**Resurrection Leads to Restoration**

***15****When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”****16****He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”****17****He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.****18****Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”****19****(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.” (John 21:15-19, ESV)*

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Jesus’ resurrection opens up the opportunity for restoration between people.

Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we read about post-resurrection events today. The Resurrection event inaugurated an entirely new era in the history of mankind. For the believer, a life dedicated to the Risen Lord does not only mean a life full of freedom, but also, restoration (or reconciliation). Keeping that in mind, then, today we will be talking about what kind of reconciliation has been done by the Lord between Him and us. Due to the latter, it is possible for us to have the same restoration in our human relationships. Again, Jesus’ resurrection opens up the opportunity for restoration between people. Let us see, then, the application of this truth in our lives…

Since we are reconciled with the God the Father through Jesus, we are called reconcile with each other as well. Peter had betrayed the Lord. He had denied knowing Him, but he had also recognized his mistake. He hadn’t had an encounter with the Risen Lord about this event. The only thing he knew was that he had been unbelieving and unfaithful when he denied Jesus. He did not know that the Lord was both a forgiving *and* a restoring God. When we notice the minor differences in the meanings of the terms used in the passage, they convey deep meaning. Jesus called Peter in the same way that he first called him to follow Him when they first met – Simon son of Jonah/John. It is as if the Lord was calling Peter for the very first time. Then, we see that He asked three questions, to wipe out the three times that Peter denied Him. The Lord said to Peter, “feed my lambs,” “tend my sheep,” and “feed my sheep.” In other words, Peter was not only restored to his status (as the leader of the disciples) after his betrayal, but he was also called to feed and tend – not just to give sustenance, but to watch over Christ’s people. He was called to care for both the lambs and the sheep – in other words, not only the new believers, but also the mature Christians. Jesus did not simply forgive Peter – he restored him to His ministry, even preparing him (with His prophecy) to be able to receive the crown of martyrdom (which Peter did).

Years ago, in a Western city, a husband and wife became estranged, and finally separated. They left the city and resided in different parts of the country. The husband one day chanced to return to this city on a matter of business. He went out to the cemetery to the grave of their only son. He was standing by the grave in fond reminiscence when he heard a step behind him. Turning, he saw his estranged wife. The first inclination of both was to turn away. But they had a common, binding interest in that grave; and instead of turning away they clasped hands over that grave of their son and were reconciled one to another. It took nothing less than death to reconcile them! It takes nothing less than death, the precious blood of Christ, to reconcile man to God.

Since Christ has reconciled us with God the Father, and we see the Father’s image in Jesus’ words to Peter, it is time to remember our Lord’s example and to reconcile with each other. If He forgives the one who betrayed Him and restores him to the highest position, shouldn’t we also reconcile with each other? Should we not forgive our child, our brother, sister, father, or mother? Should we not forgive our betrayer and slanderer?

All human beings, we included, can receive Christ’s forgiveness and restoration, and afterwards become forgivers and reconcilers of people. If we are people of Love – if we are people of patience, wisdom, and the peace of God – especially if we are the people who reflect and represent Christ, then we are called to forgive and to be reconciled with each other, even to reinstate the truly repented believers to their positions of leadership. Again, since we are reconciled with the God the Father through Jesus, we are called reconcile with each other as well.

May the Lord reveal to us the depth of the reconciliation he has accomplished for us, so that we will live out that which we profess to believe, and that people come to know Jesus through us. May the Lord bless you all. Amen.