

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

John: Believing On The Christ, The Son Of God, For Eternal Life

Part L: Trusting In Christ For His Post-Resurrection Reinstatement Of Peter (John 21:15-19a)

I. Introduction

- A. John's Gospel presents Jesus as the Son of God Who was full of grace and truth, and the events surrounding His death, burial and resurrection reveal His grace and truth in His claim to be the Son of God and Messiah.
- B. We thus view His post-resurrection reinstatement of Peter that testifies of these edifying truths for our insight:

II. Trusting In Christ For His Post-Resurrection Reinstatement Of Peter, John 21:15-19a.

- A. Before Jesus' crucifixion, Peter had responded to Jesus' prediction that all of His disciples would be offended because of Christ so that they would scatter from Him (Matthew 26:31) by claiming that though all men might be offended because of Jesus, yet he would never be offended so as to abandon Him, Matthew 26:33.
- B. However, as Jesus predicted, Peter denied Jesus three times before the night ended, Matt. 26:34 with 26:69-75.
- C. Nevertheless, in Matthew 26:32 after predicting the disciples would scatter from Him and right before Peter's claim he would never deny Him, Jesus said He would go before them into Galilee, and John 21:15-19a reveals one reason for that meeting was to reverse Peter's threefold denial in a **gracious** public reinstatement. We view that reinstatement for lessons on God's gracious reinstatement program of all believers who fail the Lord:
 - 1. Jesus prefaced making Peter face his past sin by graciously extending great love toward him, Jn. 21:1-15a:
 - a. In their initial meeting, Jesus referred to Peter and the other disciples as a great father would lovingly refer to his sons by warmly addressing them as "Children" (*Paidion*), John 21:4, *Ibid.*, p. 609.
 - b. Jesus had then graciously given them a large catch of fish (John 21:6) and a miraculous provision of a breakfast of fishes and bread over a charcoal fire by the sea (John 21:9) and had invited them to a breakfast meal (John 21:12), a cultural symbol of warm friendship. (*Zon. Pict. Ency. of the Bible*, v. Three, p. 214)
 - 2. Jesus also closely duplicated the setting of Peter's past sinful failure, making him return to that point of spiritual defeat in his life that he might face it in order to overcome it, John 21:9, 15a:
 - a. Peter had denied Jesus when he sat by a charcoal (*anthrakia*) fire, John 18:18 (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 66), and the only other New Testament passage mentioning such a fire is here in John 21:9 (*Ibid.*), indicating Christ was leading Peter to recall the very setting of his denial.
 - b. Peter had claimed that though all others might deny Jesus, he would not (Matt. 26:33), so Jesus asked if he loved Him more than the other disciples did, making Peter face his failure to keep his claim, Jn. 21:15a.
 - 3. In then making him overcome his past failure, Jesus three times asked Peter if he loved Him, recalling Peter's threefold denial so he could counter it by a new threefold claim to love Christ, John 21:15b-17. It grieved Peter to have to recall his threefold denial in that public setting (John 21:17b), but Jesus made him face his past public failure even by His use of words as revealed in the Greek text (as follows):
 - a. The first two times Jesus asked Peter if He loved Him, His verb choice for love is *agapao*, to love in an objective and somewhat formal manner (*U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, 1966, p. 411-412; Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the N. T.*, 1973, p. 42-43), to which Peter responded with a contrasting verb *phileo*, meaning, "I affectionately love you as my close Friend [and not in just a formal manner]," John 21:15-16.
 - b. In Jesus' third question, His verb choice for love is *phileo*, asking if Peter loved Him as a close Friend like Peter **even NOW** claimed, and this question stated this way as the third question recalling Peter's third denial over which he had wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75) was emotionally traumatic for him, John 21:17.
 - 4. Then, having made Peter face so as to reverse his past denial with a threefold claim of love for Him, Jesus told of future victory for Peter over the **cause** of his denial, fear of persecution for following Jesus:
 - a. Peter and the other disciples had scattered from Jesus for fear of physical persecution, Matt. 26:55-56.
 - b. So, to arrange for Peter to defeat that fear that had led him to deny Christ, Jesus predicted Peter would successfully die by crucifixion like Jesus died when he rightly held to his stand for Christ, John 21:18-19a.

Lesson: *In grace, the risen Lord lovingly made Peter face his past, sinful threefold denial of Christ and so counter it with renewed affirmation of His devotion to the Lord, and then Jesus led Peter to overcome the fear of physical persecution that had spurred him to deny Jesus in the first place that he might be a great overcomer in the faith!*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Jesus as the truly GRACIOUS, risen Lord. (2) May we take heart that our Lord loves and supports us to equip us like Peter to be overcomers where we have failed the Lord in our lives!*