

RENEWAL, REMAKING AND RELEASING, II

John 21: 15-19, Isaiah 54:1-10

INTRODUCTION

We have examined scripture where Jesus tells Simon he shall become Peter or “a rock.” We have looked at the miracle of the haul of fish in Luke 5:1-11. From those points on in Simon’s life, there were constant conversations between Jesus, Peter and the other disciples to drive home in practice, in everyday living, what was being taught. Pray, fast, forgive, forsake, don’t look back, have faith, and numerous other themes. Peter would be told of his failures to come. He would be taught what greatness really is, and even how to wash feet. Now at the entry point of the real launching of Peter, there would be another conversation. That is our focus today.

STRETCHING PETER

Jesus has just shown once again, by repetition of that fish miracle three years earlier, that God still provides, that hearing Jesus and responding to His instruction is the way to live. This is about provision, but it is more about simple obedience in response to being called to live a new way. This is about the Kingdom way of living, where world economy is reversed. Winners lose, and losers win. Life is death and death is life. Everything is turned upside down in the mind-set that is the usual. In John 21:15 Jesus asks a simple question. “Do you love (agapao) me”? Well, the obvious answer is yes. Peter has left all, he has been through the mill for the sake of this Jesus. He is still hoping, he has run to the empty tomb, the obvious answer is yes! Jesus responds with of all things a task. Can you imagine, your wife says “do you love me”... you respond “you know that I love you” and she says do the dishes or something similar. See Jesus has if Peter loves Him with the highest form of love, God’s unfathomable love, and then says “feed my lambs”. Peter would much rather rule them, you know, be in charge of them etc. But FEED them. Well what all does that mean? We all know that Peter has answered with a different word than God’s love, he has used phileo, a brotherly love context, or friendship thing. Jesus, persists. Three times he goes at the question and three times Peter responds, clearly frustrated by the constant questioning, if not hurt. And each time the big question is followed by a task assigned. This is a bigger deal than one might imagine for a man that prefers to win wars, build tabernacles and walk on water. Tasks, even the word is one that takes the smile off your

face.....unless you have grabbed hold of the deeper principles of Jesus. Tasks you see, are edifying, character building, and especially intimacy deepening things. That's right, and always the task is filled with the life of Jesus right in the middle of it. You are carrying out tasks in the "Name" or character and heart of Jesus. A cup of cold water, being on time for work, the smile under pressure, the thank you for the expected, not just the unexpected, the appreciation and encouragement for the worker..... way beyond the work. Feeding sheep is not your television ministry, your many books you've written, though it might include them. Feeding sheep is the actual assignment of personally getting your hands dirty or smelly, disrupting your day if not life, for the sake of benefitting someone else; AND..it is the real evidence of your love for God. Not how loud you sing, how well you communicate, or your knowledge of deep spiritual things. It is the connection to God by touching your world.

STRIPPING PETER

There is another emphasis, which is absolutely paramount to carrying out tasks. Who is going to make the rules about when, how and why it should be done? I don't mind getting into the mundane, messy things of life, as long as I can control it. As long as it is on my terms. That is why the next part of the dialogue is more unnerving than the first. Verse 18 is the clear prescription by Jesus for how this thing is going to really work. I have trouble understanding a real smooth connection between verse 17 and 18. It doesn't really flow for me the way some like some sharing Jesus does. Not until I look close. There is both challenge and assurance in verse 18. To a world thinker it is an extreme challenge. I don't want someone else running my life, controlling my destiny, interrupting my personal world. Yet, there is something so freeing, so valuable, such a release of my spirit and my mind, IF I can realize that Someone else is running this thing, doing this thing, bringing the results forth. It is the death to life thing. I lose control, I gain freedom. I fight for control, I end up in bondage. It doesn't really make sense in any setting I can think of.... except the Saviors's setting. He will provide, He will determine, He will be in the middle of all of it...IF I will just quit looking around at others, comparing myself to different folks, and say YES LORD!!