**Resurrection and 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)*

 The Risen Jesus is (always) ready to restore us. Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we talk today about the ideas of restoration and reestablishment. God not only defeated death itself through Jesus’ Resurrection, but He also restored Jesus’ disciples. Jesus’ Resurrection opened a new door for all of humanity, but especially His disciples. Throughout the centuries, this truth would become very apparent through the accounts of restoration-experiences of believers in Lord. One of our first examples of the latter, however, was the Apostle Peter’s encounter with the Lord after His Resurrection. Thus, my prayer is that through this message, we would better understand the ability and truth of Jesus’ restorative power. Again, the Risen Jesus is always ready to restore us. Let’s talk about the event referenced in Scripture for a bit…

 By having a humble heart, we give Jesus permission to get us back on our feet again from our falls. We all know Peter the Apostle’s character from the Gospels: he was a loudmouth, overly confident of himself, and basically unwise in his excessive talking and declarations. In this specific case, he found himself at the seashore, eating bread and fish with the Risen Lord and some of the disciples after being invited by Jesus Himself.

The Lord had some unfinished business with Peter, and he began to question him. He didn’t call him, “Simon Peter,” however; neither “Simon,” nor “Peter.” No, He called him Simon son of Jonah, by his family name. It was as if He was restarting the relationship with him from scratch. That name was not being used during the three years of ministry with Jesus. The Lord asked a question three times, and Peter was offput. Why? The reason was the pain he felt, as He found Himself in front of ultimate Truth. The repetition also reminded him of his threefold denial of Jesus. Jesus was extending the call to ministry, once for every denial. He was reminding Peter that the people were His sheep and lambs. Peter, then, humbly declared Jesus’ Omniscience after the third question (“you know all things”), as well as his love toward Him. Then, Jesus reveals Peter’s glorious honor of martyrdom coming in his future. Of course, the Christian historian Eusebius memorializes the fact that Peter was crucified upside-down during the Emperor Nero’s reign, because the apostle did not want people to suddenly begin to worship him, by considering him the same or similar to Jesus. Finally, Jesus gave his greatest and simplest command to Peter once again, perfecting Peter’s dual calls of service and discipleship to Jesus, saying, “Follow me.”

There was once a tv show in which a family had begun to know someone who happened to be Jesus Himself, but without knowing this latter fact. Jesus had disguised himself from them by wearing everyday clothing just like them. The girl in that family, in one of her tough days, threw a glass ornament to the ground in frustration, and shattered it into a thousand pieces. When her internal state of being began to recover, she noticed that this new person that she was getting to know as a family friend (secretly Jesus) was good at repairing things. She gave the shattered glass remains of the glass ornament to Him, though not really believing if anything would come of it. Jesus, then, took those thousands of pieces of glass, and made a beautiful new ornament out of those pieces and presented it to the girl. In other words, Jesus took a shattered life, (parallel to the shattered ornament,) and made a new life out of the shattered pieces and failures.

The Lord Jesus is still restoring lives today. It may be that you, like Peter, have so many sins that you have just given up on Jesus and you don’t feel like approaching the Lord in faith anymore. Today’s message is for you, then.

*Jesus is asking you today: “Do you love me more than all this?” He is saying, “If your answer is “yes”, then follow me! If your answer is yes, then do the work that I have assigned you to and have given you the ability to do.”*

Peter needed to be a shepherd for people – but you, dear brother or sister, may have a different calling from the Lord. Do not listen to the voice that says, “you failed, don’t bother God.” Or, to the one that says, “It’s done; you are worthy of hell, and God will not forgive you for that.” Rather, come and know the Lord again, and He will speak with you and get you back up again on your feet. He will take your shattered life and build a new life out of your experiences.

By having a humble heart, we give Jesus permission to get us back on our feet again from our falls. The Risen Jesus is (always) ready to restore us. Go after Him, and do not leave Him alone – because He will restore you if you humble yourself before Him.

The Lord bless you all. Amen.