

# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS with Christ

## “Seeing the Savior in Action”

Key Verse - 20:31—*“But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you might have life through His name.”*

### **Study Number Eight – The Restoration of Peter – John 21:1-17**

We’ve been studying Snapshots of the Savior to get to know Jesus Christ better.

1. We looked at John 2 at the WEDDING IN CANA OF GALILEA so we could see that Jesus could have fun. When people had a need for wine, He took care of it and met their needs.

We get THREE STATEMENTS:

1. “they have no wine,”
2. “whatever he says to you do it,” and
3. “you’ve saved the best till now.”

Those were the key thoughts we got out of that study.

2. Then we looked at John 3 and the INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS so that we could see a religious guy talking to the Lord. We have a key phrase to remember from verse 7:

“you must be born again.”

That’s a DIVINE IMPERATIVE and that’s the Lord Jesus saying, “If you’re going to get with it, if you’re going to have the experience of eternal life, there’s one thing that starts it, and that’s the NEW BIRTH.

3. Then we looked at the WOMAN AT THE WELL because she’d been feasting at many wells and had not been satisfied.

She had five husbands and the guy she was living with wasn’t her husband. And the Lord Jesus so related to her that He was willing to provide for her “living water.” In other words, He would satisfy her every need if she would enter into a relationship with Him by faith.

4. Then we looked at John 6 with the little guy and his lunch in the FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND so that see that a little is a lot when the Lord’s in it. He’d like to take us and bless us and break us and serve us to people too, just like He did the little guy’s lunch.

5. We then went to John 8 in the next snapshot so that we could see the Lord Jesus’ POWER TO FORGIVE.

Here’s a woman caught in the act of adultery and He

FORGIVES her, He FREED her, and He pointed her to a FUTURE as she accepted the responsibility for what was going on in her life, as far as the past is concerned.

6. Then we looked at John 11, THE RAISING OF LAZARUS, because we had three people in that section that had different needs.

MARTHA needed to know that she could trust the Lord in impossible circumstances, and the Lord really got the message through.

MARY needed comfort because she didn't understand what was happening.

LAZARUS needed life and liberty.

7. In Snapshot 7 we talked about the VINE AND THE BRANCHES in John 15.

The reason that the Father has a vine, who is Jesus Christ, and we are branches related to Him is because He wants fruit. And if we know Him and He's our Savior, and we're walking with Him, there's only one reason that the Father has that vine in our relationship with Him. That's to bear fruit through us and to the world around us.

He first CHANGES us, by bearing fruit in us.

Then He BEARS FRUIT to people around us by changing

their lives by what they see in ours.

## And that brings us to Study #8—THE RESTORATION OF PETER.

In our last study we were one night before the Cross. That's a bad scene. And it was a scary time. It was a sad time. For thirty-three years the Lord Jesus had been dreading this terrible hour that was going to come.

Since that last study, the cross and the resurrection has already taken place, as well as several appearances. But the guy who steps onto center stage in this passage had a terrible time after our last study.

He heard the message about the vines and the branches, but it never did get through to the poor guy. Peter listened to that message but as soon as they left the vineyard where that message took place and started to head toward the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord said, "Men, I've got to tell you, I'm going to die. I'm leaving you."

Peter never got the message. He says, "Look Lord! Everybody else can check out on You, but You can always count on old Pete. They'll get You over my dead body. They'll never get to You before they get to me. You just count on it Lord. I'm Your friend, true to the end."

The Lord turns to Peter and He says, "Peter I hate to break it to you, but I've got to tell you what's going to happen. It's not

like you say Peter, because before the rooster crows in the morning, you're going to tell people three times that you don't even know Me!"

Talk about scorning a friend. He really nailed him to the wall with that one.

We have to understand Peter. He is an enthusiastic extrovert. He would never be in a crowd of people for very long, but everybody gets to know him.

