

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

## Easter Study

*The Story of Peter*

# The Story of Peter

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** This lesson will trace the Easter story from Peter's perspective through his boast, denial, visit to the tomb, and restoration.

## Key Verses

John 13:36-38  
John 18:1-11, 15-18, 25-27  
John 20:1-10, 19-23  
John 21:1-19  
Romans 3:23; 5:8; 10:9

**Memory Verse** - Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

## Hook

Ask the students to each think of their best friend or closest family member. Ask them if they would be willing to give up that friendship to avoid some sort of cost (having to pay \$5). Go through a series of costs, each increasing in intensity (e.g. extra homework, being grounded, going to jail, even death).

In today's story, Peter's love for Jesus was put to the test. Let's see how he did.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

The Gospel of John gives special attention to the journey of Peter during the crucifixion, resurrection, and post-resurrection sequences in Christ's life. It begins in John 13:36-38, when Peter boasted that he would follow Christ even to the point of death. Jesus, however, rebuked him and said that he would deny Jesus three times that night. When the soldiers first came to arrest Jesus, Peter tried to fight them off, but Jesus told him to put his sword away. Later, while Jesus' trial was going on, three separate times someone asked Peter about Jesus, and just like Jesus predicted, Peter denied knowing Him (John 18:15-18, 25-27). This caused Peter great shame, and he ran away weeping.

After recording Jesus' crucifixion and burial, John tells us that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early on the third day and found the stone had been rolled away. She told Peter, who ran to the tomb to find that His Lord had risen from the dead (John 20:1-10)! Later that day, Jesus revealed Himself to the rest of the disciples (John 20:19-23). However, it seems that Peter was still ashamed of what He had done. Days later, while sitting by the sea eating some fish and bread, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him (John 21:15-19). Peter responded yes each time, to which Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep." Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times, he was given a three-fold restoration.

# LOOK

Peter's story during this sequence in John is a beautiful picture of the Gospel. At first, Peter's confidence was in himself. He thought, "Because *I* am so strong-willed and courageous, there is no way *I* could ever deny my Lord." Peter was his own hero, his own source of strength. He was in dramatic need of humility, and it was a dramatic humbling that he got!

Despite Peter's strong boast, when he had a chance to prove his courage, he failed miserably three times. Even before a young servant girl (John 18:17), he was unable to affirm his faith in Christ. Peter tried to claim that he was far stronger, bolder, and more faithful than all the other disciples, but instead he was utterly humiliated by his failure. Imagine how Peter must have felt knowing that he denied Jesus three times!

Peter obviously wanted to make things right, so when he heard about the stone being rolled away, he ran as fast as he could to see the tomb. When he saw the tomb was empty, he knew something had happened. Seeing Jesus later confirmed that he was alive. But Peter still needed to be restored after so great a failure.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

# LOOK (Continued)

Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to make things right and respond to his three denials with three affirmations of love and faith. Peter had to be shown that alone, he could not follow Christ. He needed to come to the end of Himself so that Christ could save Him.

Just like Peter, many people today rely on themselves for salvation. They think that by being strong enough, smart enough, brave enough, or good enough, they can make it to heaven. Other religions teach that if we do enough good works, we can go to heaven (or achieve happiness or whatever the goal of that religion is). However, because we all have sin (Romans 3:23), none of us are good enough. None of us can make it into heaven on our own, no matter what we do. Just like Peter, even if we try our hardest, we will still fail. We cannot save ourselves.

God knew that we were helpless to save ourselves, which is why He sent Jesus to come into the world. He died on the cross to pay the just penalty for our sins and rose again to defeat sin and death. We couldn't help ourselves, so Jesus had to do everything for us. In fact, our memory verse (Romans 5:8) tells us that Jesus did this for us *while we were still sinners*. Jesus didn't use our sin as an excuse not to help us, but as the reason to come and save us. And just like Peter, Jesus did not simply leave us in our sin. Like Peter, in our sin we rejected Christ. We denied Him by living like He is not truly God. Jesus came to restore that broken relationship. If we will repent (turn from our sin ) and confess and believe that Jesus is the risen Lord, we too can be saved (Romans 10:9) and have that relationship with God restored.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize Romans 5:8.

Present the Gospel message and give the students an opportunity to accept Christ as Lord and Savior.

**Pray:** Thank Jesus for His saving death and resurrection. Thank Him for any boys and girls who gave their lives to Him. Ask for help to rely on God rather than our own strength.

