



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “Reach Back”

Ps. James Lowe – April 27, 2014

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Who was your best friend growing up? What did you like about them?
- Have you ever had a broken relationship healed? What was the main thing that healed it?
- How do you usually deal with a relational problem: confront it, or avoid it? Why?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at [bethelbrentwood.org/media](http://bethelbrentwood.org/media).

*When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:1-8 ESV)*

Jesus had suffered and his disciples had abandoned him. Peter had especially failed, denying that he knew Jesus and sealing that denial with a curse. Peter had been privileged to be in Jesus' inner circle. He had been in the bedroom for the resurrection of a child. He had been on the Mount of Transfiguration. He had walked on water. He had been the most outspoken of the apostles. But he had miserably failed Jesus under pressure in Jesus' greatest hour of trial and need.

Yet Jesus specifically went out of his way to reaffirm Peter after the resurrection. The angel mentioned Peter by name. Later Jesus deliberately addressed Peter in Galilee where he said he would meet the disciples. John records a special conversation Jesus had with Peter, in which Jesus brought him clarity, comfort, and confrontation.

#### **Clarity**

*Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. (John 21:4-8 ESV)*

Peter discovered that it was the Lord who had come to meet them. Peter was thrilled that Jesus was raised from the dead, and that he had come to meet with them in spite of their collective failure. He so wanted to see Jesus and be close to him that he didn't wait for the boat to reach shore with all the fish. He jumped out of the boat to be with Jesus as soon as possible. It was a symbolic moment that indicated Peter's fresh commitment to Jesus, leaving behind once and forever his former profession in order to follow God's specific plan for the rest of his life.

### **Comfort**

*When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. (John 21:9-14 ESV)*

Jesus went out of his way to bless the disciples with this miraculous catch of fish, in addition to having already prepared some cooked fish and bread. It was a kind and gracious act which immediately addressed their hunger and weariness after having fished all night. It also signified his fresh concern and care for them. This would have been especially meaningful to Peter, given that he was the natural leader among them, and yet had so terribly failed Jesus. It was a moment of comfort for Peter to be with Jesus and to be cared for by him again, just as Jesus had done for Peter many times before. Jesus had healed his mother-in-law, miraculously provided the Temple tax for him, fed him with multiplied food on two occasions, provided a miraculous catch of fish on another occasion, and much more. Jesus was now once again showing his love and care for Him.

### **Confrontation**

*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." 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." 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. 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." (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)*

Jesus helped Peter be fully restored by confronting his failure. He did so in a manner that both exposed his sin and reinstated him in his service and leadership for Jesus' mission. Peter had boasted that he would defend Jesus even if it cost him his own life. Jesus helped Peter confront the fact that he didn't love Jesus as much as he had boasted. The three questions are successively weaker descriptions of love. In fact, Jesus changed the word translated love in the third question to a word that meant love as a friend, as opposed to the sacrificial love that had been demonstrated by Jesus. Even though Peter had much to learn and grow in, Jesus showed that he forgave him, accepted him, loved him, and restored him.

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- Do you feel that you've fallen away in some way from your relationship with Jesus?
- Who are some people you know that have fallen away from their relationship with Jesus?
- What are some spiritual keys to restoring and renewing a proper relationship with Jesus?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- That God would restore any among us (Life Group or church) who have fallen away from him.
- That God would use each of us to help restore others who have fallen away from Jesus.
- That God would help those being restored find their place of service in God's church.