He had a brother by the name of Andrew who was introverted not by choice but because he lived with Peter. Peter is the kind of guy you can really relate to. He's an all-American guy. He's a high school stud, never had pimples, dated the prettiest girls, with everything going his way. Straight A's on his report card and he would have made it in track and tennis too, if he would have had time to go out for both.

But here comes Peter, never doing anything wrong, just overwhelming everybody. Mr. Cool when he comes into the scene. When he joins the twelve disciples, it's not any different.

The first thing they do is to elect this guy president of the student body, or president of the organization. He's the key guy in the center of everything. And he's also in charge of the executive committee. He, James and John, the sons of thunder, were chosen as the little exec committee that made all the key decisions that related to everybody else. So he's in

a big position.

Now there's one problem with a guy like this. When we have a guy that gets super excited, sometimes he has doubts.

If everything's going great man, he's higher than a kite. But if everything's going bad, he's down in the dumps. Peter had those times when sometimes everything was going great and other times everything was going wrong. And many times they were very close together.

For instance, one day the Lord said, "Men, who do people say that I am?" And old Peter says, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord blesses him for that. And the next minute Jesus says, "I'm going to the cross," and Peter says, "It won't happen to You." And the Lord says, "Get thee behind Me Satan."

It's just like that. Sometimes he's got his brain in gear and sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes he says the right thing and sometimes he says the wrong thing.

Peter had a lot of interesting and funny experiences with the Lord. His conversion is a beautiful experience. We'll look at that shortly because it relates to the verses that are before us.

But for instance, he's the first guy that waterskied in the Bible. One night the Lord was walking on the water and He said, "Peter come on!" Peter said, "If that's You, I'm coming." Sure enough, he did and he did it without skis and a boat and

he went over to the Lord. And the rest of the disciples just couldn't believe this guy.

Peter is the kind of guy that's probably best described in John 13. We're getting ready for this final supper that they're going to have together and everybody's talking about who's going to be secretary of state in the kingdom and everybody forgets to do the menial task of washing the feet.

Old president Peter didn't appoint anybody because he was busy talking about the kingdom. And so the Lord takes the towel and the bucket and begins to methodically wash their feet.

Now when He comes to Peter, we expect that the answer He's going to get will be the answer and that's right. Peter says, "You ain't washing my feet." The Lord says, "Peter, if I don't wash your feet, you don't have a part with Me."

Peter says, "If that's the case, give me the whole bath." And that's the kind of guy he was. He goes from one extreme to another. He runs hot and he runs cold.

But it's all built around the power of Peter. All of his great claims of loyalty are self-sufficient claims. "Well Lord, You want something done? I'll do it. You can count on me. Listen Lord, don't sweat it. I'll get everything organized, I'll have everything. Okay, all You've got to do is teach. You just be there and count on Peter to handle everything. I'll never leave anything undone. These twelve men will serve you to the

death.”

And that’s kind of the way he trucked through life. Just the ego-centered, self-sufficient Peter that he was.

Now the significance of this particular passage can only be understood in what happened after he made those claims about “over my dead body.”

But when they got to the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord said, “It’s time to pray.” He left nine of the guys and He said, “I want the executive committee to go with Me a little bit further.” And they went over into the garden and got ready to pray.

The Lord says, “Okay Peter, you, James and John stay right here and you pray and I’m going right over here to pray.” And sure enough, Peter’s out, “Now I lay me down to sleep.” He’s sacked out—he and James and John—before they even started praying.

And the Lord came back and He said, “Can’t you guys even watch with Me one hour?” Peter and the others woke up and they were ashamed of themselves and they started praying again. They mumbled a couple of prayers and off they went again.

The Lord came back, agonizing in this situation, and He said, “Fellas, it’s time.” And sure enough, here comes Judas with the troops that are going to apprehend Jesus.

Now what happens? Pete fumbles around and finds a sword. He'd never had one of those things in his hand before, and he's going to make a deliverance.

He walks up and he thinks, "If I can decapitate one of these birds or split his personality, that'll scare the rest of them and they'll all leave!" So he finds a guy, he winds up—never had a sword before and he has poor aim in the darkness—and he whacks the guy upside of the ear.