**Parent Question:** How did Jesus restore Peter after Peter denied Him?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on John 13 & 21 by David Guzik

**([John 13:36-38](#)) Peter's denial of Jesus is predicted.**

**Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."**

- a. **Lord, where are You going:** Peter (and the other disciples) did not yet understand Jesus. Peter perhaps thought that Jesus was going on a long journey without them. Peter wanted more of an explanation.
- b. **Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward:** Peter didn't understand, but Jesus did. Jesus understood that Peter *could not follow* Him unto death now, but **afterward** he would.
- c. **Lord, why can I not follow You now:** Peter knew he was the disciple of Jesus, and the disciple's duty was the **follow** the rabbi. Peter felt so committed to his discipleship to Jesus that not only would he **follow** Him, but also **lay down my life for Your sake**.
  - i. *We believe Peter.* He *would* have died for Jesus right then but he later failed because his devotion was based on emotion, and in the soon-to-come crisis emotion would fail him.
  - ii. We might say that Judas' denial of Jesus was *deliberate* and planned; Peter's denial of Jesus was accidental and spontaneous. Peter's denial was terrible, but it wasn't the same as what Judas did.
  - iii. We see a different Peter when his walk is no longer built on emotion, but on the work of Jesus on the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit. "Christ must first die for Peter, before Peter can die for him." (Clarke)
- d. **Till you have denied Me three times:** Peter confidently said that he would follow Jesus and even die for him. Yet when the test came he could not stand being laughed at for Jesus' sake. To him, a servant-girl's tongue was sharper than an executioner's sword. Before the next morning dawned he would deny he even *knew* Jesus **three times**.
  - i. "When Peter protested, our Lord showed him that He knew all the weakness lurking within him better than he himself could know it." (Morgan)
  - ii. "Cockcrow was the third of the four Roman night-watches, halfway between midnight and dawn." (Bruce)
  - iii. The denial was burnt in his memory. When Peter preached in [Acts 3](#), he charged them with denying Jesus ([Acts 3:14](#)). Towards the end of his life he described some dangerous men as those who denied the Lord ([2 Peter 2:1](#)).

### THE RESTORATION OF PETER

#### A. A miraculous catch of fish.

## 1. ([John 21:1-3](#)) Peter and six other disciples return to fishing.

**After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.**

a. **After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples:** John recorded another of the several appearances of the resurrected Jesus to His disciples. This appearance took place in the Galilee region (**at the Sea of Tiberias**). [Matthew 28:16](#) also records an appearance of the resurrected Jesus to His disciples in Galilee.

b. **Simon Peter:** Once again Peter was at the top of a list of the disciples. This time he was among seven who joined him in fishing at the Sea of Galilee.

i. **And two others of His disciples:** "There were 'two other,' and they are unnamed, and I believe purposely unnamed. They represent the anonymous and hidden multitudes of faithful souls, whose names are never published in human documents, whose deeds are never reported in human reports. To these He manifested Himself as surely as to the others. Those 'two other' represented the majority of the saints." (Morgan)

c. **I am going fishing:** Some believe that Peter was wrong to go fishing, and that this was a compromised return to a former occupation. Others believe Peter disobeyed no command of Jesus and was simply wise and practical. In the end, only the attitude of Peter's heart could determine if he was disobedient to go back to fishing.

i. It is important to remember that they went to Galilee because Jesus told them to ([Matthew 28:7](#), [28:10](#)).

ii. Adam Clarke put their fishing enterprise in the best possible light: "Previously to the crucifixion of our Lord, the temporal necessities of himself and his disciples appear to have been supplied by the charity of individuals: [Luke 8:3](#). As it is probable that the scandal of the cross had now shut up this source of support, the disciples, not fully knowing *how* they were to be employed, purposed to return to their former occupation of fishing, in order to gain a livelihood; and therefore the *seven*, mentioned [John 21:2](#), embarked on the sea of Tiberias, otherwise called the sea of Galilee." (Clarke)

iii. At the best, it shows that Peter and the other disciples were uncertain as to what they should do next. "The fishing expedition plainly reveals the uncertainty of the disciples, an uncertainty which contrasts sharply with their assured sense of purpose from the day of Pentecost on." (Morris)

d. **That night they caught nothing:** They fished through the night and had no success. Whether their motives were good or bad, **that night they caught nothing.**

i. "All night they had toiled without one sign of fish; they had lost heart; they were weary, hungry, hopeless. 'Ah!' they would whisper, 'this lake is sadly changed; there used to be good fish in it. There doesn't seem to be one in it now.'" (Morrison)

ii. "To be a fisherman, a man must expect disappointments; he must often cast in the net and bring up nothing but weeds. The minister of Christ must reckon upon being disappointed; and he must not be weary in well-doing for all his disappointments, but must in faith continue in prayer and labor, expecting that at the end he shall receive his reward." (Spurgeon)

