

Jesus Reinstates Peter

John 21

PPT Title

Jesus Reinstates Peter

Main Point: Jesus uses imperfect people who love Him to tell others about His salvation.

Key Verse: *Then the disciples left and preached everywhere. The Lord was with them, and the miracles they worked proved that their message was true. - Mark 16:20*

Props: Several signs, each with a different name of a country on it (Before class begins, hand signs out to several students throughout the room. Ask students to keep signs down until you call on them.)

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Jesus appeared twice to His disciples. By appearing, He proved that He had risen from the dead, and that He was truly the Messiah. Jesus told them that they would soon be sent out to teach people how to be saved from their sins. But Jesus told them to wait until He sent the Holy Spirit to fill them with power (Luke 24:49).



The disciples were in Galilee, because Jesus told them to go there. They were miles away from Jerusalem where Jesus had been crucified, and where the Pharisees and chief priests were. Most of the disciples were from Galilee. It was their hometown. They probably had time to visit with their families while they were there. Surely, they were eager to see Jesus again, but they didn't know exactly when He would appear.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES (John 21:1-14)



Say: One day, Peter announced to the other disciples that he was going to go fishing on the Sea of Galilee. This was not the kind of fishing that you and I do with a rod and reel. This was the kind of fishing that is done with a large net. Peter was a professional fisherman before He met Jesus. In fact, this day he was probably going to go fishing in his old boat with his old nets. Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two other disciples decided to go with him. They fished all night but didn't catch anything.



Early the next morning, they heard someone calling out to them. Their boat was about 100 yards away from the shore. That's about the length of a football field, so they couldn't tell who it was.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore. But the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, "Friends, don't you have any fish?"

"No," they answered.

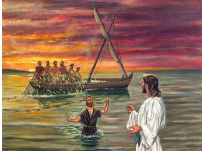
He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat. There you will find some fish."



When they did, they could not pull the net into the boat. There were too many fish in it.

Then (John) the disciple Jesus loved said to Simon Peter, "It is the Lord!" (Teacher:

Interject here to say that Jesus loved all His disciples. This was written by John. John called himself "the disciple that Jesus loved," because he felt so loved by Jesus.)



As soon as Peter heard that, he put his coat on. He had taken it off earlier. Then he jumped into the water.

The other disciples followed in the boat. They were towing the net full of fish. - John 21:4-8a



Ask: Does this story sound familiar to anyone? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** A very similar thing had happened three years before. It happened way back when Jesus first started teaching people out in the open. Jesus only had a handful of followers at the time. A crowd had gathered to hear Him teach. He hopped in Peter's boat and asked Peter to row the boat out into the water a little ways. He taught the people, then He told Peter to take the boat to where the water was deep and put out his nets. Peter told Jesus that he and his partners had fished all night, but had not caught a thing. But he did what Jesus asked of him. As soon as the nets were in the water, they were packed full of fish. His partners, James and John, had to come with another boat to help bring in the fish. Both boats were so full of fish that they nearly sank! It was at that moment that Peter realized that Jesus was truly sent from God. Jesus said, "From now on, you'll be fishing for people." That day, they left everything to follow Jesus (Luke 5:1-11).



Now, here it was three years later, and the same scene was replayed: same sea, same boats, same fishermen, and the same Lord. The sight of nets filled to overflowing with fish must have jogged John's memory. He remembered the time when he and his friends were all first filled with hope that Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for.

Note to Teacher: So many things had happened since that day three years ago. We wonder if John's "deja vu" experience in the fishing boat brought back a flood of memories. Did the unmistakable smell of fresh fish and the sound of anxious tails slapping the water cause the past three years to pass before his eyes? Did he recall intimate moments of laughing with Jesus, wondrous times of gleaning truth from Him, glorious moments when fields of people put their trust in Him, and the devastating hours when Jesus went to the cross? Did Jesus reenact this scene to purposely refocus their minds back to the time when they first believed He was the One? We can almost imagine the slight grin on Jesus' face as He used this miracle as a calling card to the disheartened disciples.

Say: Suddenly, John called out, "It is the Lord!" Peter jumped in the water and swam to shore. This is not at all surprising. Peter had been the boldest of all the disciples. Peter often **did** before he **thought**. The others followed Peter in the boat. When they got to shore, they saw a fire with fish and bread cooking. Jesus invited them to come and eat breakfast with Him. They all recognized Him.



