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“The God of Restoration”

John 21:14-19

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In our society we typically throw away things that are broken or in terrible condition, but not God! He loves those who are broken and discarded because then He can mend them and reclaim them for His glory. In other words, God is the God of restoration. Biblical restoration is when God takes something broken and makes it brand new! When God restores broken things and broken people, the final state is actually better than the original condition! In John 21, Jesus restored Peter after Peter had denied knowing Jesus around the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. After His resurrection, Jesus had an exclusive conversation with Peter, only recorded in John’s gospel, that brought restoration to Peter’s life. God is still restoring broken lives, and broken marriages, and broken things for His glory! He is the God of Restoration.

1. **John 21:14-19** – *“This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. 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.’ 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. 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.’”*

2. Peter's restoration

- a. This was a conversation between Jesus and Peter following Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection
- b. Peter was repentant for sinning against God, and so Jesus restored Peter to a right relationship with Him

3. What is restoration?

- a. Webster's Dictionary defines restoration as, "*a bringing back to a former position or condition*"
- b. Biblical restoration
 - i. When God takes something broken and makes it brand new
 - ii. The process of receiving back more than has been lost such that the final state is greater than the original condition
- c. In the Old Testament, God sent a plague of locusts to devour the crops of the Israelites as judgment for their sins—but once the Israelites repented, God promised to restore them:
 - i. [Joel 2:25a](#) - "*So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.*"
- d. God loves broken and discarded people
- e. If we repent of our sins, He will reclaim us for His glory
 - i. [Psalm 51:11-12, 17](#) - "*Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. ... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.*"

4. Why did Peter need restoration?

- a. At the Last Supper, prior to Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus predicted that His disciples would abandon Him and that Peter specifically would deny Him three times
- b. Peter claimed that he would never deny Jesus
- c. Shortly after, Peter did deny Jesus three times, just as Jesus said he would
 - i. This was a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy from the prophet Zechariah
 - 1. [Zechariah 13:7b](#) - "*Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered...*"

5. The difference between remorse and repentance

- a. Judas—who betrayed Jesus into the hands of the religious leaders—was remorseful but never repented

- i. [Matthew 27:3](#) – “Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, **was remorseful** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.”
 - ii. [Matthew 27:3](#) – “Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, **he changed his mind** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.” (ESV)
 - b. In contrast, Peter wept over his sin and was repentant
 - i. [Matthew 26:75](#) – “And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So he went out and wept bitterly.”
 - ii. [Mark 14:72](#) – “A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ And when he thought about it, he wept.”
 - iii. [Luke 22:61-62](#) – “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”
 - c. God can always restore someone who is broken and repentant
6. The meanings of the word **love** in John 21
- a. The English word love is used seven times in John 21
 - b. The Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, has four different words for love
 - i. **Storge** – family love
 - ii. **Eros** – romantic love
 - iii. **Philia** – friendship love
 - iv. **Agape** – supreme love
 - c. The first and second time Jesus asked Peter, “*Do you love me?*” Jesus’ use of the word *love* translates to *agape*, but in Peter’s response, “*You know that I love you,*” *love* translates to *philia*
 - d. The third time Jesus asked Peter, “*Do you love me?*” *love* translates to *philia*, and Peter once more used *philia* in his response
 - e. Peter was no longer overstating his devotion to Jesus, and Jesus adjusted his language to meet Peter where Peter was
7. The God of restoration
- a. Jesus stoops down to the darkest places of our brokenness to bring us up
 - b. God’s grace is greater than our sins
 - i. [Romans 5:20b](#) – “*But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.*”
 - c. Peter was restored to a right relationship with Christ

- i. He became the first person in the New Testament church to preach an evangelical message and three thousand people were saved
- d. God takes broken people and makes them whole, reclaims them for His purpose, and uses them for His glory
 - i. **Psalm 23:1-3a** - *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul."*
- e. Peter understood the significance of what Jesus had done for him, and he referenced restoration in the closing words of the book of 1 Peter in the New Testament
 - i. **1 Peter 5:10-11** - *"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."* (1984 NIV)

Discussion Questions

1. Read **John 21:14-19** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Describe the concept of biblical restoration. (See #3b above)
3. Why did Peter need restoration? (See #4a above)
4. Compare and contrast Peter and Judas. What is the difference between remorse and repentance? (See #5a and #5b above)
5. How do we know when we have truly repented versus merely feeling remorse over our sins? (See #5 above)
6. Discuss the significance of the contrasting ways Jesus and Peter expressed the word "love" in John 21. (See #6 above)
7. Read **Romans 5:20b**. How does God "stoop down" to our darkest places? Discuss a time when God met you in your sin. (See #7a and #7 b above)
8. Read **Psalm 23:1-3a** and **1 Peter 5:10-11**. Discuss a time in your life when God restored something even better than its original condition.
9. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)