AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP - BIBLE STUDY
Study Series: That You May Believe: A Journey through the Gospel of John
Part 34: Restoration of Peter & the Future of the Church: Love, calling, shepherding
Wednesday, September 30, 2026
Text: John 21:1-25 **Teacher: Pastor Genevieve Kumapley**

Introduction:
This chapter is an exposition of how Jesus commissioned Peter. Jesus understood that Peter needed a special encouragement after his denial because he was probably feeling completely worthless. The chapter also serves as Peter's personal comeback story and a bridge between the resurrection of Christ and the mission of the early church. The disciple who denied Jesus will become a shepherd and a leading witness. The chapter shows us that failure does not have to be the final chapter of a disciple's calling.

John 20 appears to provide a natural conclusion to the Gospel, yet John gives us one more chapter. *"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*
John 20:30-31 NIV

Why? Because after establishing who Jesus is, John shows us what life looks like for those who believe in Him. The disciples have encountered the risen Christ, but questions remain. What happens to Peter after his denial? Is his calling finished? What will leadership look like in the church Jesus is establishing? How should disciples relate to Christ, to one another, and to their future?
John 21 answers these questions through three major movements:
LOVE — "Do you love Me?" →CALLING — "Follow Me." →SHEPHERDING — "Feed My sheep."

1. Jesus appearance at the shore: John 21:1-14

Seven disciples are together by the Sea of Galilee and Peter announces: "I am going fishing." The others join him. There is debate over whether Peter is abandoning his calling or simply returning temporarily to his former occupation. Apostle John emphasizes something important: **"***That night they caught nothing."* These are experienced fishermen, yet after an entire night of labor, their nets are empty. Then Jesus appears on the shore.He asks whether they have any fish. When they answer no, He tells them: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat." They obey, and suddenly the net is filled with **153 large fish**. All night without Jesus' direction they come up with empty nets. One act of obedience to Jesus results in overflowing provision.

*Q: **What is the significance of this story? What other stories does this remind you of?***

The lesson is *not* that followers of Christ will always experience visible success whenever they obey. Rather, the church's mission can never be separated from dependence upon Christ. ***"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. "John 15:5 NIV***

2. Restoration begins with Love: John 21:15-17.

After breakfast, Jesus turns directly to Peter. Three times Jesus asks a question: "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" The repetition immediately reminds us of Peter's three denials. (See Matthew 26:33; 69-75) Three denials with three questions resulting in three affirmations and three commissions. Jesus did not just remind Peter of his failure rather he publicly restores him. Jesus dealt with Peter at the deepest level, he addressed his identity (he called out his name Simon, son of John) and not just his public ministry. Before Jesus discussed Peter's ministry, he addressed Peter's relationship with Him. The questions are "do you love me and more than "these"?

This gives us a key principle- our ministry for Jesus must flow from our love for Jesus not just the activities.

Q: What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration? Can someone know that God has forgiven them and still struggle to move forward? Why can it sometimes be easier to believe God forgives other people than to believe He can still use us after failure? What does restoration look like practically?

Q: Think about Peter's position. If you had failed Jesus publicly after confidently promising that you never would, how might you feel the next time you saw Him?

Q. *What are some signs that someone may be serving Jesus while slowly losing intimacy with Jesus?*

3. **<u>Love Leads to Calling & Shepherding: John 21:17-19</u>**

Each time Peter affirms his love, Jesus gives him responsibility: "Feed My lambs." "Tend My sheep." "Feed My sheep." Jesus connects love for Himself with care for His people. This is one of the most important leadership principles in the New Testament: If you love the Shepherd, care for His sheep. Jesus repeatedly says: **"My lambs." "My sheep."** Church leaders are **under-shepherds** serving people who belong to Christ.

Peter goes on to teach the principle in 1 Peter 5:2–4**,** *"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not Lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."*

Finally, Jesus says two words: **"Follow Me."** These words take Peter back to the beginning. In the Gospels, Jesus originally called His disciples to **follow Him (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17)**. However, Jesus told Peter that following Him will eventually be costly. John explains: "Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God." v.18

After everything Peter has experienced, the miracles, the transfiguration, the Last Supper, the denial, the crucifixion and resurrection, yet the command remains: **Follow Me.**

4. **<u>The Future of the Church: John 21: 24-25</u>**

John concludes by reminding us that Jesus did many other things beyond what has been recorded. But John 21 leaves us looking forward. The key takeaway for the church is that Love for Jesus must become visible in how we care for the people Jesus loves; because the future church would not be built by flawless people as Peter's story proves that. It is built through **restored people who love Jesus, follow Jesus, depend upon Jesus, and faithfully care for His people.** And that continues to be the calling of the church today.

Q: What does "feed My sheep" look like in today's church?

As I end, there are 3 questions to ponder about:

LOVE: "Do you love Me?" Has activity for Christ ever begun to replace intimacy with Christ?

CALLING: "Follow Me." Is there an area where past failure, disappointment, or comparison is distracting you from what Jesus is calling you to do now?

SHEPHERDING: "Feed My sheep."
Who has Jesus entrusted to your care—your family, church, ministry, workplace, younger believers, or people who need encouragement?

In conclusion: LOVE - "Do you love Me?" Everything begins with our relationship with Christ. CALLING "Follow Me." Failure does not necessarily mean the end of usefulness. Christ restores people and calls them forward in obedience. SHEPHERDING "Feed My sheep." This is the core of assignment, go make disciples; and teach them to obey. Matthew 28:19-20