Application: Even though these men were life-long fishermen, they couldn't catch a thing. They couldn't even provide breakfast for themselves. Jesus provided what they needed: fish and bread for breakfast, and even plenty of fish for the days ahead. This was a good reminder that nothing they would try on their own could compare to what Jesus could do through them. Just the same, when we follow Jesus in everything we do, He will do amazing things in our lives. He provides EXCEEDINGLY more than we could ever accomplish on our own.

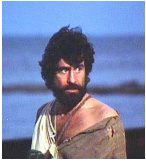
JESUS TAKES PETER BACK (John 21:15-17)



Say: When Jesus and the disciples had finished eating, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you really love Me **more than these others do?**"

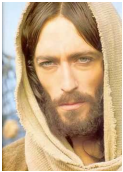
"Yes, Lord," he answered. "You know that I love You."

Jesus said, "Feed My lambs." - John 21:15



Before Jesus was arrested, Peter had bragged that he would never leave Jesus' side, even if every other disciple deserted Jesus (Matthew 26:33). Really, Peter was bragging that he loved Jesus more than the rest of the disciples. **Ask:** But, when Jesus was arrested, what did Peter actually do? *He denied knowing Jesus 3 times.* **Say:** Peter denied even knowing Jesus **3 times**.

So, here on the beach, Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to be humble when He asked if Peter loved Him **more** than the others. Peter answered without bragging this time. Jesus gave Him the simple instruction to feed His lambs. This was a symbolic way of telling Peter to teach God's word to Jesus' followers (Hebrews 5:12).



*Again Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you **really** love Me?"*

He answered, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love You."

Jesus said, "Take care of My sheep." - John 21:16

This time, Jesus asked Peter if he **really** loved Him. Again, Peter honestly said that he loved Him. Jesus told him to take care of His sheep, because Jesus wanted Peter to care for the spiritual needs of His followers.

Jesus spoke to him a third time. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"

Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love Me?" He answered, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love You."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. - John 21:17

Now, for the third time, Jesus asked Peter if he simply loved Him. This was difficult for Peter. Usually, the reason someone would ask the same question over and over is because he didn't believe the answer that was given. Maybe one of your parents has looked at you and asked a question like, "Susie, who broke my lamp?" Then, when you answered, "Nobody," your parent looked at you again and asked, "Who broke the lamp?"

This was not the case here. Jesus *knew* that Peter loved Him. Jesus was giving Peter the opportunity to profess his love out loud **three times**, just as he had denied Jesus three times several weeks before.



If Peter loved Jesus at all, there was one instruction he must follow. He must teach others about the new life that Jesus offered. Jesus was going to be leaving the disciples very soon. Jesus would no longer be able to take care of the spiritual needs of His followers. Jesus was handing this VERY important job over to Peter and the other disciples. At this point there was a small number of people who believed in Jesus, but that number was about to grow quickly. It was VERY important that Peter teach the truth about Jesus to the many people who would believe in Him.

Before Jesus was arrested, Peter was the boldest of all the disciples. He was a leader, and others followed his example. Then Peter showed his weakness by denying that he knew Jesus. Jesus did not want Peter to feel that he could never be a leader again. With these three questions and instructions, Jesus "reinstated" Peter. To reinstate means "to bring back into use," or "to restore to a previous position." There was great work to be done, and Jesus wanted to bless Peter by putting him right in the middle of it.

Application: Everyone makes mistakes. If God only used perfect people, who could He use? He couldn't use anyone, because no one is perfect! Jesus will use people who love Him. Not people who love Him with some super-human love, but those who simply love Him as much as they can. All the heroes we read about in the Bible have one thing in common: they loved God. Some were rich, some were poor, some were beautiful, some were plain, some were strong, and some were weak. But the one thing they shared was a heart that loved God. That is all He requires of you (Matthew 22:37).

Some of you may already love God, and that's awesome. But some of you may feel like God is too far away or too hard to get to know for you to actually love Him. If this describes you, then please hear this. He is NOT far off. He loves you and He wants you to love Him. The only way to love someone is to get to know him or her personally. Simply knowing facts about someone will never lead you to love them. For example, I **know facts** about Abraham Lincoln. I know he was the 16th president of the United States. I know that he was very honest and he wanted all people to be treated fairly. Because I know these facts about him, I think he was a great man. I admire his accomplishments, but I do not love him.

On the other hand, I **know** _____ (my husband, my father, my son, my mother). He was not ever president of a country. He is not famous. But I **know** him. I know what he likes and dislikes. I know what makes him laugh and what makes him sad. I know him because I have spent so much time with him. Because I know him so well, I love him very much. Knowing someone this well doesn't happen over night. I have known him for a really long time.

