

Peter: Failure & Forgiveness
STRANGER ON THE SHORE

Saturday, October 24

Reading: John 21

John 21:17 *The third time [Jesus] said to [Peter], "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."*

After Jesus' appearance in the upper room, Peter and six other disciples return to Galilee where Jesus had promised to meet them. Perhaps they began to be discouraged when Jesus did not immediately arrive so Peter fell back into old habits - he decides to go fishing. Jesus had called him away from fishing for fish to be a "fisher of men," but during this time of confusion Peter returned to what was familiar.

After fishing all night and catching nothing, they heard a Stranger on the shore telling them to "throw your net on the right side of the boat." When they did the net became so full of fish that they could not haul it into the boat! John, the disciple that Jesus' loved, was the first to recognize this had happened before (Luke 5:1-11) and realized the Stranger on the shore was Jesus. Hearing this, Peter jumped overboard in his rush to see the Lord.

When they arrive on shore, Jesus already has breakfast waiting for them. After the meal, Jesus takes Peter aside to reaffirm and recommission him for service. Though he had been forgiven (probably at that earlier encounter - see yesterday's devotions), Peter may have thought his denials disqualified him from service. Three times Jesus asks Peter "Do you love Me?" and each time He followed Peter's response with a call to "Feed My sheep." Despite his failure, Peter would be an effective servant and would eventually die for his Lord.

LESSON ONE: When we get discouraged it's easy to fall back into old ways & patterns, but Christ has called us to a new life. As we obey, God will give us courage to not lose heart.

Psalm 27:13-14 "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord! (NKJV)

LESSON TWO: Have you ever failed the Lord? What feelings did you have because of your failure? Our failures do not disqualify us from serving the Lord. Jesus forgives and restores us when we repent so we can again be useful for His kingdom.

LESSON THREE: There are two different words used for "love" in this passage. Jesus asks Peter do you *agape* Me, the Greek word used for supreme love usually attributed to God Himself. However, Peter answers Jesus' question with the Greek word *phileo*, brotherly love. The third time Jesus asks the question He uses the word *phileo* - "Do you love Me like a brother?" This is probably why Peter is sad after this third question. Jesus has changed His terms to meet Peter where he is in his relationship. The old Peter was full of boasts about his dedication to Christ. But Peter has changed. Gone are the big boasts! They have been replaced by an honest acknowledgement of his own shortcomings and the need to grow. Because of this, Peter is just who Jesus is looking for to lead His people. Jesus wants to take us where we are and mold us into who He wants us to be. But before He can do that, we must take an honest look at ourselves, warts and all. Only when we realize our need for His power, love, and forgiveness in our lives can we be effective servants for Him.