

Discovering the Gentleness of Jesus

The Restoration of Simon Peter

I. PETER'S APOSTASY AND RESTORATION IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A. John 13:36-38

1. **"...you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow afterward."** - Peter was sincere in his desire to follow Jesus radically but was weak and immature and incapable of doing so. This was a hard reality to face. It devastated Peter. The revelation of our own weakness can for seasons sideline us. Peter began feeling shame because of his fractured soul.
2. **"Lord why can I not follow You now?"** - This reveals his desire to be wholehearted and abandoned. This was a sincere cry from a lovesick man who's desire it was to be radically given to the Lord. We're confused by Jesus' seeming unwillingness for us to be wholehearted now. We don't understand. Like Peter we get mad because its our greatest longing to be fully devoted and completely given to Him in love.
3. **"I will lay down my life for You."** - Peter resists what Jesus is saying and proclaims his maturity, fervor, ardency and commitment level. Though this was sincere, it was weak and insufficient. A few hours later he would desert Jesus and deny Him. But this doesn't mean the intention and the desire to be abandoned wasn't real.
4. **"Will you lay down your life for Me?"** - Jesus challenges Peter's perception of his maturity and his depth in God. Jesus is gently exposing Peter's presumption and perspective distortion. Peter will soon be surprised by his denial of Jesus. Jesus won't be. He's fully aware of Peter's weakness and propensity. And He's aware of the extent to which Peter's immaturity will soon take Him. And yet still Jesus remains loyal in His love and kindness to Peter.
5. **"...the rooster will not crow till you have denied My three times."** - Peter's denial will be worse than any of the others. He'll fall the hardest. And so Jesus will have to love Him the strongest.

B. John 15:9 - **"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love."** Jesus declared His love to these young men AFTER He prophesied of their imminent apostasy. Jesus seeking to establish them in the strength and unrelenting nature of His love for them. Imagine being Peter and having Jesus declare John 13:36-38 to you and declaring John 15:9 to you.

C. John 18-21 - Peter's apostasy and restoration

1. 18:1-11 - Jesus' betrayal and Peter's attempt to rescue Him

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2. 18:15-18 - Peter denies Jesus
3. 18:25-27 - Peter denies Jesus
4. 20:1-10 - John and Peter hear of the resurrection and go to the tomb (Mark 16:7 - "Tell the disciples AND PETER...")
5. 21:1-3 - Peter "quits" and invites the others to do the same returning to fishing
6. 21:4-8 - Jesus meets them and replays the scenario of when He first called Peter initiating restoration
7. 21:9-14 - Peter is awkward around Jesus confused about how to relate to Jesus after his failure
8. 21:15-19 - Jesus restores Peter

D. Acts 1-2 - Peter preaches the first sermon on Pentecost and establishes the NT church

II. THE FOUNDATIONAL REVELATION OF GOD'S GENTLENESS WITH US IN OUR WEAKNESS

- A. In Matthew 26:41 Jesus told Peter that he had a "willing spirit" but "weak flesh." This is critical to understand. Jesus was saying that Peter had the INTENTION to obey but not the ABILITY to. And his inability to walk in wholehearted abandonment didn't negate or cancel out the sincerity of his desire to do so.
- B. Through this story it becomes abundantly apparent that there is a profound difference between rebellion and immaturity. The difference between Judas and Peter was that Judas was rebellious and unwilling to obey and Peter was immature and willing to obey. They both failed, they both forsook Jesus and they both fell away. But the end of the story was radically different for these two young men. And Jesus related to them both in very different ways. Jesus does not relate to you as a rebellious hypocrite when you stumble in sin if you are sincere in your intentions to obey. The Lord looks at the intentions of the heart and not the outward appearance of our achievements (1 Samuel 16:7).
- C. In this place of understanding how Jesus sees us and relates to us in our weakness, frailty and immaturity we obtain the revelation of God's great gentleness.

He delivered me because He delighted in me... (Ps. 18:19)

Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:35)

- D. When this strikes our hearts we begin to see that weak love is just as real and precious to the Lord as mature love. And then we begin to see how relentlessly kind He is to us now as we grow in maturity. We begin to see how He values our weak and flawed love today before its mature and perfected.