

RISEN! How exhilarating it must have been for the Lord Jesus when He arose from the dead and left the tomb. The basis for salvation for all since Adam until the fire from heaven falls upon the rebels at the close of Jesus' thousand year reign of righteousness. Our sins are paid for. Death is conquered. It had no hold on Him. The redemptive work He had set out to do was finished! The suffering and God's abandonment is past.

Jesus had instructed His disciples to go to Galilee after He was risen. John tells why. They were ready to take up their former occupation, fishing. Fishing for fish not for men. Fishing for income not sport. The Lord called to them from the shore where He, unknown by them, was preparing a shore lunch breakfast for them. They had had no "luck" but He had fish cooking over a fire. They heeded His instructions and cast their net on the other side. They had a great haul, 153 large fish. John recognized Him first, but Peter grabbed his coat and jumped in leaving the catch behind in his haste to reach the Lord. As in Jerusalem, he was clearly at ease with the Lord. The Lord had appeared to him privately before that first night in the room with the disciples, Luke 24:34, 1Corinthians 15:5. We should not pick up the baggage of a sinful act once we have cleared our conscience with the Lord. With Him forgiveness is righteous and loving and lasting.

(For those who have noted, numbers used in scripture may carry some symbolism. The number seven - perfection, the number nine - completeness, etc. The number seventeen is less commonly thought of as being symbolic. But seventeen seems to be connected with God's provision for our care. Noah entered the Ark on the seventeenth day, etc. 153 is 9×17 , God's care perfected.)

This was the third time Jesus had appeared to them but apparently they had this urge to ask Him who He was, though they were hesitant to. Was His new body enough different from theirs or was it just a little too good to be

true that He was indeed risen and right there with them.

But next Jesus had some shepherding to do. Patiently, after feeding them, helping them relax and get used to Him He set about reenlisting them to the calling to which He had originally called them, fishers of men. They would not only preach the risen Christ to lost souls but they would be used to establish, build up His assembly and tend His flock. He picked out Peter, the leader and the one first commissioned, with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, Matthew 16:16 - 20. Peter had failed miserably after his boast to die for the Lord. Shortly after His resurrection the Lord had met Peter privately and restored his soul. Peter never evaded the Lord afterward and was eager to be near Him. But He clearly felt inadequate to serve the Lord in any capacity after his failure. His soul was at peace but his heart needed to be stirred back into action. Note how Jesus did that. No "pep talk." "Go get-em!" No commiseration, "that could happen to anyone." Not "Aw get over it, quit feeling sorry for yourself," 1Kings 16:5. Addressing Peter by His given name, Simon Jonason, He simply asked him if he loved Him. Do you love me? (The Lord used the Greek "*agapao*", as, "Do you truly love me self sacrificially with all you heart?") Peter, uneasy and perhaps wary of an idle boast, responded with a different term, one used for "brotherly love" or "brotherly affection." Jesus said "tend my sheep."

(The Greek behind the expression "feed my sheep" used in the KJV means tending or shepherding sheep. Even simply feeding them involved occupation 24/7, leading them into good pasture and guarding and caring for them, etc.)

But Jesus wanted more from Peter than "I'm truly fond of You." He wants our whole heart. Jesus asked Peter the same question again and got the same reply. But Peter was getting nervous. Jesus then changed His question to match Peter's responses. This was enough. The Lord knew Peter was ready to go wherever the Lord sent him.

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (<i>agapao</i>) thou me more than these?	Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love (<i>phileo</i>) thee.	Feed my lambs.
Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (<i>agapao</i>) thou me?	Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (<i>phileo</i>) thee.	Feed my sheep.
Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (<i>phileo</i>) thou me?	Peter was grieved Lord, thou knowest all things;* thou knowest that I love (<i>phileo</i>) thee.	Feed my sheep.

*Peter here acknowledged Jesus is God.

The Lord then cautioned Peter. Peter, when young would freely move about. But when he was old others would deprive him of his liberty, and ultimately his life. Peter therefore knew his whole life he would be a martyr when he was old. He thought his time was up when Herod had imprisoned him but he was miraculously released by an angel, Acts 12:7. He wrote his second Epistle under the expectation of his departure, 2Peter

1:13-15. The Book of Acts is replete with the exploits of Peter who was marvelously used by the Spirit to bring the gospel to the Jews. He called them out from Judaism to gather as one unto the Lord. He later was used to introduce the first Gentiles to the gospel and into one assembly with the Jews, Acts 11 & 12. After that he faded from sight as Paul established the Assembly of God comprising Jews and Gentiles in one body.

Characteristically Peter turns and wonders about His

friend and companion, John. Jesus firmly admonished him, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.* So to speak, “What ever is going on, whatever happens, you follow Me!” Good words for each of us. And God has given us an example familiar to all of us. How often mothers are heard charging their little ones to “Stay by me! Watch me! Follow me!” John clarifies that the Lord’s words did not mean he would not die.

The Lord’s admonishment would stand even if John had been translated to glory instead of dying. But He wasn’t. Instead he remained long enough to be treated to “*the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified [it] by His angel unto his servant John.*” *Revelation 1:1 (KJV)* Perhaps one could say that in that sense John didn’t die, at least until he saw the end of all things. John’s eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, and he has told us what he saw so now we can also see it. Just read The Revelation.

Note that Jesus didn’t urge Peter to change his character to fit some standard devout posture and manner by which all believers could be distinguished. That would lead to hypocrisy. He was still to be Peter (as no one else could be). The Lord, the Chief Shepherd (*1Peter 5:4*) simply asks that we follow Him. Doing so we will gradually be transformed into His image.

2Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As Paul puts it:

Romans 12:1-3. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Closing his record the second time, John first solemnly affirms that what he has written is the truth. Note, he does not swear to the accuracy of his account. His word is a sufficient legal witness. John was true to the Lord’s command that they swear not, *Matthew 5:34-37*. The believer today can avail himself of this alternative to swearing to tell the truth when testifying in a court of law or in some legal forum, affidavit or the like. “I affirm that . . .”

Then John added his personal observation that if all of what Jesus said or did were recorded even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. We will have eternity to learn all of what He said and did in His incarnation, not to mention all that He has said and done as the Eternal Son, and what we will hear Him say and do throughout eternity with us. We will be satisfied!

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore

Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Isaiah 53:11 (DBY) He shall see of [the fruit of] the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied:

And He will be satisfied.

By Ronald Canner, October 12, 2011.