

“3 Lessons On The Beach!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. Feeding Ministry - Thanks, & release from 3 month obligation. Still welcome to bring.
- B. Prayer: *God, You have a plan...& we are that plan.* To share Your good news; to live the good news; to speak up for babies & others who don't have a voice & are facing injustices.
- C. Last week: We talked about blending our **vocation** with our **calling**. Our vocations are **special**, our calling is **sacred**, regardless of whether you wear a *clerical* collar or a *blue* collar. (Swindoll)
- D. This Weeks Outline: **3 Lessons on the Beach! Past Failure can be Forgiven in Love** (15-17); **Present Lifestyle is no guarantee of the Same Future**(18,19); **Personal Obedience is an Individual Matter**(20-23). Wrap up: **There is so much More!** (24,25)
- E. **Lonely Ember Story** - A pastor decided to visit a member who had stopped attending services. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but **said nothing**. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs. **After some minutes**, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, **still silent**. The host watched all this in quiet fascination. As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and "dead as a doornail." Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. **Just before the pastor was ready to leave**, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday." - **Jesus is ready to rekindle Peters ember!**

II. **PAST FAILURE CAN BE FORGIVEN IN LOVE! (15-17)**

- A. Jesus seems to have taken Peter aside for this discussion (vs.20 other disciples behind them)
 - 1. *Let's eavesdrop in on their conversation!* - **READ 15-19**
- B. What He **says** is remarkable, **but** what He **doesn't say**, even more so.
 - 1. He **doesn't say**: Some friend you turned out to be...I'm real disappointed in you...You let Me down...You're all talk Pete...Coward!...Boy, was I ever wrong about you...And you call yourself a disciple!¹

¹ Ken Gire: Intimate Moments with the Savior. pg.140.

2. He **simply** asks: **Do you love me?** (The 3 x's **not to rub it in**, **but** once for **each denial**)
 - a) To give Peter an opportunity to openly confess his love.
 - b) **Jesus is not there to inflict pain; He is there to relieve it!**
 - (1) He had seen Peter's bitter tears of repentance.
 3. **News Flash:** Jesus doesn't sit in heaven sharpening His **red pencil** to jot down every time we fall on our face.
 - a) Peter tells us years later, "**Love covers a multitude of sin!**" (1 Pet.4:8)
 - b) **Where did he learn that?** Right here on the Galilee's beach, where Jesus picked him up & dusted him off (or ringed him out/wet).
 - c) **You've been there too, haven't you?** You've failed Him. You've fallen & eaten some sand.
- C. The most important thing in ministry is **loving Christ**, for all ministry flows from that!
- D. Peter both a **Fisherman** & also a **Shepherd**, who would *care for* the lambs & sheep.
1. The image, changes from that of the **fisherman** to that of the **shepherd**. Peter was to minister both as an **evangelist** (catching the fish) **and** a **pastor** (shepherding the flock). It is **unfortunate** when we divorce these two because they should go together.
 - a) Later Peter writes to the elders in **1 Pet.5:1-4** - **Let's turn to & read this.**
- E. **Feed my sheep** - Jesus' way of saying, "you're still the man for the job."
1. **Note:** Where I got our name for our Radio program 1989.
- F. **More than these?** - **More than the disciples**. **No**, his love for Jesus over the other disciples wasn't an issue. **More than the boats, nets, fish**. **No**, probably wasn't the issue either. **More than these other disciples love Me?** **This** seem to be the issue.
- G. Peter had boasted of his love for Christ and had even contrasted it with that of the other men. "**I will lay down my life for Your sake!**" (Jn 13:37) "**Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.**" (Mt. 26:33)
1. There is more than a hint in these boastful statements that Peter believed that he loved the Lord **more** than did the other disciples. {as if to say, "I can see **James/John** falling away; **Thomas** for sure; **But not me!** - I'm spiritually stronger & more devoted to you than they are. I can see their commitment won't hold up, but mine will."}
 2. **Beware of:** spiritual self-confidence; self-rt; believing you're more spiritually stronger; more devoted. **Or because** you've been on a missions trip now; **because** you go door to door & evangelize; **because** you don't own a T.V. set; **because** you drive a "humble mobile" **Beware!**

H. Peter probably didn't feel like a **confident shepherd**, but more like **little Bo Peep!**
Peter was never told to **supervise the shepherds**, but to simply **feed sheep!**

I. **Note:** Now Jesus drops the *more than these* part of the question.

J. **Lambs & Sheep** - Both the **lambs** and the **more mature sheep**, need feeding and leading.

K. Jesus Christ is the **Good Shepherd** (Jn 10:11), the **Great Shepherd** (Heb.13:20,21), and the **Chief Shepherd** (1 Pt 5:4).

