

Title: Restoring a Right Relationship with Christ

Passage: John 21:15-25

Introduction

Question: How does God respond to us when we fall?

Summary:

Many of us have been filled by guilt and shame because of our sin. In this text we see Jesus' kindness and tenderness towards Peter through the way He poses the three questions to Peter and the way He responds to Peter's answers. What we see in this passage then is the heart of Jesus for Peter and for all us. Jesus is ready not only to forgive Peter, but also to reaffirm His calling in Peter's life and to restore him to ministry.

EXPOSITION

Question: What is the condition of your relationship with the Lord Jesus?

- The heart of a Christian = an on-going love relationship between the believer and Jesus Christ

But what happens when we fail or have fallen?

- Do you still love Jesus? If so, then Jesus will re-affirm His love for you.

2 Timothy 2:13

if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Great Calling

John 21:15

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

Jesus said to Simon Peter

- Jesus initiated this conversation; it is Jesus who initiated restoration. He comes near.

Simon, son of John,

- original name (not Peter)
- Jesus takes Simon back to the beginning, reminding him who he was before began following Jesus.

do you love me more than these?

- These = other disciples

Matthew 26:33

Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."

- Peter previously compared himself to others.
- Jesus questioning where Peter is now.

He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."

Love

- different Greek words with different meanings:
 - Erotic = sexual passion
 - Phileo = brotherly affection marked by deep feelings
 - Agape = unconditional love marked by action (See Roman 5:8)
- Here: Peter uses only the word "phileo"
 - Pointed to his prior failure/rejection of Jesus so that he is unable to claim unconditional devotion.

Matthew 26:72

And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man."

He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

- Jesus doesn't reject Peter's expression of his love but acknowledges his humility.
- My lambs = those who belong to Christ.

Acts 20:28

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

1 Peter 5:1-4

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

- Christ is the Great Shepherd who graciously calls others to shepherd His flock and His lambs.

John 21:16

He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

- Jesus is commissioning Peter = tend = shepherd

John 21:17

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

- Jesus asks: Do you really "phileo" love me?

Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?"

- *grieved* = not so much down because bringing up past failure but rather feeling unsettled yet in awe of Jesus receiving and loving Peter.

"Do you love me?"

- Question: Do we love Jesus from the heart?
- We can do much and say much but can in reality be dead in our heart for Jesus.

Matthew 15:8

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

Mark 12:30

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

- the more we realize how much God has done for us, the more we will love Him for what He has done for us.

Great Cost

John 21:18-19

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Prophecy of Peter's death

- *you will stretch out your hands,*
 - Pointed to way of death: crucifixion

(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.)

- Anyone who dies for Jesus is a glory to God.

Psalms 116:15

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

1 Peter 4:16, 19

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name...Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

- Quote: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." (Jim Elliott)
- We may glorify God in every situation, including that of death. We can glorify God by testifying of the comfort that is real.

Psalms 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 90:12

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

John 21:20-22

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"

When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"

- Temptation to compare ourselves to others.

Luke 18:10-11

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"

- After hearing from God, stay focused and committed to what God has said.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 21:24-25

This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Application

Question: If you are reminded of a past failure, what is your response?

- Jesus has the same heart and draws near to you in grace and mercy

Answer: Repent

Acts 3:19-20

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,

Revelation 2:4-5a

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

- Remember - where you have fallen
- Repent - of your sins
- Return - to what you were doing when previously followed Christ

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- God’s forgiveness is available to those who come and confess

Prayer: Lord, I am Yours, please save me.

Psalms 34:18

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.