



Jesus Reinstates Peter

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

John 21



Jesus appeared to His disciples several times before He was taken up into heaven. He made it clear to Peter that He was forgiven and he had work to do. Jesus uses imperfect people who love Him to tell others about His salvation.

Day #1: True Fishers

The disciples were in their hometown of Galilee, waiting for further instructions from Jesus. Waiting is often a very difficult task. Several of the disciples had once been professional fisherman, so one day, they decided to set out in their old fishing boats. They fished all night, but their nets came up empty.

Early the next morning they heard someone calling to them from the shore. He was too far away for them to see who it was, but they could hear what he said.

† 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!" - John 21:6-7a

Peter jumped in the sea and swam to shore. The other disciples followed in the boat. We can almost picture Jesus smiling on the shore as He saw the disciples heading toward Him.

This was the same scene that Jesus created three years before. Peter, James, and John had fished all night without catching a thing. Jesus told them to throw their nets into the water one more time. When they did, the nets came up bursting with fish (Luke 5:4-7). It was at that moment Peter realized that Jesus was the Lord, and at that time, Jesus told them **they would become fishers of men**. The men left everything and followed Jesus (Luke 5:8-11).

Now, three years later, Jesus had come to remind them of His promise. Their time of training was complete. It was time for them to become fishers of men. This means it was time for them to tell lost people how to be saved from the punishment of their sin. Jesus was about to give them the tools they needed to do this kind of fishing.

Day #1 continued:

* The call to **fish for people** is a call to you as well. Will you accept the work God has for you? Are you willing to put down doing things your way, and do things Jesus' way? Remember, our nets come up empty when we do things our own way.

Day #2: Weight Lifting

Get two plastic grocery bags. Tie one handle of one bag to one handle of the other bag. Make sure it is a good strong knot. Now put something heavy in each bag, such as a textbook, or two cans of vegetables. Set this aside for a moment.

When Jesus was arrested, Peter stood nearby to watch His trial. But when Peter was asked if he was a disciple, Peter said, "No." In fact, Peter denied even knowing Jesus three times. When Peter realized what he had done, he cried bitterly. He was terribly disappointed in his own actions. His sadness was like a weight on his heart. (Place the plastic bag weight that you made around your shoulders.) The memory of that night played over and over in his mind. He wondered if he would ever be free of the guilt that he felt. He may have even wondered if he had wasted the last several years of his life traveling with Jesus, because when it really mattered, he didn't stand up for Jesus.

But now, Jesus came to let him know without a doubt that he was forgiven. When Jesus appeared on the seashore, He pulled Peter aside. Jesus had three questions for Peter. Three times He asked:

† "Simon...do you really love Me?" - John 21:16

Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to proclaim his love three times. Peter knew he was truly forgiven. The weight had been lifted from Peter. (Remove the weight from your shoulders.) Now Peter would be free to do the work that Jesus had given him.

* At times, we all blow it. But Jesus does not want us to live under the weight of our guilt. Quickly confess your sin to Him. He is faithful to forgive you - every time (1 John 1:9). If it helps you, picture Jesus lifting the weight from you. Because of what He did, your sins have been forgiven (1 John 1:7).

Day #3: Feed My Lambs

† 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?"

Day #3 continued:

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

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

Peter had once bragged that he loved Jesus more than anyone (Matthew 26:33). But now he simply said he loved Jesus. Jesus instructed Peter to feed His lambs.

Jesus was not talking about actual lambs. Jesus once called Himself the good Shepherd (John 10:11), and He said that the people who believed in Him were His sheep. Here, Jesus was telling Peter to take care of and teach the people who believed in Jesus.

After Peter and the disciples became "fishers of men," telling the good news that people could be saved from the punishment of their sin, Jesus wanted them to continue to teach them. Being saved from punishment was not enough. These people needed to be taught how to abide with Jesus so they can live fruitful lives. They needed encouragement, and they needed to know how to tell others about the new life they had been given.

Jesus once taught His disciples that if they were kind to other people it was the same as being kind to Him (Matthew 25:40). By teaching and caring for new believers, Peter would be showing his love for Jesus.

 Sometimes we feel our only responsibility is to tell people how to be saved from their sins. But, Jesus makes it clear that we must go much further. Those of us who know the Lord are instructed to love, encourage, and build up other believers (1 Thes. 5:11). In doing this, we show our love for Jesus!

Day #4: Holy Spirit

What is your favorite part of having a birthday? One of the best parts is receiving gifts! Some years we can hardly wait for our special day to come because we have been looking forward to receiving a special gift. The disciples were about to receive the BEST gift ever - and it would come from God Almighty!

One day, not long after Jesus appeared to Peter and the others on the shore in Galilee, the men were sharing a meal together. Jesus instructed His friends to stay together in Jerusalem until they received the **gift** that His Father had promised them. And what was this gift that was promised by the Creator of the Universe? It was the **Holy Spirit**. Jesus had talked about the Spirit many times, but it is doubtful that disciples could fully understand what a wonderful gift the Spirit of God would be. And now Jesus promised that this gift would be given to them in just a few days.

 *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. - Acts 1:8*

Day #4 continued:

The disciples were about to receive God's POWER. It was the same power by which Jesus performed miracles and by which Jesus was raised from the dead! (Romans 8:11, 15:19) This is a TON of power! It would take this power - and nothing less - to accomplish God's plan. These few men were the ones who had been chosen to take the message of Christ into ALL the world. **They were the plan.** And God gave them the power to accomplish it.

 Now, **you are the plan.** The message has been given to you, and you are instructed to go out and tell the world. If your faith is in Jesus, you have been given the AWESOME gift of the Holy Spirit! You have the same amazing POWER in you that the disciples had when they took the Good News into the all the world.

Day #5: Return to Heaven

Jesus was about to leave the disciples, but He promised to send the very Spirit of God to help them accomplish God's plan.

 *After Jesus said this, He was taken up to heaven. (The disciples) watched until a cloud hid Him from their sight.*

While He was going up, they kept on looking at the sky. Suddenly two men dressed in white clothing stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. But He will come back in the same way you saw him go." - Acts 1:9-11

It must have been an amazing sight, watching Jesus go up into the clouds. The disciples kept looking up even after they could no longer see Him. This might be similar to our watching a helium balloon float higher and higher until it is out of our sight.

Then God's messenger angels came to announce that Jesus would be coming back one day. The angels seemed to be hinting that there was no point staring at the sky when the disciples had work to do. The disciples worshipped Jesus right where they stood, and then they ran to Jerusalem filled with great joy (Luke 24:52). Their joy was contagious as they began telling everyone the Good News about Jesus, the risen Savior.

Just as Jesus promised, He sent the Holy Spirit to fill His believers. Every person who trusts in Jesus becomes a home in which the Spirit of God lives (1 Corinthians 3:16). And just as Jesus promised, He will return one day to set up His Kingdom on Earth. No one knows the date or time that He will return. But in the meantime, we have work to do!

 Pray right now and ask Jesus to put someone in your life that needs to hear about Jesus. When you are with that person, let your joy overflow, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words to speak. Then take the time to be their friend, encourage them, and teach them to abide in Jesus.