



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #342
Jesus' Resurrection and Eternal Ministry
Six More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days

Jesus' Seventh Resurrection Appearance, Part II:
Jesus Publicly Restores Peter to Ministry
Jn 20.15-24

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, *"Simon son of John, do you continually love me more than these?"*

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, *"I command you to keep on feeding my lambs."*

16 Again Jesus said, *"Simon son of John, do you constantly love me?"*

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, *"I command you to keep on taking care of my sheep."*

17 The third time he said to him, *"Simon son of John, do you really love me?"*

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, *"I command you to keep on feeding my sheep."*

18 *"Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."*

19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him,

"I command you to keep on following me!"

20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

22 Jesus answered, *"If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? I command you to keep on following me."*

23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, *"If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"*

24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	By the Sea of Galilee
Timeline	April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	The Resurrection and 40 Day Ministry of Jesus
	6 More Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Over 40 Days
Title:	Miracle 35; Jesus' 7th Resurrection Appearance, Part II

This reading describes the way Jesus publicly restored, or reinstated Peter for leadership and ministry. It flows out of the previous reading. Fellowshiping with Jesus is our eternal treasure, and far more important than ministry on this earth. True ministry is a natural by-product of intimate fellowship with Jesus. This is an important part of the lesson of Peter's restoration for him, and for us.

Jesus' threefold question to Peter, **"Do you love me?"** got straight to the heart of ministry, according to Jesus. We serve our Lord as an expression of our love for him, or our service is in vain. Paul said the same thing in I Cor. 13.2-4 in a poetic way. Ministry is not primarily about the needs of people—it is something motivated and conducted out of love for God, if it is to have value before him.

Jesus and Peter used different words for love in these three questions. Jesus asked, do you agape me? Peter answered that he had phileo for Jesus. In the gospel of John, these two different verb for love are used interchangeably. However, when Jesus asked the third time he used phileo instead of agape. The narrative specifically mentions that this third question hurt Peter. It was if Jesus was saying to Peter: *"Do you really love me the way you say you do?"*

More than any difference in meaning between phileo and agape, the key to these questions was that Jesus repeated them three times. Peter had denied Jesus three times. Jesus gave him the chance to express his love for his Lord three times in restoration. Furthermore, Peter's attitude toward his love for Jesus had changed dramatically since Thursday night, when he had declared so confidently that he loved Jesus enough to die with him, and for him. What was different?

When Jesus inquired whether Peter loved him, the apostle qualified his answer by first stating, *"Lord you know all things."* It is not what we say about our love for God that matters. Anyone can claim to love God supremely, as Peter had done before. It is the fact that God knows everything about us that matters. Knowing us perfectly, he still chooses to love us unconditionally.

God's powerful love for us gives us the ability to respond to his love with our own love for him. It is all his doing. He knows us, and he knows that our love for him is ever and only a response to his prior love for us. Peter wanted Jesus to know that he knew that Jesus knew best that Peter's love was a responsive kind of love, not an unconditional love like his Lord's. That is the honest truth of our situation.

Recognition that our ability to love God is a product of his grace, and not our own strength, is the firm foundation for consistency in loving him. Abiding in God's prior love for us is the secret of loving him back. Understanding this truth is what qualifies us to minister God's love to others. **"Love each other as I have first loved you"** is the principle that enables true, consistent ministry to God and people. Peter was learning this truth, so he was therefore ready for public restoration.

Jesus told Peter that when he was young, or immature in his relationship with Jesus, he was self-directed and self-reliant. As he grew more mature, the Holy Spirit would overcome his selfishness, and he would learn to be led and guided by the Spirit, to the point of dying as a martyr by the power of the Spirit, like his Lord. Christian tradition says that when Peter was crucified, he demanded to be placed on the cross upside down, because he was not worthy of being crucified in the same position as his Lord.

Jesus commanded Peter three times to minister his Word to his sheep. This was how he would "care" for them. God's children need to hear the word of Jesus through his servants, not messages that emanate from the preacher and derive from our own ideas. Love for God and his flock will always mean that the preacher/teacher serves up Jesus' own Word to his own.

The seventh appearance ended with the foundational principle of discipleship that Peter had begun with: **"Keep on following me."** Peter could no longer see Jesus on a regular basis after the resurrection, but the process of adjusting everything in his life to the example and will of Jesus would continue unchanged by the power of the Holy Spirit. Following the invisible Jesus was the same as following the physical, visible Jesus.

A relationship with Jesus is not about following rules, religion, or even spiritual disciplines. It is about being under the constant influence of his character, values, and abiding presence. It is being alive to Jesus' invisible influence, in the same way we relate to all the other persons in our lives.

The command was to **"keep on following me"** as a process because it is SO easy to become distracted from that basic task. Just moments after Peter was reminded of this command, he was turning around and asking Jesus, *"what about him (John)?"*

Jesus told Peter that John did not matter. His command to Peter was to follow Jesus alone, not to compare himself with other disciples. As soon as Peter became distracted, Jesus brought him back to attention by repeating the same command. The constant repetition of this process--focusing on Jesus, being distracted, refocusing on Jesus--is the Christian life in a nutshell. The more we mature, the shorter the times of distraction, but the process itself will never end on this earth.

The narrative ended with a reference to the way the contemporary disciples misinterpreted Jesus' words concerning the apostle John. Here we have an instance of the way misinterpreting the words of Jesus is common to us all. It happened in the early church, and it is still happening today. We need to do everything in our power to study the life and Word of Jesus carefully, so that we interpret him as accurately as possible.

APPLICATION:

Since the apostle Peter failed his Lord, you can be sure that you and I will experience our major failures as well. All the apostles failed Jesus at one time or another. These failures are solid proof that we all have a thoroughly sinful nature. No amount of growth or knowledge changes the sinfulness within us. Therefore, we all need restoration from Jesus at one time or another.

Jesus loves and restores each of us to the ministry he has prepared for us in the same way he restored Peter. None of us are worthy to serve him in our own strength, or on the basis of our past performance. We can "**keep on following him**" because he died and rose again on our behalf. Since Jesus is love, he serves. Following him means joining him in a life-style of serving in his name.

Is there some sin that you have a hard time forgiving yourself for committing? What does Jesus' forgiveness and restoration of Peter say to you about his forgiveness of your sin? When will you let it go?

Are you holding yourself back from ministry because you feel you are too sinful to be given that privilege? What does Peter's restoration say to you about those feelings?

How can you love Jesus by serving his sheep today?