In the same way, we get to know, and love, God by spending time with Him. We read His word, the Bible; we see Jesus at work in other Christians that we know; we stop and think about His amazing power when we see His creation. All this is called **abiding** in Him. It is remaining with Jesus day in and day out. When we really know Him, we are able to love Him. If you are just getting to know Jesus, pray for God to keep you close to Him. Tell Him you want to love Him.

Abide
Remain
in Jesus

JESUS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN (Acts 1:9)

Say: John tells us that Jesus remained on the earth for 40 days after He was resurrected. During that time, He appeared to the disciples at different times and He taught them about the Kingdom of God.

One day while they were eating, Jesus told them that in just a few days they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

PPT Verse

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem. You will be My witnesses in all Judea and Samaria. And you will be my witnesses from one end of the earth to the other.



After Jesus said this, He was taken up to heaven. They watched until a cloud hid Him from their sight. - Acts 1:8-9

The disciples worshipped Jesus and they were overwhelmed with joy (Luke 24:51).

Just as Jesus promised, He sent the Holy Spirit to fill the disciples a few days later (Acts 2:1-4). The disciples went out preaching and teaching. God worked in amazing ways, and many people put their faith in Jesus (Mark 16:20).

Jesus specifically mentioned the city of Jerusalem, the area of Judea, and then the ends of the earth. **Teacher: Refer to map.** Jerusalem was the city they started out in. Judea was the next larger area. As the disciples told the truth of Jesus, it spread to larger and larger areas. It is still spreading. One day it will reach every nation (Matthew 24:14).

Application: Just as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, **each one of us** is filled with the Holy Spirit when we put out trust in Jesus (Acts 2:38). God's Holy Spirit gives us power to understand God's truth and tell it to others (John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:13).

Each of you has a circle of friends that you can consider your Jerusalem. **Choose a volunteer. Say:** Here is _____. She has a best friend, a little brother, a little sister,



and two cousins that live really close to her. (Pull up a volunteer for each person you mention, and place him or her in a circle around your original volunteer - facing inward.) This is _____'s "Jerusalem." She sees them every day. She can share truth with them all the time.

Then you have larger groups of people, like kids in your class or on your sports team. Call up ten volunteers to be her classmate (or teammates). Place them in a circle around the first circle - facing inward. **Say:** These kids are _____'s "Judea." She sees them pretty often. She can share with them sometimes.



As _____ shares truth with those around her, one person might believe, and that person would start telling others. Choose one person on the inner circle, and turn him or her around - facing outward. Then another might believe and begin to tell others. Face him or her outward. Then another. Face him or her outward. Can you see how this works? And just think: each person represented here has his or her own circles. It is amazing how the Good News can spread!

And, one day, God may use you to take His truth to the ends of the earth. Call on your sign-holders to stand up and hold up their signs. Send some of your "believing" volunteers to stand by the different countries.

Jesus is calling you to tell others. First, get to know Him and love Him, then He does the rest!

Optional Application (without volunteers): Just as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, **each one of us** is filled with the Holy Spirit when we put out trust in Jesus (Acts 2:38). God's Holy Spirit gives us power to understand God's truth and tell it to others (John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:13). Each of you has a circle of friends that you can consider your Jerusalem. Then you have larger groups of people, like kids in your class or on your sports team. They are your Judea. And, one day, God may use you to take His truth to the ends of the earth.

PPT Key Verse

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PPT Main Point

Main Point: Jesus uses imperfect people who love Him to tell others about His salvation.

Note to Teacher: Caution should be exercised in making too much of the two different words for "love" which are employed in this text. The two verbs are *agapao* and *phileo*. The first two times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, the word for love is *agapao*. The third time Jesus asks, He employs the term *phileo*. Every time Peter responds to Jesus' question, indicating his love, he employs the word *phileo*. The distinctions that some make between these two terms may hold true in some cases, and for some authors. They do not seem to hold true for John, who often uses different terms for the same concept. When commentators do seek to emphasize the distinctions between the two Greek words John uses, they do not agree as to what the meaning and emphasis of these terms are. We should keep in mind that when Jesus spoke to Peter and asked him these three questions, He spoke not in Greek (the language in which the Gospel of John is written), but in Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews of that day. The change in words may have some significance, but I hardly think it is the key to understanding the passage.

Bob Deffinbaugh, *What Is This Thing Called Love? (John 21:1-25)*, ©1996-2006 Biblical Studies Press, reprinted with permission from www.bible.org.

(Thayer's lexicon defines **agapao** as to be fond of, dearly love; **phileo** as to approve of, to like, befriend)