## 2. ([John 21:4-6](#)) Jesus directs their work.

**But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.**

a. **Jesus stood on the shore:** The previous three resurrection appearances in John's Gospel were each *unexpected*. This also seemed to be unexpected; the **disciples did not know that it was Jesus**.

i. "It seems to indicate the suddenness of the appearance." (Dods)

ii. It's wonderful to think that Jesus showed up at their work. He was interested in all their life, not just when they attended religious service. "The risen Redeemer and Ruler was showing men His interest and power in the commonplaces of their lives." (Morgan)

iii. We don't know exactly why they **did not know that it was Jesus**. "Perhaps they were preoccupied with their failure, or because they could not see him clearly through the morning mist on the lake." (Tenney)

b. **Children, have you any food:** Jesus spoke to His disciples with a common greeting that working men used amongst themselves. Yet He also made them explain an unsuccessful night of fishing, causing them to answer Him **no**.

i. "It should be 'lads'; *paidion* being the common term of address to men at work, see Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 137, *Frogs*, 33." (Dods)

ii. "This he saith as seeming to be some housekeeper, who passing by fishermen, calls to them, as willing to buy their fish for the use of his family." (Trapp)

c. **Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some:** Jesus made a strange suggestion to His disciples. There was no logical reason why fishing in the morning light would be better than fishing at night. There was no reason why fishing on one side of the boat would be better than the other side. It wasn't even directly a test of trust in Jesus, because they did not know it was Him until the fish were caught. This was probably a test of their ability to find the guidance of God in small and unsuspected ways — such as a stranger calling out fishing instructions from the shore.

i. "I have been unable to find any evidence which indicates which side of the boat was normally used by fishermen on the sea of Galilee so that it is difficult to know whether this was unusual or not." (Morris)

ii. This account illustrates the principle that we should never be afraid to change our method, as long as it is at the direction of Jesus.

d. **They were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of the fish:** The disciples did as the Man on the shore asked and were successful beyond expectation. This shows a difference between doing work without Divine guidance and with Divine guidance.

i. "The experience must have reminded the disciples of a similar incident many months before, though on that occasion the net was broken and the boat began to sink (see [Luke 5:1-11](#))." (Tasker)

ii. "There is no need to seek symbolical meanings for the right and left side. The difference is not between right and left, but between working with and without Divine guidance." (Plummer)

iii. "The disciples' haul of fish is a parable of their missionary activity in the time that lies ahead. But this activity, with its pastoral sequel, will be attended by success only as they follow the directions of their risen Lord." (Bruce)

iv. We have even greater reason to expect blessing as He directs our service. Jesus never commanded these disciples to go fishing, but He commanded us to preach the Gospel and make disciples.

v. "Christ's presence, if he would but come among us in the fullness of his strength, would do so much more for us than anything that we have ever seen yet that we should be as much astounded by the increase as the apostles were by the two great draughts of fishes. Christ had but to will it, and the fish came swimming in shoals to the net, and he has but to will it, and souls will be converted by millions to himself and his gospel." (Spurgeon)

vi. "It is a miracle, certainly, but yet neither the fisherman, nor his boat, nor his fishing tackle are ignored; they

are all used and all employed. Let us learn that in the saving of souls God worketh by means; that so long as the present economy of grace shall stand, God will be pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (Spurgeon)

vii. “Perhaps, if they had not fished at night, Christ would not, have given them fish in the day time. He does not often come to bless idlers; he acts sovereignly, as I have said, but he generally gives his blessing to those churches that do the most for him.” (Spurgeon)

### 3. [\(John 21:7-8\)](#) The disciples recognize Jesus on the shore.

**Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.**

a. **It is the Lord:** John reached the tomb before Peter ([John 20:4](#)) and recognized the fact of Jesus’ resurrection before Peter ([John 20:8](#)). Here John also recognized the identity of the stranger on the shore before Peter did. John knew that anything *this* wonderful had to come from Jesus.

