the Upper room when Jesus explained to the disciples that they would all forsake Him—they would all fall away...
 - Peter said...though the rest of these will fall away, I will not...
- it wasn't long after that Peter fell asleep in the Garden when Christ asked him to stay awake and pray with Him...
- then he failed in the Garden by becoming enraged and cutting off the ear of one of the soldiers...
- then of course he denied the Lord three times...
- and even after the resurrection...when he saw the empty tomb, Scripture reports Peter still, at that time, did not believe...
- when the first women arrived at the tomb, they were told by an angel to give a message to the disciples...meet the Lord at the Sea of Galilee...but they didn't go...
- then Jesus Himself told them to get up to the Sea of Galilee...and they finally did it...and guess what, Jesus isn't there...so what does Peter say?...I'm going fishing!
- now one of the questions that is often discussed about this part of the story is...

B. Was Peter wrong for going fishing?

- and please keep in mind---this wasn't sport fishing...they weren't on vacation, passion the time so they went to get a few walleye...
- they had nets...they were returning, in one way or another to their former life and occupation...
- and I think we have to acknowledge...the text doesn't say for sure that they were wrong to go fishing...but we do know this...

1. Christ's original call involved Peter leaving his nets and becoming a fisher of men.

- he is certainly not fulfilling the call he's been given...
- and why not?...we don't know for sure...but there is this huge issue hanging over him...he failed, miserably (can anybody here relate to that?)...so what happens now?...that question remains to be answered...
- another observation we could make is...

2. There is no hint of prayer, study, or consideration of God's will.

- this appears to be another example of Peter making an impulsive decision. ...enough of this guilt, enough of this uncertainty, enough of this messing up...I'm outa here, and anyone who wants to come can come.
- a third strong reason to believe Peter's action were displeasing to God was...

3. Their approach wasn't working very well.

- verse 3 tolls a bell that too many fishermen have heard too often...
- they toiled all night, and they caught nothing.

- and of course that was pointed out by Jesus calling out to them from shore, and the NASB is probably right when it translates his words as a statement---
"Children, you don't have any fish, do you...."

- now, does anybody here think that all of this happened by accident?...
- what an unusual coincidence---professional fisherman didn't catch a thing back in Luke 5 when they were first called to follow Christ...and now on this particular night they didn't catch anything either...dumb luck...
- what's the principle?

C. Emptiness is often the vehicle God uses to draw people to Himself.

- sometimes the most gracious thing God can do for you is to not allow your steps away from Him and His will to work...
- Children, you don't have any fish, do you?...
- this gets at a significant aspect of ministry philosophy to our community...just be ready with the compassion and trust of Christ when somebody's net is empty...
- Jesus is in the business of helping people who come to the place of realizing that their nets are really empty...

II. God Stands Ready to Show You His Power to Forgive.

...please keep this in mind...their nets did not stay empty...not by a long shot...and the principle is...

A. Success is often closer than you realize.

- **Warren Wiersbe – “The difference between success and failure was the width of the ship. We are never far from success when we permit Jesus to give the orders...”**

- Jesus wasn't there to simply remind them that life without Him didn't work, He was there to offer than a better alternative...
- cast your net on the right side of the boat...
- **John 21:6 – ...So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of the fish.**

- what's the lesson?...

B. God loves to deal in abundance.

- and somebody might say...but you don't understand how messed up my life is...
- or someone else might say---do you folks realize how dysfunctional this culture is and you are on purpose following a ministry philosophy that extends an open welcome to anybody from this community regardless of their past?...yes, and here's why...
- **Romans 5:20 - ...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:**

- please don't tell anybody later that we talked about fish this morning...

- we didn't talk about a lot of fish, we talked about a lot of grace...God loves to deal in abundance...

- and abundant...strength...that's why the apostle Paul says... **Ephesians 3:20 - Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,**

- and abundant life... **John 10:10 - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.**

- God wanted Peter to understand that there was something far bigger in this picture than his failure...it was the marvelous grace of Christ...

C. God allows you, and calls you, to do your part.

- they still had to cast their nets...they had to do what He said...
- and they had to haul the fish in...
- and isn't it an amazing detail---that even though Jesus had the breakfast cooking when they got to the shore, He said in verse 11...
- **John 21:10 - Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught."**
- isn't that fascinating?...it's not like Jesus was embarrassed because He didn't realize so many people were coming...
- what an incredible balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility...

- what does that have to do with the forgiveness process?...

1. If you are not yet a follower of Christ...you have to take a step toward Him...

- it is called repentance and faith....it is called admitting that your sin has separated you from Him...
- it's called admitting that you need a Savior and a Lord...
- God stands ready to adopt you into His family, but you have to cast the net...[develop the gospel, exact steps to take...]

2. Christian friend...if in a particular situation you are need of forgiveness...

He still shows His power through forgiving/changing people...

- now, where does this story end?

III. Forgiven People Still have a Place in the Plan and Program of God.

- the tenderness in this passage is instructive...
- Come and dine Jesus says in verse 12...
- I agree with Warren Wiersbe who said..."**How loving of Jesus to feed Peter before He dealt with his spiritual needs. He gave Peter opportunity to dry off, get warm, satisfy his hunger, and enjoy personal fellowship. This is a good example for us**

to follow as we care for God's people. Certainly the spiritual is more important than the physical, but caring for the physical can prepare the way for spiritual ministry. Our Lord does not so emphasize the soul that he neglects the body."

- this too goes at the very heart of our community based ministry strategy...
- after breakfast, Jesus and Peter have a conversation...
- what Peter did cannot be ignored...there has to be some kind of restoration...
- and so the Lord asks Him three times, Simon, do you love me?...
 - I wonder why He asked Him three times?...because Peter denied Him three times...
 - and you may know if you have studied this before that, though this conversation probably occurred in Aramaic, we have it recorded in Greek...
 - and the Greek word Jesus uses in His first 2 questions is a form of agapa – sacrificial, committed love...
 - Peter responds with phileo...friendship love, less intense but still important...
- also Jesus uses different words regarding ministry...tending His lambs, and tending His sheep...
- and we could make some observations about the differences...but let's focus on the main emphasis...
- ultimately Peter had to come back to his first love...
 - at their very core, Peter's lapses had been because of a lack of love...
 - and there wouldn't be any future ministry of any kind that was effective unless it was built on a foundation of love for Christ...
- and then he's restored to ministry...feed my lambs, feed my sheep...
- thank God that His grace includes the opportunity of usefulness regardless of ones past...
- [develop – there's a place for everybody, also—don't count anybody out]