The Lord says, "Peter, put up your sword!" That really scares him. He's expecting the Lord to say, "Man, that's fantastic Peter! I appreciate your help in this situation. I really needed you."

Instead the Lord says, "Peter, I don't need you. If I needed deliverance tonight I would have gotten the angels of heaven to provide for the deliverance. You're not minding the things of the Lord right here, Peter. Just put up your sword!"

That's a pretty stern rebuke and Peter starts worrying about Peter now instead of the Lord, and he follows at a good distance.

Now when they get over close to the place for the trial, Peter's scared. But he figures if he stays around John, everything will be okay. John's dad was kind of part of the religious establishment of the day and he figured that these guys that had apprehended Him were part of that group.

So they were over there by the trial, and some little girl came up and said, “Aren’t you a follower of Jesus?” And Peter says, “I am not.”

And then low and behold, another little girl says the same thing and Peter feels crowded. “I am not!” Peter feels he better get into male company, “This female bit’s about to get me. Already twice I’ve, you know, I’ve had to say I didn’t know Him.”

And before you know it, he’s standing around the fire with a bunch of guys and they’re in conversation. One of the guys says, “Hey, I can tell by your accent that you’re a follower of Jesus.”

This triggers Peter’s old nature and he blows his top and he begins to curse and to swear profane words that had come off of the fishing boat. And he says, “I do not!” and denies the fact that he knows the Lord.

The next picture is a picture of Peter seeing one final glance of the Lord Jesus as he goes out into the night and the gray dawning of morning, and he hears the rooster crow.

This is a heartbreaking experience. Imagine being president of an organization and have it all fall apart. And the fiasco the next day is all his responsibility.

He feels that. He feels like he’s the one who’s responsible for

this whole foul mess. And he has to live in agony for three days, being responsible for the cross. And he takes it all on his shoulders.

Now it's fabulous, of course, three days later when he hears that the Lord's risen from the dead. That's the greatest news to give a guy who has blown it so badly.

One other thing that happened after he got the news of the resurrection. First Corinthians 15:5 tells us that "the Lord revealed Himself to Peter." And when He revealed Himself to Peter, we don't know what happened.

Most likely in that meeting the same thing happened with the woman who was taken in adultery. Because there was forgiveness there in that little meeting together with Peter and the Lord. There was freedom, and the Lord was pointing Peter to a future if he was willing to admit that he was not adequate and he was willing to turn it over and let the Lord show what He could do through an available instrument.

Now with those thoughts in mind, we will go through these next verses briefly because the last three verses are the key ones to the lesson.

Let's begin with verse 1.

**v. 1 After these things Jesus again made himself visible to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and He manifested himself in this manner.**

“After these things Jesus again made himself visible to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and He manifested himself in this manner.”

Alright, “After these things,”—what things?

Back in chapter 20 the Lord revealed Himself to the disciples and Thomas got himself straightened out and recognized that the Lord Jesus was truly alive.

“After these things Jesus again made himself visible” to them. And this is the way He did at “the sea of Tiberias.”

**v. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, the one called the twin, and Nathanael, the one from Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.**

“There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, the one called the twin, and Nathanael, the one from Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.”

We have the name of seven guys here. Five of them are mentioned by name, and two of them aren't. The five guys that are mentioned are:

1. Peter,
2. Thomas—the guy that was doubting until last chapter,

3. James and
4. John, the two sons of thunder, and then
5. Nathanael—he’s the guy who was totally honest. The absent-minded professor of the troop who sat out under the fig tree when Philip went to find him and bring him to Jesus.

And then it says we have two more guys.

Now most likely these other two guys are the nutty buddies we met back in chapter 6—Philip and Andrew—because they’re the only other two among the twelve that were interested in fishing, or had fishing in their background.

