

After the resurrection, Jesus revealed Himself again to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (a.k.a. Sea of Galilee). Seven of the disciples were present: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and two unnamed others (v.1-2). Peter, still a natural leader, decided to go fishing—returning to what he knew before Jesus called him. The others followed. They fished all night but caught nothing (v.3). This night of failure set the stage for a divine encounter.

Jesus Appears and Provides

As morning broke, Jesus stood on the shore, unrecognized by the disciples. He called out, asking if they had caught anything. They answered no (v.4-5). Jesus then instructed them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some” (v.6). Their obedience brought an overwhelming catch, and John recognized, “It is the Lord!” (v.7).

Peter, impetuous as ever, dove into the sea and swam to shore. The other disciples followed in the boat, dragging the full net (v.8). They found a fire, fish, and bread already prepared (v.9). Jesus invited them to bring some of their catch—153 large fish, yet the net was not broken (v.10-11).

This miraculous provision was a reminder that obedience to Jesus brings fruitfulness. Apart from Him, our labors—even in familiar territory—are empty (cf. John 15:5). But when He directs the work, the outcome is abundant. It’s not about effort; it’s about obedience.

Jesus Feeds His Disciples and Recommissions Peter

Jesus said, “Come and eat breakfast.” None dared ask, “Who are You?”—they knew it was the Lord (v.12). This was the third recorded appearance of the risen Christ to the disciples (v.14).

After breakfast, Jesus turned to Peter with a deeply personal and restoring conversation. Three times He asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” (vv.15-17). The first two times, Jesus used the Greek word *agapao* (divine, self-sacrificing love), but Peter replied with *phileo* (brotherly affection). On the third question, Jesus used Peter’s word: “Do you *phileo* Me?” Grieved, Peter replied, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Jesus met Peter where he was. He didn’t condemn Peter’s limited response, but commissioned him: “Feed My lambs...tend My sheep...feed My sheep.” Christ was restoring Peter from his threefold denial, not just forgiving him but recommissioning him. True love for Christ expresses itself in faithfulness to His flock (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Prophecy and Personal Calling

Then Jesus foretold the kind of death Peter would die—“you will stretch out your hands” (v.18)—a phrase that signified crucifixion. Jesus said this to indicate that Peter’s end would glorify God. Then came the call: “Follow Me” (v.19).

Peter, noticing John, asked, “What about this man?” (v.21). Jesus replied, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me” (v.22). Here is a vital principle: we are each called to follow Christ personally. Comparing our path with another’s distracts from obedience. The Lord’s plan for someone else is not ours to question.

The Truth and Testimony of John

A rumor arose that John would live until Christ’s return, but John clarifies: Jesus said, “If I will...”—not that it would happen (v.23).

John concludes with his eyewitness testimony: “This is the disciple who testifies of these things... and we know that his testimony is true” (v.24). And finally, he remarks that Jesus did many other things, and if they were all written down, “the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (v.25).

Personal Application

- When we act in self-will—even in familiar places like work or ministry—we often find futility. But when Jesus directs the work, it yields fruit. We must listen to His voice.
- Restoration is not just about forgiveness; it’s about renewal and recommissioning. No matter how great the failure, Jesus can restore and use us again.
- Our love for Christ is not proven by sentiment but by obedience—especially in caring for His people.
- God meets us where we are, but calls us to more. Peter’s story is one of grace—not because Peter earned a second chance, but because Jesus extended it.
- Don’t be distracted by comparing your walk with someone else’s. Christ calls us to follow Him—individually and faithfully.

Closing Thought

John’s Gospel ends with this note: there is so much more that could be said. Jesus’ life is not contained in a volume—it unfolds in the hearts of those who believe. May our lives become living testimonies of His ongoing work.

“Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.’” (John 21:22, NKJV)