



Feed My Lambs

John 21

John 21 – How can we emulate the grace Jesus showed Peter?

Among the last few words of the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:18 is a desire for us to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (NKJV). Peter certainly experienced God’s unmerited favor by being restored to service after denying his relationship with Jesus. God used Peter’s failure to help him experience His grace in John 21. This experience transformed Peter into the bold leader of the disciples that God intended him to be. The more we learn about Jesus and what He did for us, the better we’ll be able to show that same unmerited favor to those who have wronged us. The grace we extend to our associates may change their lives and ours.

John 21 – How does the Lord help us in times of discouragement?

Jesus is the Master Encourager. John 21 tells of Peter and some other disciples being frustrated by fishing all night without catching anything. After Jesus went to the cross, His disciples lacked direction and were uncertain of the Lord’s presence and help. Jesus came to them, made His presence known, and gave them direction. The Lord often uses our times of discouragement to reveal His loving-kindness to us. As Jesus offered His disciples a warm fire and breakfast, He also wants to give us sustenance, comfort, and fellowship. So when we get frustrated, we should start looking for Him in the midst of our trying circumstances. He usually reveals His compassion to us in a way we least expect.

21:3 – What should our unproductive times lead us to do?

God uses these times to bring us closer to Him. After Jesus was resurrected, the disciples were confused about what to do with their lives so they went back to their old way of living. In John 21:3, Peter went fishing with some other disciples, “*but that night they caught nothing*” (NIV). While fishing was a familiar activity that gave them something to do while they sorted out their thoughts, their efforts yielded nothing. Many times our efforts at work leave us with only “empty nets.” The Lord allows us to experience low productivity, frustrations, and failure to help us see the need to rely on Him instead of our own resourcefulness. When we feel tired and empty, this should drive us closer to Jesus.

21:4 – How can we get so caught-up in our lives that we miss recognizing Jesus?

In John 21:4, several disciples were fishing and saw the resurrected Jesus on the shore but did not recognize Him. The lighting might have been poor in the early morning and they were not expecting Jesus but their being preoccupied with fishing certainly kept them from recognizing Him. The fact that they were fishing showed that they were avoiding the issue of what to do after they learned that Jesus had risen from the dead. We too can become so caught-up in our lives that we fail to recognize Jesus. We should expect to see Jesus doing the miraculous in ordinary events. God is in control and there are no coincidences; things that happen serve His purposes.

21:6 – How can we see the Lord working miracles in our life?

If we are following Jesus, we will see miracles. In John 21:6, Jesus’ disciples followed His advice and caught more fish than they could load into their boat. The fact that their fishing net was not torn per John 21:11 attests to the attention of the miracle worker. Such attention to detail is characteristic of the Holy Spirit’s work in the circumstances of our lives as well. As the Lord orchestrated just the right situations to lead us to Him, He has arranged for us to be where we are to serve His purposes. Our encounters with certain associates are beyond coincidence, they are specially set up by the Lord to lead people to Him. The more we follow Jesus, the more miracles we’ll see.

21:15-17 – What is the value of brokenness?

Effective leaders must be humble. In John 21:15-17 Jesus helped Peter grasp his most valuable life lesson in humility before he could obtain leadership. Peter needed to realistically confront his shortcomings before he could guide the church. Peter was a strong, powerful person but he had to be broken before he could deal compassionately with others. This occurred when Peter denied his association with Jesus which he had boasted would never happen. It takes more than talent to be a successful leader. To have Jesus’ class of leadership, it takes a spirit broken from pride, in fellowship with God, and tender toward others. Since all authority comes from God, effective leaders need to be tapped into His power rather than their own.

21:18-22 – Why shouldn't we compare our calling to those of other Christians?

It is tempting to compare ourselves to our Christian associates when considering how we may be regarded by God. However when Peter did this in John 21:18-22, Jesus rebuked him. To follow Jesus in our society, we must be totally committed to obeying Him. God's call and the results of our obedience are different for every person. God uses all kinds of people having specific plans for the impulsive Peters, the thoughtful and sensitive Johns, and the forceful Pauls. God considers each person's nature and abilities when He establishes our purpose. We are called by God and accountable to no one but Him. So then we should content with where God has placed us and not be jealous about what He has given others to do.