For instance, Matthew was interested in money and the market. James, the son of Alpheus, did not have an interest in fishing. Simon the Zealot was a revolutionary. Judas Thaddeus Lebbaeus was a young guy with no fishing in his background. Judas had already committed suicide so that only leaves us the two—Andrew and Philip.

**v. 3 Simon Peter is saying to them, “I am going fishing.” They are saying to him, “We are coming also with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and during that night they caught nothing.**

“Simon Peter is saying to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They are saying to him, ‘We are coming also with you.’ They went out

and got into the boat; and during the night they caught nothing.”

Now what’s the significance of that to Peter? Peter is returning to his old way of life to catch fish. Why’s he doing that?

Well, when we start failing in life and things start happening that we can’t explain or blame on anybody else, there’s one thing a guy will often do and that’s to protect his sagging ego by returning to something he can still do.

Now to Peter he has to say, “Well, I blew it. I failed. I’ve been wrong. It’s been rough.” But instead of accepting the responsibility of it and coming like a man to the Lord and dealing with it, he’s got to save that sagging ego. And in his mind he’s saying, “Well, at least I can still fish!”

And so he takes his ego and gets a bunch of the other guys with him, and out he goes to try to catch fish.

He forgot the lesson of, “Without Me you can do nothing.” He made one mistake. The Lord wasn’t with him on this one. They were doing it on their own. And he gets the obvious results. It’s a futile fishing trip without the Lord in the boat.

We all are going to try to get the Lord in our boat the next time we go fishing. The neat thing is, we can have Him in our boat, because He can be in our life when we come into a relationship with Him and He goes with us wherever we go.

**v. 4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.**

“But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.”

Why didn't they?

Ever been to the beach early in the morning? Often there's a thick fog and you can hear the sound of the ocean, but can't even see it.

And these men are out on the sea at dawn and a hundred yards away there's a guy standing on the shore and they just don't recognize who He is at that distance.

**v. 5 Then, Jesus is saying to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered Him, “No.”**

“Then, Jesus is saying to them, ‘Children, you have no fish, have you?’ They answered Him, ‘No.’”

He asked a question that was going to precipitate the obvious answer. He knew before He asked that they didn't have any fish.

**v. 6 And He said to them, “Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find.” Therefore, they**

**threw it, and no longer were they strong enough to haul it in because of the great number of fish.**

“And He said to them, ‘Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find.’ Therefore, they threw it, and no longer were they strong enough to haul it in because of the great number of fish.”

Instantaneously they obey the command of the Lord and they put the net over on the right side of the boat and wow, they get results.

Now the significance of these results is that this is instant replay for Peter. The very first time Peter met the Lord was after he'd been out fishing all night. He was cleaning his nets down on the beach and the Lord said, “Hey Peter, can I borrow your boat because the crowd is so big here? They're going to push me in the water.”

Peter gets a box seat behind the Lord in the boat while the Lord preaches a message. And this is the first time Peter's ever heard the Lord.

And it's so neat because the Lord turns to him afterwards and says, “Let's go fishing.” We can almost imagine how Peter feels after being out all night. It's almost impossible to catch fish in the middle of the day, but he wants to be a good host. He thinks, “We'll go for a boat ride, but no fishing.”

And they get out there and the Lord's serious. He says, “Let

down the nets.” And Peter lets down the nets and sure enough, he thought it got caught on a rock.

But when it began to surface it was so full of fish they couldn't get it into the boat. Peter is so broken by this experience that he drops to his knees right there in the boat and says, “Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

That was the beginning of a relationship between the Lord and Peter. And now we're coming back to that relationship here. Instant replay, if you please.

**v. 7 Then that disciple whom Jesus loves is saying to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Then Simon Peter, having heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was only partially clad, and threw himself into the sea.**

“Then that disciple whom Jesus loves is saying to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’”

John always refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loves.” He doesn't use his name, but he does have a characteristic. He's the one whom the Lord loves.

All the other guys gave John a bad time because he had such a neat relationship with the Lord. He was sort of the teacher's pet. If you're putting apples on the teacher's desk, you're going to catch some flack.