b. **Plunged into the sea:** John was first in recognition, but Peter would be first in devotion. He threw on his **outer garment** and threw himself into the water to reach Jesus as soon as possible. The boat couldn’t move quickly enough for Peter, and he didn’t want John to be first *again*. Perhaps — *perhaps* — Peter thought he might walk on the water to the shore.

i. “The probability here is that the word means that parts of the body normally covered were exposed so that Peter was not naked but rather ‘stripped for work’ (RSV, Barclay).” (Morris)

ii. “He was rowing, then, with as little on as possible, probably only a *subligaculum* or loin-cloth, and now picks up his *pe?d?t?s*, a garment worn by fishers (Theophylact), and girds it on, and casts himself into the sea.” (Dods)

iii. “He looks up, recognizes Him, casts all other care aside, slips on his outer-garment, for no Oriental would appear in undress before his superior, girds it to him, and casts himself into the sea, so eager is his love for the Lord.” (Trench)

c. **Dragging the net with fish:** The other disciples followed, doing the hard work of bringing the net full of fish with them.

### 4. [\(John 21:9-11\)](#) Jesus invites the disciples to breakfast.

**Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.” Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.**

a. **They saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread:** When the disciples came to shore — including a wet Peter — they noticed that the resurrected Jesus was still a humble servant. He took the trouble to prepare a fire and cook the food for His disciples.

b. **Bring some of the fish which you have just caught:** The order of events shows that Jesus *had food for them* before the great catch of fish were brought it. What they caught *added* to the menu; it did not make it.

i. **Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish:** “One hundred and fifty-three fish plus a wet net would probably weigh as much as three hundred pounds, or more. The observation of the exact number of fish and the fact that the net did not break reflect both an eyewitness account and a fisherman’s perspective.” (Tenney)

ii. “Peter’s hauling it up single-handed is a tacit tribute to his physical strength.” (Bruce)



c. **Full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three:** Peter took the initiative and dragged the heavy net all by himself. The **net was not broken** and held a large catch of 153 fish. Through the centuries there have been many attempts to explain why the number was 153.

Some interpreters (like Augustine) thought that because 153 is the sum of [numbers 1](#) to 17, this catch of fish points towards the [number 17](#) — which he thought to be the number of commandments (10) added to the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit.

- Some have noted that 153 is the added numerical value of the Greek words *Peter* and *fish*.
- Some note, “In Hebrew characters Simon Iona is equivalent to 118 + 35, *i.e.*, 153.” (Dods)
- Some ancient writers (such as Jerome) believed there were 153 different types of fish in the world and this catch represented a full harvest of the entire world.
- Some (such as Cyril of Alexandria) thought that 100 stood for the Gentiles, 50 stood for Israel and 3 stood for the Trinity.

i. The truth is that all we know for certain is that 153 represents *the number of fish in the net*. The many allegorical interpretations of the number warn us against creating hidden meanings in the Biblical text.

ii. “Peter never landed a haul of fish without counting them, and John, fisherman as he was, could never forget the number of his largest takes.” (Dods)

#### 5. ([John 21:12-14](#)) The disciples eat breakfast with Jesus.

**Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?” — knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.**

a. **Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast”:** We are again impressed at the servant nature of Jesus, even in His resurrection. He prepared breakfast for His disciples, no doubt a delicious one.

i. Boice reflected on the many invitations of Jesus in the Gospels.

Come and see ([John 1:39](#)).

Come and learn ([Matthew 11:28-29](#)).

Come and rest ([Mark 6:31](#)).

Come and dine ([John 21:12](#)).

Come and inherit ([Matthew 25:34-36](#)).

b. **Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”; knowing that it was the Lord:** This is another indication that there was something unusual about the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection. Possibly it was a result of the beatings He endured at the cross, the scars of which remained at least in part.

i. “Formerly they would not have thought of asking him ‘Who are you?’ — but now they felt as if they ought to do so, because, after all, they *knew* who it was.” (Bruce)

ii. “The verb rendered **ask** signifies more: — **to question** or **prove** Him.” (Alford)

iii. “Not one of the disciples ventured to interrogate Him; *??et?sa?* is ‘to examine by questioning’. Each man felt convinced it was the Lord, and a new reverence prevented them from questioning Him.” (Dods)

c. **Jesus then came and took the bread:** Jesus is often seen eating with His disciples after His resurrection. This is a picture of intimate, friendly fellowship.

