

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY

"The Gospel of John"

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Lesson 71 John 21:15-25 "Loving without Limits"

¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead

a. "large fish, 153...the net was not torn" – How many miracles occurred in this one episode?

- a. 1. Catching fish in wrong time of day.
- b. 2. Catching fish on the wrong side of the boat.
- c. 3. Catching such an unheard-of number of fish.
- d. 4. The net didn't break (nets were notorious for breaking).

i. **Question: What was Jesus' point?**

b. "None of the disciples dared ask Him" – No not-believing, this time!

¹⁵ When they had finished eating,

a. "When they had finished eating..." – It was critical that Jesus "eat" with them to confirm the fact, that He was really alive in His human nature. His resurrected body was, indeed, a physical body. His state, in resurrection, points us to our resurrection state on Judgment Day.

a. **Philippians 3:20-21.** *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

i. "His glorious body" – "stoma" – physical body designed to last for eternity.

b. **1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 48-49.** *42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

i. "perishable...imperishable"

ii. "dishonor...glory"

iii. "weakness...power"

iv. "natural body...spiritual body" – the new resurrected body is alive and in a physical state, but without the limitations of our earthly life: time, space, aging, deterioration, etc.

48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we [g] bear the image of the heavenly man.

- a. "those who are of the earth...those who are of heaven"
- b. "we shall bear the image of the heavenly man." – thinking of Jesus' characteristics AFTER His resurrection: personality, physical features, human traits, etc., but designed for eternity!
 - a. Designed for eternity will be a blessing for those in eternal life, and it will be a curse for those in eternal death!

Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

- b. "do you love Me more than these?" – Jesus' last act of mercy was to recommission Peter in front of the others. Three forms of the foundational question to Peter (and to anyone called to discipleship):
 - a. Jesus: "do you love (agapy) Me?" (without conditioning the love)
 - b. "more than these?" – whatever Peter may have valued more than Jesus: the approval of the others, as their leader.
 - c. Peter: "you know that I love (philo) You." (I have affection for you)
 - d. "Feed My lambs." – literally "keep pasturing" the most precious and vulnerable of My flock: feeding young Christians with the Word;
- c. "Take care of My sheep." – Jesus' second question asks for agapy love, again with no conditional loving. Peter's answer is philo (affection & friendship).
 - a. "Take care of" – encompassing the whole job of shepherding; 23rd Psalm
 - b. "sheep" – the whole flock
- d. "Feed My sheep." – Jesus' third question cuts Peter to his heart. Jesus' use of philo (affection) shifts the confrontation to Peter's 3 denials in the court of the high priest.
- e. "when you are old you will stretch out your hands" – Jesus points Peter to an end-of-life reality: someone else will be in charge, so accept it!
 - a. Question: *When, in your life, did that reality that someone else will eventually control your life, dawn on you?*
 - b. *How gracefully/ are you handling that?*
- f. "to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God."
- g. "Follow Me!" – literally "be following Me."

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" ²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." ²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

- a. "Peter turned a saw that the disciple" – Peter's attention was distracted by John's following them. He was also disturbed by Jesus' prediction!
- b. "Lord, what about him?" – two ways to take Peter's question:
 - a. Compassionate concern for John's well-being, as Peter watched out for John in their friendship.
 - b. Self-centered defensiveness, as Peter resents the Jesus' assertion that he, who prides himself as one in charge, will have to submit to the will of others; and he will not be in control. He shifts the topic to someone else!
- c. "what is that to you? You must follow Me."
 - a. Jesus puts Peter (again!) in his place.
 - b. It is not Peter's call, as to what would happen to other disciples! Peter has one mission: Follow Jesus!

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. ²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

- a. "testifies...testimony is true." – recalling John's original purpose in writing the gospel: to witness to non-Jews that Jesus is the true Messiah, worth investing your life.
- b. "Jesus did many other things as well." – the canon (collected books of the Bible) point to Jesus and God's plan of salvation for us. Technically Lutherans teach that the canon is open, meaning that there could be other books out there. As Luther points out, though, everything we need to faith in life, and eternity, we already have.