And sure enough, John got a lot of this. John refers to himself as the one “whom Jesus loves,” because all the guys had called him that. He had a very special place.

John heard that voice and he saw the miracle, and when we put those two together, we can’t make a mistake in identity. There’s no way. He says, “It’s the Lord!”

“Then Simon Peter, having heard that it was the Lord, put on his outer garment, for he was only partially clad, and threw himself into the sea.”

Peter is so excited that it’s the Lord that he puts on his t-shirt, jumps in for a polar bear dip, and swims a hundred yards to shore to be with the Lord.

**v. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, in fact about 100 yards, dragging the net full of fish.**

“But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, in fact about 100 yards, dragging the net full of fish.”

Well, he leaves the responsibility of getting the fish into the boat to the other six guys.

**v. 9 Then when they got out upon the shore, they are seeing a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread.**

“Then when they got out upon the shore, they are seeing a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread.”

The Lord’s already got breakfast ready.

**v. 10 Jesus is saying to them, “Bring some of the fish which you now caught.”**

“Jesus is saying to them, ‘Bring some of the fish which you now caught.’”

Peter gets busy at that.

**v. 11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to the shore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.**

“Simon Peter went up and he drew the net to the shore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.”

Peter gets the fish ashore and then we read in verse 12:

**v. 12 Jesus is saying to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples was daring to question Him, “Who are you?” knowing that it was the Lord.**

“Jesus is saying to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ None of the disciples was daring to question Him, ‘Who are you?’ knowing that it was the Lord.”

Now some people read that and they say, “Well, why’s that in there? Why did they do that?”

Ever had the experience of going to a funeral and then three weeks later seeing the guy walking down the street again? We’ve never had that experience so we don’t know how we’d act if somebody who’d died on a cross and was put in a tomb, and we see Him walking down the street the next week.

These guys just can’t comprehend it. They want to believe it, but they want to be sure it’s Him. And none of them dared ask Him. They’re so excited.

But it says they all knew it was the Lord.

**v. 13 Jesus is coming and taking the bread, and giving it to them, and the fish in the same way.**

“Jesus is coming and taking the bread, and giving it to them, and the fish in the same way.”

That’s kind of like Snapshot 4, isn’t it, when He took the little guy’s lunch—the bread and the fish—and fed them? They’re probably thinking about that while He’s doing this.

**v. 14 This already is the third time that Jesus made**

**himself visible to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.**

“This already is the third time that Jesus made himself visible to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.”

When were the other two times?

On the DAY OF RESURRECTION, He revealed Himself to ten of the guys. Thomas missed the youth meeting that night and so he wasn't there and he missed the first encounter.

And the other ten guys just couldn't believe it and they went and they told Thomas, “Thomas, you missed it! The Lord came and you weren't there with us.”

Thomas said, “Awe, get off it. I don't believe that. You know I won't believe it unless I can put my finger in the nail prints in His hands and my hands in His side. I won't believe it.” And so he went all week just frustrated. He wouldn't believe it.

But the next week Thomas learned his lesson. He was there. And sure enough, the Lord revealed Himself a second time, and that's the confession that's made in JOHN 20, when he drops on his knees and says, “My Lord and my God! I'm convinced You are who You say You are.”

Now this is the third time, here with them ON THE SEA.

**v. 15 Then when they had finished breakfast, Jesus is**

**saying to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He is saying to Him, “Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I love you.” He is saying to him, “Feed my lambs.”**

“Then when they had finished breakfast, Jesus is saying to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He is saying to Him, “Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I love you.’ He is saying to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’”

Well here we see eight guys. They’re sitting around and they’re having the neatest time talking about past experiences, and they’re breaking bread and eating fish together. And breakfast is over and all of a sudden the guest of honor turns to one guy in the group and says, “Simon Peter.”

Imagine the hush over everybody else when the guest of honor picks out one person and is going to say something to him. He says to Simon Peter:

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”

What He’s saying here is, “Simon, am I really first in your life? Do you love Me more than these fish? Or do you love Me more than the rest of these guys sitting here? Am I really first or are you just saying that?”

