

The Restorative Grace of Jesus
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 21:15-24
Southern Hills Baptist Church
February 11, 2018

Introduction: After Peter denied Jesus he must have gone through a bit of an identity crisis. This was the Disciple who declared his faith could weather any storm (Matt 26:33-35) and yet when the heat came he buckled and denied even knowing Jesus. Peter was overcome with guilt and feelings of unworthiness. Why would Jesus have any interest in him going forward? How could Jesus use someone so broken? Have you ever wrestled through feelings and questions like this? Most of us have. Thankfully, we serve a Savior who loves to graciously restore His fallen followers.

Jesus Graciously Restores: “Do you love me?” (vs. 15-17)

- **Do you love me?:** A simple question from Jesus that plumbed great depths. This question confronted Peter in his sin, it humbled Peter, it revealed change in Peter, and most importantly it helped restore Peter.
- **Agape/Phileo:** The first two times Jesus asked Peter if Peter loved Him he uses the Greek word “Agape.” Peter replies using the word “Phileo,” which also means love. Some argue that Agape is a self-sacrificing love, a higher form of love that Jesus is asking for and Peter will only offer up a brotherly love. However, John uses these words interchangeably throughout his Gospel account (ex. John 11:5, 36).
- **Recreating the Denial:** The setting between Peter’s denial and Peter’s conversation with Jesus on the shore shares some striking similarities. The both take place by a coal fire. They both take place in front of witnesses. They both revolve around 3 repeated questions.
- **Obliterating Denial:** “The threefold denial needed to be obliterated by this threefold confession;... every black mark that had been scored deep on the page by that denial needed to be covered over with the gilding or bright coloring of the triple acknowledgement. And so Peter thrice having said “I know him not!” Jesus with a gracious violence forced him to say thrice, “Thou knowest that I love thee.” -*Alexander Maclaren*
- **The Beauty of Jesus:** Jesus, the all-powerful, risen Savior who needs nothing from anyone, graciously choose to restore Peter, a man broken by his own sin. Could Jesus have just moved on to someone who was more “worthy,” to someone who had not denied Him in front of others? Sure (who is worthy?). But, Jesus loves restoring the broken!

Jesus Graciously Recommissions: “Feed my sheep!”

- **Sheep:** This is a common reference to the people of God.

- **Feed My Sheep:** This is a call to pastoral ministry and is descriptive of that call. Pastors are to be men who feed the people of God with the Word of God (Matt 4:3-4; 2 Tim 3:16-17). Thus you ought to look for a Pastor who teaches the Word of God as the main course of each sermon
- **Recommissioning:** Jesus is calling Peter, broken Peter, a man who publically denied Jesus, Jesus is calling this man to go and lead and feed His people! Peter likely wondered if he could ever be used by God again Yes, He can and He would. Jesus uses broken people.
- **Application:** Have you ever felt too broken to be used of God? What history haunts you, telling you that you are unfit for service to God? Confront that sinful history, not in your own power or your own strength, but confront it in the power of Jesus. Remind yourself that, ye you are unworthy, you are unqualified, but your fitness to serve God isn’t based on your worthiness, it is based on Jesus’ worthiness.
- **The Grace of Peter’s Fall:** In many ways Peter’s failing in chapter 18 when He denied Jesus was a grace in his life. You see, Peter was largely controlled by pride. He needed to be humbled. He needed to see that he wasn’t worthy of Jesus. He needed to see that his faith on his own was fragile. He needed to see his desperate state for Jesus.
 - May the same be true of us. May the sin that has weighed us down in the past open our eyes to our unworthiness, to how unqualified we are, to our utter and desperate need of Jesus, that we would stop looking to ourselves and our actions to qualify us and start looking to Jesus for all we need.

Jesus Prophetically Foretells of Peter’s Perseverance

- **Crucifixion:** Jesus shared that Peter would die by crucifixion when He used the common expression “stretch out your hands.”
- **Perseverance/Omniscience:** This prophetic word promised that Peter, the man who denied Jesus, would never deny Him again, but instead die for Him. It also displays Jesus’ full knowledge of all things. Time is a barrier Jesus can breach.

Jesus’ Final Call: Follow Me

- **Focus on God’s Call on Your Life:** After hearing prophecy of his own death, Peter asks what is to come of John. Jesus redirects Peter to keep his eyes focused on following Jesus.
 - **Application:** It is easy to look at the blessings others enjoy and wish they were ours. God has placed exactly where you are you’re your good and His glory. Your focus should be on following Jesus where He has placed you.