i. **Gave it to them, and likewise the fish:** “Evidently there was something solemn and significant in His man-

ner, indicating that they were to consider Him as the Person who supplied all their wants.” (Dods)

ii. “They ate the bread and fish that morning, I doubt not, in silent self- humiliation. Peter looked with tears in his eyes at that fire of coals, remembering how he stood and warmed himself when he denied his Master. Thomas stood there, wondering that he should have dared to ask such proofs of a fact most clear. All of them felt that they could shrink into nothing in his divine presence, since they had behaved so ill.” (Spurgeon)

iii. **The third time:** “This probably means the third of the appearances that he himself has recorded.” (Tasker)

## B. The public restoration of Peter.

### 1. ([John 21:15-16](#)) Jesus inquires about Peter’s love.

**So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, 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.” He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”**

a. **Jesus said to Simon Peter:** After their breakfast Jesus spoke directly to Peter. Jesus had already met with Peter individually on the day of His resurrection ([Luke 24:34](#), [1 Corinthians 15:5](#)). We can only wonder at what Jesus and Peter talked about at that first meeting. Nevertheless, it was still important for Jesus to restore Peter in the presence of the other disciples.

b. **Simon, son of Jonah:** Jesus addressed the leader among the disciples as **Simon**, not as *Peter*. This perhaps was a subtle reminder that he had not stood as a *rock* in faithfulness to Jesus.

i. “There is an air of solemnity about John’s use of the full name, Simon Peter, and then of his reporting Jesus as using the expanded form, Simon son of John.” (Morris)

c. **Do you love Me more than these:** Jesus asked Peter to compare *his* love for Jesus to the love that the *other disciples* had for Jesus. Before he denied Jesus three times Peter claimed to love Jesus *more* than the other disciples did ([Matthew 26:33](#)). Jesus wanted to know if Peter still had a proud estimation of his love and devotion to Jesus.

i. It is possible that **these** referred to the fish and a fisherman’s life. Some think that Jesus asked Peter if he was willing to give up fishing again to follow Him. Yet, Peter’s previous claim to a greater love suggests that Jesus referred to the other disciples, not the fish.

ii. Jesus asked Peter not so that He would know — He already knew, and Peter was aware that Jesus knew. It was for Peter’s self-examination the questions were asked.

d. **Do you love Me more than these... You know that I love You:** Jesus asked the question twice using the word *agapas*, which in its Biblical usage often speaks of an all giving, uncaused, unselfish **love**. Peter answered Jesus using the word *phileo*, which in Biblical usage sometimes has in mind a more reciprocal **love**, a friendly affection. Some translations express Peter’s answer as, “I am your friend.”

i. Some commentators see no significant distinction between the two different ancient Greek words *agapeo* and *phileo* in this passage. Most believe that Peter was now more reserved in his proclamation of devotion. There is surely *some* significance that Jesus asked Peter this question twice, using the same ancient Greek word for **love**, and Peter answered twice using a different word for **love**.

ii. “He is simply saying that his heart is open to Christ and that Christ therefore knows that he loves Him with the best love of which he, a sinful human being, is capable.” (Boice)

iii. “There are preachers of the gospel among us who have dragged a full net to shore, the great fishes have been many; they have been great and successful workers, but this does not prevent its being needful for the Lord to examine them as to their hearts. He bids them put by their nets for awhile and commune with him.” (Spurgeon)

e. **Feed My lambs... Tend My sheep:** After Jesus asked and Peter answered, Jesus twice gave Peter an instruction regarding how he should act towards God's people. The idea was that Peter could demonstrate his claimed love for Jesus by feeding Jesus' **lambs** and by tending Jesus' **sheep**. Jesus emphasized that they were *His* sheep, not Peter's.

i. **Tend My sheep:** "The verb used here has a somewhat broader meaning. It is 'Exercise the office of shepherd' over against simply 'Feed'." (Morris)

ii. **Tend My sheep:** "By which he seems to intimate that it is not sufficient merely to *offer* the bread of life to the congregation of the Lord, but he must take care that the sheep be properly *collected, attended to, regulated, guided, &c.*; and it appears that Peter perfectly comprehended our Lord's meaning, and saw that it was a direction given not only to *him*, and to the rest of the *disciples*, but to all their *successors* in the Christian ministry." (Clarke)