To help with understanding this interaction, here’s a little Greek lesson.

The Lord Jesus says, “Simon, son of John, do you *agape* Me?”

The word *agape* refers to the type of love that God produces in the heart of an individual who’s become a Christian. When that person comes to a relationship with Jesus Christ, God begins to work in their life a capacity for love that we can’t believe.

It’s so neat because it’s a self-sacrificing love. It’s a love which motivates us to be interested in other people becoming Christians. A lot of people that aren’t Christians get bugged by it. They think it’s phony, because they just can’t believe that somebody can love them that much and be that interested in them. And a lot of times they say, “Awe man, you can’t love me that much.” Yes! It’s possible when we’re walking with the Lord and we have this self-sacrificing *agape* love.

What Jesus is saying to Peter is, “Peter, do you love Me with a God-like kind of love?” Now Peter answers Him in a different way. He says, “Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I *phileo* You.”

Now *phileo* is human affection. That’s the word we get for Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. In other words, Peter says, “Lord, I don’t love You with the kind of love You’re asking me, but I do at least love You as a friend.”

What’s the significance of that? The significance of that statement right there in this verse is for the very first time in

Peter's life—all of his life—he's made a confession that has never departed from his lips before. And that is, a confession that he is not capable of doing what the Lord asks him to do.

In a broken spirit he's saying, "Lord, I know You want me to love You with that kind of self-sacrificing love, but I don't have the capacity. I can only love You with human affection."

Now if this had been Peter three months ago, he'd have said, "Love You? Man, I love You so much I'll die for You. You can always count on me. *Agape* love? I'm exuding with it." In other words, self-sufficient Peter is able to handle anything.

This is a statement that has to depart from our lips before we ever enter into a relationship with Christ.

We have to get off the throne of our life and say, "I cannot gain eternal salvation apart from a relationship to Jesus Christ."

And secondly, if we're a Christian and we've been trying to handle life the way it's come to us day after day and we feel pretty cocky and sufficient in it, the Lord has a way of breaking us. Just like He did old Peter.

And in midst of his futility and failure, Peter begins to read the writing on the wall. And this is the first time, the very first time, he's ever admitted that he is not adequate for a request which the Lord makes in a question. "Do you love Me?"

Then the Lord says, “Be feeding my lambs.”

Why does He say that? “Feeding my lambs” is the MILK MINISTRY.

When a person becomes a Christian, we have to give them the milk of the Word of God.

“As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word,” Peter says in 1 Peter 2:2-3. That’s a milk ministry.

Now, in verse 16 we have the next one.

**v. 16 He is saying to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He is saying to Him, “Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I love you.” He is saying to him, “Be shepherding my sheep.”**

“He is saying to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’”

What’s He doing there? He wants to be sure that Peter heard the question.

He’s saying, “Simon, son of John, do you *agape* Me?” Using the very same word a second time to be sure that Peter really recognizes his inadequacy. And sure enough, he does.

“He is saying to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I *phileo* you.’”

“I only love You with human affection.”

“He is saying to him, ‘Be shepherding my sheep.’”

What’s that ministry? That’s the MATURING MINISTRY.

That’s the ministry where we, as Christians, disciple somebody else. We help them by sharing things from the Word of God that we’ve grown to love and appreciate so that they can grow and develop and be protected. Maybe we’re older in the things of the Lord and we’re going to protect them from error by sharing some things that we’ve learned from the Word.

Now look at verse 17. Talk about a tear-jerker in the life of a man—here it is.

**v. 17 He is saying to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, you are knowing all things; you are knowing by experience that I love you.” Jesus is saying to him, “Be feeding my sheep.”**

“He is saying to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, you are knowing all things; you are knowing by experience that I love you.’ Jesus is saying to him, ‘Be feeding my sheep.’”

Want to know the impact of that? Here are the words for “love” as they occur in the Greek language:

“He is saying to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John do you *phileo* me?’”