1. Pastors are "**under-shepherds**" who must obey Him as they minister to the flock. Pastors then should help **protect** and **perfect** the flock.
 - a) So Jesus says as lambs or even mature sheep, **you need help!** You need tending, feeding, & to be cared for. **Jesus said you need pastors to pastor you.**
 - b) **Some** sheep today think they don't need a shepherd. **Some** are spiritually anorexic sheep, they don't want to eat, so they starve to death spiritually. **Some** don't want to lie down in green pastures, they prefer dodging cars on freeways (at least that's what their life looks like). **Some** walk right off cliffs. **Some** get taken in by wolves in shepherds clothing. **Some** walking all alone get picked off by predators. **Some** sheep bite their shepherd.
 - c) *:(I'm sorry sheep for your former shepherds who may have **taken advantage** or even **eaten** their sheep. **Some** have **slept with** their sheep; **some** have **stolen from** their sheep; **some** have very badly **misrepresented** the Good Shepherd.*
 - (1) I'm so privileged to be your shepherd. I'm so scared to do something that would compromise my position here & fail my Jesus, CM, or you.
 - d) **So what do Pastors need?** Pastors need to **Love Jesus!!!**
 - (1) **That's the most important thing a pastor can do? Love Jesus Christ!**
 - (2) Maybe that's the question when you need to change churches...ask the pastor I just have 1 question, "**do you love Jesus? And can you share why you do?**"
 - (3) **CM...I love Jesus! I have many areas of *deficiencies* but I love Jesus!**
 - e) **So then, what do Marriages need?** Husbands(as leaders) to **Love Jesus!!!**
So then, what do Families need? Dads that **Love Jesus!!!**
So then, what do Husbands need? Wives to **Love Jesus!!!**
So then, what do single parent children need? Their parent to **Love Jesus!!!**

L. **Lord, You know all things** - i.e. He knew Peter's heart (& ours).

M. **Past Failure can be Forgiven in Love!**

III. **PRESENT LIFESTYLE NO GUARANTEE OF SAME FUTURE!** (18,19)

A. (18) The prediction of a martyr's death by crucifixion.

1. Peter preached for 37 years & was 70 years old when he died.
2. **Eusebius** (1st cent historian) in his *Ecclesiastical History* tells us that Peter was crucified in Rome, by Nero, but that he asked to be crucified **upside down**, as he was not worthy to die exactly as his Master (a.d 61). Oh, after watching his **wife** get crucified.
3. What kind of friend inspires devotion like that?
 - a) A friend who **prayed for** him when he was weak. A friend who **forgave** him when he failed. A friend who **healed** a painful memory. A friend who **believed** in him. A friend like **Jesus!** A friend who **1st laid down his life** for him. (Ken Gire)
4. **Persecuted Church Updates** every Sunday before service.
Not a **fun** ministry for *Mark Ritter*. A labor of love for the brethren, but not fun reading story after story...often *gory story* after *gory story*.
 - a) Rev.6:10,11 Tribulations martyrs cry out to God "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, **who would be killed as they were**, was completed. [God's answer? Only that there would be still more to come]
 - (1) But John helps us with a little bit of the answer...some how some way, God would receive **glory**, specifically by his martyrdom.
 - (2) But Peter's death would not be a *tragedy*; it would **glorify God!**

B. (19) **Follow Me** (keep on following Me) Reinstates Peter as an apostle. **Restoration complete!**

1. He **denied** Jesus 3 times, **now** he gets to **confess** his love for Jesus 3 times.
2. Do you need to be **reinstated** this morning? Do you need to be **re-commissioned**?
3. Within **7 weeks** Peter would preach the boldest sermon of his life. Right in Jerusalem. 3000 would be saved. They would form the very nucleus of the church he would establish there.
4. **Important:** Jesus restores Peter back to **discipleship** (follow Me), not to **sonship!**

C. **Present Lifestyle** is no guarantee of the **Same Future!**

IV. **PERSONAL OBEDIENCE IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER!** (20-23)

A. (20,21) **What about this man?** - Peter takes his eyes off **Jesus** & focuses on **John**.

1. *Sounds like we already did this lesson? but we can do it again!*

2. Remember Peter walking on water until...“when he **saw** that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” Mt.14:30,31
3. It’s dangerous to look at **others** or look at **circumstances**, rather than look at **Christ!** [*Following Him*, is much easier when your eyes are **focused on Him!**]

- B. It is very clear from this that Jesus has a plan for not only our **lives** (what He wants us to accomplish) but also in our **deaths**.
1. **Peter plan**(representing trials & suffering) or **John’s objective**(natural causes)?
 2. His arrangements for us are *carefully chosen* in regards to the service we are to render...**ultimately**, to bring Him **Glory!**
- C. Comparing brings confusion!
1. God doesn't deal with us on a **comparative** basis, but on an **individual** one.
 2. *He redeems us individually. He rebukes us individually. He rewards us individually.*
- D. (22) **Follow Me** - That’s the challenge Jesus put to Peter. **Not** to follow **John**, or the rest of the **disciples** or the **majority**, but **ME!**
1. And Peter **followed Him**...right into the excitement of the book of Acts!
- E. **Personal Obedience** is an **Individual Matter!**

V. **THERE IS SO MUCH MORE! (24,25)**

- A. Some 60 years have passed since Jesus died, when John penned this letter.
- B. According to John’s own testimony: **The** account is **selective**, not *exhaustive*; **The** events are **actual**, not *theoretical*; **The** purpose is **specific**, not *vague*. (Swindoll)
1. The whole universe is a **living library** that only begins to tell of our glorious Creator, God the Son!
- C. Jesus is waiting to tell us the rest of the story when we get there!
1. **Are you going?**
- D. **Past Failure** can be Forgiven in Love; **Present Lifestyle** is no guarantee of the Same Future; **Personal Obedience** is an Individual Matter.
1. **Or, Don’t Quit! - Don’t Predict! - Don’t Compare!**
- E. Jesus asks you this morning: **Do you love Me? - Will you follow Me? Will you stay focused on your calling? - Will you care for My sheep?**