## 2. [\(John 21:17\)](#) Jesus asks Peter a third time: **Do you love Me?**

**He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, 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 all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."**

a. **He said to him the third time:** The two previous questions Jesus asked Peter in the presence of the other disciples were not enough to accomplish what Jesus' wanted to do in the life of Peter. Jesus had to ask **him the third time**.

b. **Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time:** Peter understood the significance of the question being asked **the third time**. It was a plain reminder of his previous three-time denial.

i. "Peter had *thrice* denied his Lord, and now Christ gives him an opportunity in some measure to repair his fault by a *triple* confession." (Clarke)

c. **Do you love Me:** The third time Jesus slightly changed His question. He asked Peter if he did in fact have a brotherly love, a friendly devotion to Jesus (*phileis*).

i. "Peter in his first two answers uses a less exalted word, and one implying a consciousness of his own weakness, but a persuasion and deep feeling of personal love. Then in the third question, the Lord adopts the word of Peter's answer, the closer to press the meaning of it home to him." (Alford)

d. **Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You:** Peter did believe that he loved Jesus (using the word *philio*), yet he relied on Jesus' own knowledge of **all things**. Peter understood that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself.

i. Jesus didn't ask Peter, "Are you sorry?" nor "Will you promise never to do that again?" Jesus challenged Peter to *love*.

ii. "Jesus Christ asks each one of us, not for obedience primarily, not for repentance, not for vows, not for conduct, but for a *heart*; and that being given, all the rest will follow." (Maclaren)

e. **Feed My sheep:** Jesus restored Peter in the presence of the other disciples by causing him to face squarely his point of failure; *then* Jesus challenged Peter to set his eyes on the work ahead.

## 3. [\(John 21:18-19\)](#) Jesus' call on Peter's life.

**"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."**

a. **Most assuredly:** Jesus prefaced these closing words to Peter with great assurance. What He was about to say needed to be remembered.

b. **When you were younger:** Jesus spoke of Peter's past, reminding him of his younger days when he had less responsibility and could do more as he pleased. Most of us know what these **younger** years were like.

c. **When you are old, you will stretch out your hands:** Jesus spoke of Peter's future, when another would bind him (**gird you**) and **carry** Peter to a place he would not want to go — a place with stretched out hands, crucified on a cross. It would be by this **death he would glorify God**.

i. "He will be restrained, no longer the master of his own movements." (Morris)

ii. Trusting that Peter understood what Jesus meant, this must have given him a great chill. *Peter, you will die on a cross*. John the Gospel-writer understood, but wrote this many years after Peter's death.

iii. Yet it also gave Peter *assurance*. In the crucial moment a few weeks before, Peter denied Jesus three times to save himself from the cross. Jesus assured Peter — **most assuredly** — he would face the challenge of the cross once again and he would embrace it. Jesus promised Peter that he would die in utter faithfulness to his Messiah and Lord.

iv. "Ancient writers state that, about thirty-four years after this, Peter was crucified; and that he deemed it so *glorious* a thing to die for Christ that he begged to be crucified with his *head downwards*, not considering himself worthy to die in the same posture in which his Lord did. So *Eusebius, Prudentius, Chrysostom, and Augustin*." (Clarke)

v. "Jerome says, that 'he was crowned with martyrdom under Nero, being crucified with his head downwards and his feet upwards, because he alleged himself to be unworthy of being crucified in the same manner as his Lord.'" (Alford)

vi. The Christian in death can **glorify God**. "Justin Martyr confesseth of himself, that seeing the piety of Christians in their lives and their patience in death, he gathered that that was the truth that they so constantly professed and sealed up with their blood." (Trapp)

d. **Follow Me:** In this dramatic moment, Jesus gave these last words to Peter. Years before He called Peter to follow Him ([Matthew 4:18-19](#)). Now Peter knew that continuing to follow Jesus would mean a certain cross. Peter was once again challenged to **follow** his Messiah, Teacher, and Lord.

i. "Jesus placed Peter in a category with himself — a life spent for God and ultimately sacrificed to glorify God. Similar language was used concerning Jesus earlier in the Gospel ([John 12:27-32](#); [13:31](#)). The command 'Follow me' is a present imperative, which literally means 'Keep on following me.'" (Tenney)

ii. "There is possibly significance in the use of the present tense here. 'Keep on following' will be the force of it. Peter had followed Christ, but not continuously in the past. For the future he was to follow steadfastly in the ways of the Lord." (Morris)