Talk about killing a guy’s adequacy and self-sufficiency. It was done right there.

The Lord says, “You know Peter, it’s not just a question of whether you have self-sacrificing love, I want to know if you’ve even got human love for Me.”

Lots of times the Lord goes through extremes to get us to catch the message. He did that to Peter here, because He wanted him to really know that within his heart, he was totally incapable of the kind of love that He wanted to produce through him.

He says, “Simon, do you even love Me with human affection?”

Imagine that. When we’ve failed somebody and they say, “Would you be willing to lay down your life for them?” And we say, “Well, no, I really wouldn’t but I love you as a friend.” And then they turn around and say, “Can I really ask you this? Do you love me as a friend?”

Just imagine how excruciating that would be. Well, we’re in Peter’s shoes if we feel a little bit like that.

It says, “Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you *phileo* me?’” See? That really got to him.

Want to see a grown man cry? Here it is. What’s his answer to that third question?

“Lord, you are knowing all things; you are knowing by experience that I *phileo* you.”

“One thing the last three years ought to do for You Lord, at least it ought to convince You that I at least love You as a friend. That I’m a good friend.”

Now one thing that happens when a person comes to the recognition that he’s incapable of this kind of love, God finds a candidate in which He can produce it. And that’s exactly what He wants to do in our life when we come to the end of our own human effort in trying.

When we quit denying the fact that He exists and when we admit that He’s got a plan, and when we admit that we’re wrong and God’s right, God is ready to start to do something with us.

Perhaps it’s been a long dreary life for someone and they’ve been fighting God all along the way, He wants that relationship and He’s saying, “I love you and I want to love through you, but I can’t until you get off the throne of your life and you quit being so self-sufficient and you let Me do through

you what I want to do.”

Peter, in the midst of his failure, was charged with a **THREE-FOLD MINISTRY**:

1. a **MILK MINISTRY**,
2. a **MATURING MINISTRY**, and
3. a **MEAT MINISTRY**.

There are three types of people that we meet along the Christian path:

1. the **LITTLE CHILDREN** who have just come to know the Lord and they need milk, and
2. the **YOUNG MEN** who are in conflict with the evil one (1 John 2) and they need protection, they need help, they need maturing and growth as they face temptation, and
3. the **DADDIES** who have walked with the Lord a long time and they need the meat of the Word of God.

Peter is charged with all three of these responsibilities.

Now the one thing that we need to get is that when we come to the end of our adequacy and our self-sufficiency, then God is ready to do a work. He can order the circumstances in our life, and maybe He has, to bring us to exact place because He

wants to show us that we're not adequate in ourselves, and He alone is the one who can prove and make life meaningful when we turn it over to Him and end up that self-sufficient claim that we can do it on our own.

We have these final observations that come out of this passage.

Lesson #1: Activity without the Lord's direction produces nothing.

Lesson #2: Success is not permanent; failure is not fatal; it is repentance that counts.

Lesson #3: Restored and renewed—the Lord is ready with a ministry.

Lesson #4: Obedience produces results.

Lesson #5: The fruit of failure sets the stage for a fabulous future!

Jesus said in John 12:24 and 25: "Except a corn of wheat fall unto the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit."

It is the desire of the Lord Jesus that we come to the end of ourselves and we allow Christ to become alive in us. And we allow Him to do through us what He's promised to do in faithfulness to His Word.

Peter is restored, renewed, and ready. Read the book of Acts to see the track record of this guy and see how he's used in implementing this three-fold ministry that he's been charged with here.

There are a lot of people that are walking around this world today. And a lot of people have a little sign that's written all over them that says, "No help needed."

And maybe there's someone like that today. Maybe their life has been a biography of "No help needed" and they've never come to Christ. They looked on the fact that they're going to come to their physical demise. And they feel that if they did the best they could, they're going to get in. But that isn't the way God planned it.

