**Jesus and Peter, Part 3**

**The Passage**

Read together John 21

**The Big Idea**

Jesus had plans to bear lots of fruit through Peter’s life, but there was some restoration, reconciliation, and education that needed to take place first. The fruitfulness of our lives will come as a biproduct of our experience of Jesus’ grace and our obedience in following him.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. In this passage we see Jesus’ heart and purposes in action on so many levels. What about Jesus stands out to you most from this passage?

2. Peter emerged from this moment of reconciliation with an unshakable confidence, not in his commitment to Jesus, but in Jesus’ commitment to him. Discuss the distinction between those two kinds of confidence. And how have each of those played out in your own journey of faith?

3. Consider Peter’s question about John’s future and Jesus encouraging Peter not worry about that but to stay focused on simply following him. Where do you find yourself most distracted by comparisons? And how has that affected your spiritual journey with Christ?

4. Consider applying the basic call of Christ (“follow me”) to this particular season of your life. What are some specific ways you feel led to follow Christ at this time?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. Consider Jesus’ statements about remaining in him and his desire to bear fruit through his disciples (John 15:5, 16)

B. Jesus had plans to bear much fruit through Peter, but there was some relational and foundational issues to work through first

 1. Peter had experienced faith, adventure, fruit

2. Peter had recently experienced his own faults and failures and must have wondered if he was still qualified for ministry fruitfulness

C. Likewise, we each desire to bear fruit for God’s kingdom, but we have failures and sins that make us wonder what our fruitfulness can be.

II. The power: The miraculous catch of fish

A. This has so many echoes of the original catch of fish at the beginning of Peter’s relationship with Jesus

B. This miracle reveals Jesus as the Lord of all life

 C. This miracle is also a living parable/lesson

1. He has chosen them to bear fruit, but they need to learn that this fruit won’t come through their own strength, expertise, or strategy, but rather through his power.

2. So he takes them through an exercise in futility (all night and no fish) only to demonstrate his power to bring in a miraculous catch.

3. They had caught a lot of people for the kingdom of God during Jesus’ earthly ministry, but he had a whole new catch of people to make through them during his heavenly ministry once he sent his Spirit (consider the catch in Acts to at Pentecost: 3,000 people!)

D. Likewise, Jesus sends us out to bear fruit, but the results of that are entirely by his power and grace, not our expertise and strategies.

III. The question: “Do you love me?”

A. Jesus performs a beautiful act of hospitality in waking up early, catching fish, making a fire, and preparing breakfast for his friends.

B. Jesus’ 3-fold question, “Do you love me?” echoes Peter’s 3-fold denial of Jesus the night before his crucifixion. Jesus could have just said, “I forgive you,” but he was giving Peter a chance to redeem those 3 denials with 3 affirmations of his love.

C. Notice the intimate connection between loving Jesus and feeding his sheep. Taking care of Jesus followers would become the way Peter could express his love for Jesus himself.

D. Consider the transformation Jesus brought about in Peter’s life

1. Took Peter from brash and self-confident to utterly disillusioned and in despair to ultimately humbled by the love and forgiveness of Jesus.

2. Peter emerged from this with an unshakable confidence, not in his commitment to Jesus, but in Jesus’ commitment to him.

3. Peter was now very prepared to be a faithful leader who would be humble and compassionate and could offer people the grace and forgiveness he himself had received (consider 2 Cor 1:3-4)

E. Likewise, many of us have done shameful things and we wonder if they disqualify us for ministry. Peter’s example reminds us that there is no unredeemable sin if there is genuine confession.

IV. The call: Follow me

1. In all three encounters we’ve studied between Jesus and Peter, “follow me” lies at the heart of each one (Mt 4:19, Mt 16:24, Jn 21:19)

2. The call has remained the same, but Peter has had a growing understanding of what that call implies. Here he learns it will mean his own death by crucifixion!

3. As Peter prepares to lead the church, he would have all sorts of questions about plans and strategies. But the plan remains simple: “follow me.”

4. Peter asks Jesus about John’s journey, but Jesus tells people to simply be consider with his own journey in following Jesus.

5. Likewise for us, the call always remains simple: “follow me.” That will look different for each one of us as Jesus places us in unique circumstances with unique gifts and resources. It’s so easy to get distracted by comparing our journey to other people’s journeys, but Jesus calls us to stay focused on simply following him.