

The Gospel of John

Lovest Thou Me?

John 21:1-25

We close our study of the Gospel of John with an anecdote of the resurrected Christ. After His resurrection, Christ appeared many times to His followers over a forty-day period before ascending to Heaven. John closes his gospel telling of one of these appearances, one which proved to be deeply personal for Peter.

The Setting

- Sea of Galilee; a.k.a., Gennesaret, Kinneret, and Tiberias.

The Story

- Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two others go fishing – vs. 1-2
- The Miraculous Catch – vs. 3-14
 - Their effort is in vain – vs. 3
 - Jesus appears on the shore and addresses them – vs. 4-5
 - The miraculous catch – vs. 6
 - A similar miraculous haul of fish takes place in Luke 5:1-11. The first catch took place as Christ called the fisherman to follow him. The second took place as Christ commissioned them to proclaim the Gospel.
 - John recognizes Christ and Peter swims to shore – vs. 7
 - The other disciples follow with the fish – vs. 8
 - Christ is waiting there with breakfast ready – vs. 9
 - The fish are brought to shore – vs. 10-11
 - You can tell fishermen were involved – they counted all 153 fish!
 - The disciples eat – vs. 12-13
 - This was Christ's third appearance to the disciples – vs. 14
 - First was to the Eleven without Thomas
 - Second was so the Eleven with Thomas
- Love and Service – vs. 15-23
 - There are intricacies in this conversation that simply do not translate well into English. The most famous of these is the two Greek words for used for *love*. I am listing these in their primary noun form but also giving the verb form:
 - *agape* (noun, Strong's G26) – unconditional love in a social or moral sense,
 - *agapao* (verb, Strong's G25) - affection, good will, love, benevolence
 - *philos* – (adjective/noun, Strong's G5384) – dear, friendly, fond, friend
 - *phileo* (verb, Strong's G5368) – to be a friend to, have affection for.
 - The first exchange – vs. 15
 - Christ's question – *agape* love

- “more than these” – the other disciples, compare to Matthew 26:33
 - Peter's response – *phileo* love
 - Christ's response – feed the lambs
- The second exchange – vs. 16
 - Christ's question – *agape* love
 - Peter's response – *phileo* love
 - Christ's response – shepherd the sheep
- The second exchange – vs. 17
 - Why three times? Because Peter denied three times – see 18:15-18, 25-27
 - Christ's question – *phileo* love
 - Peter's response – *phileo* love
 - Christ's response – feed the sheep
- Christ's prophecy about Peter's death – vs. 18-19
- Peter asks what John is supposed to do – vs. 20-21
 - Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down.
- Christ rebukes Peter – vs. 22
- John corrects a misunderstanding – vs. 23
- The Grand Epilogue – vs. 24-25
 - The testimony of John – vs. 24
 - The inexhaustibility of the Gospel story – vs. 25