God knew that if we could do it by yourself, He wouldn't have taken the drastic measures of Calvary. That's the reason He died there for our broken law so we could have a relationship with Him.

And as a Christian, we can also put that sign on and say, "No help needed," because we're running around trying to live life the way we think God wants us to and we've never learned that we can't do it.

And through a relationship, the Lord Jesus wants to do it through us. And in a moment of futility and failure, He wants to bring us to that point where we're willing to turn it over to

Him.

Perhaps the Lord's given us another chance and He's saying, "Look friend, whether you're a Christian or not, you can't afford to go on neglecting in a self-sufficient way the relationship that I want with you."

The water's being stirred up around us and the Lord's saying, "Come on in friend. I love you. I'm willing to forgive you. I want a relationship."

And for those of us that have that relationship but we haven't understood it, and we've been living it on our own, He's saying, "Look, I'm stirring up the water around you because I want the controls. I want to live My life in you and through you."

Let's pray together.

Our heavenly Father, as we come to this moment of personal decision and thought with regard to the study, thank You that the presence of Your Spirit has spoken to us. We ask that You might take the word and You might make it especially meaningful. We pray that each one might have some serious thoughts about their relationship to You. May the Word of God be applied to our lives by the Spirit of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS with Christ

## “Seeing the Savior in Action”

Key Verse - 20:31—*“But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you might have life through His name.”*

### **Study Number Eight – The Restoration of Peter – John 21:1-17**

#### **Key Verse 21:15**

v. 1 After these things Jesus again made himself visible to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and He manifested himself in this manner.

v. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, the one called the twin, and Nathanael, the one from Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.

v. 3 Simon Peter is saying to them, “I am going fishing.” They are saying to him, “We are coming also with you.” They went out and got into the boat; and during that night they caught nothing.

v. 4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

v. 5 Then, Jesus is saying to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered Him, “No.”

v. 6 And He said to them, “Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find.” Therefore, they threw it, and no longer were they strong enough to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

v. 7 Then that disciple whom Jesus loves is saying to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Then Simon Peter, having heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was only partially clad, and threw himself into the sea.

v. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, in fact about 100 yards, dragging the net full of fish.

#### **NOTES**

## NOTES

v. 9 Then when they got out upon the shore, they are seeing a charcoal fire already laid, and fish placed on it, and bread.

v. 10 Jesus is saying to them, "Bring some of the fish which you now caught."

v. 11 Simon Peter went up and drew the net to the shore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

v. 12 Jesus is saying to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples was daring to question Him, "Who are you?" knowing that it was the Lord.

v. 13 Jesus is coming and taking the bread, and giving it to them, and the fish in the same way.

v. 14 This already is the third time that Jesus made himself visible to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

v. 15 Then when they had finished breakfast, Jesus is saying to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He is saying to Him, "Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I love you." He is saying to him, "Feed my lambs."

v. 16 He is saying to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He is saying to Him, "Yes, Lord, you are knowing that I love you." He is saying to him, "Be shepherding my sheep."

v. 17 He is saying to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, you are knowing all things; you are knowing by experience that I love you." Jesus is saying to him, "Be feeding my sheep."

## QUESTIONS:

1. Read John 21:1-17 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. What is it that Simon Peter plans to do, and who goes with him?

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3. How successful were the disciples on their fishing trip and what suggestions did the Lord have for them?

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4. Who is it that recognizes the Lord, according to verse 7, and what does Simon Peter do?

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5. What preparations had the Lord made for the disciples when they got to shore?

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6. Were they convinced that He was the resurrected Lord, according to verse 12?

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7. What question does the Lord ask of Peter and what command does He give him?

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8. Describe how Peter feels after the third question, according to verse 17.

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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**LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Activity without the Lord’s direction produces nothing.

LESSON #2: Success is not permanent; failure is not fatal; it is repentance that counts.

LESSON #3: Restored and renewed — the Lord is ready with a ministry.

LESSON #4: Obedience produces results.

LESSON #5: The fruit of failure sets the stage for a fabulous future!

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

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