

Do You Love Me?

John 21:1-22

November 21, 2004

Intro

In John 21, Jesus meets the disciples at the Sea of Galilee after the Lord is resurrected from the dead.

He told them in advance that they would all fall away, and told them that He would meet them at the Sea of Galilee.

This is an account of when the Lord restores and forgives them. It's beautiful to see the Lord bringing fellowship to them and a restoring of their lives to God's purpose.

In particular, Jesus restores Peter who fell the greatest.

In these verses Jesus gives us insights into the failure of men, and the forgiveness and restoration of the Lord.

I. What God Can Do With Failure

A. Failure shows us our weakness

- We are so often over confident in ourselves

Illus – Peter was the one who said that he would stand by the Lord even when the rest of them fell away.

He was suggesting that He loved the Lord more than the rest of them.

Mark 14:27-31 Peter's self confidence

- What is interesting is that while we so often think too highly of ourselves, at the same time we so often think terrible thoughts about ourselves.

Illus – Here in John 21, they had been fishing all night and failed to produce even one fish.

B. He can turn failure into glorious achievement

- When Jesus comes upon the men, He directs them to cast their nets on the other side.
- It was to remind them of the first time He did the same thing.

Luke 5:1-11 How their life with Jesus began

- It was the Lord's touch that changed everything. He is the One who brought success out of failure.
- Sometimes the Lord allows us to fail to prepare us for the success that comes only from His hand.

Psalm 127:1-2, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for it is He who gives to His beloved even while He sleeps."

C. Success can be a snare and a ruin

- We can do worse than fail, we can succeed and be proud of our success, or we can worship the net and forget the Hand who supplies all things.

Matthew 5:45, “for it is He who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

- As one author wrote:

“Success – 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 out into his work double watchfulness, and double energy, and to look upwards to Him who can turn failure into a glorious achievement.”

Illus – one of the most important lessons of life is this:

One of the worst things that can happen to us to is to the wrong thing and win. We will forget that which is right and good and repeat the thing that was wrong.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18, “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

II. **God Forgives and Restores**

A. God forgives because of His love

- God knows the human condition. Jesus knew they would fail and even told them in advance.
- God knew the condition of the human race and He Himself made a way for forgiveness by taking our sin upon Himself,

John 3:15-18, “whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life; for God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

B. God also restores because of His love

- John 21 is about restoring all the disciples, and Peter in particular.
- It’s interesting to note that Jesus feeds them a breakfast of bread and fish. I wonder if this is to say, “Anything familiar about this?”

Illus – He was the One who fed 5,000 with 5 loaves and two fish.

- But this time He multiplies the fish and then says, “Bring some of them to Me.”
- He then restores Peter in a beautiful discussion about love.

- **But He begins by asking, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”**

Illus – It’s important to note that the Lord uses two different words for love in His discussion with Peter. Agape is a love of total commitment of self. Phileo is the love of friendship.

- **In restoring Peter, He gives him a purpose; do the work that I Myself desire.**

Ezekiel 34:15-16, “I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord God. “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick;”

III. “Follow Me”

A. Trust Him with the rest of your life

- It is interesting that here Jesus tells Peter by what kind of death he would glorify God.
- It is as though He were saying, *You once said that you would die for Me. Yes, you will, but it will be when you are old. Trust Me with the rest of your life.*
- When Jesus brings people to salvation, it is an introduction into a better way to live.

Luke 5:27-28, “After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.”

B. Without comparing to others

- John was following a short distance behind them and Peter asked Jesus about him.
- Jesus simply said, “What is that to you?”
- It is so tempting to compare ourselves to others and either think highly or lowly of ourselves because of it.
- Jesus says we do not have to worry about what others are doing, but simply be faithful to what God has given us to do, and trust Him with our lives.
- God gives grace to each one according to His purpose in their lives.

Ephesians 4:7, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.”

- The message is simple; “trust Me and follow Me.”

Conclusion

The Lord Jesus is the One who can turn failure in our lives into an opportunity to see His hand at work in our behalf. He is the One who forgives and restores when we do fail. Trust Him now with all your life.