

## John 73 – Peter: Hired Hand to Shephard

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John 21:15-25

### Previously...

- In previous lessons I established that Peter was always about Peter, even when seeing Christ on the shore he leaves his fellow workers behind to be *first* to Jesus
- Peter's *peirasmos*, denying Christ three times, predicated on his belief his faith was above all others (Mt 26:31-35, Jn 13:36-38)
  - Satan knew of Peter's pride and demanded to *grind* him as wheat; and Christ assented (Lk 22:30-34)

### Defacto Leader to be Humbled

- Christ set the example: God, came in the form of sinful man paying penalty for sin though without sin (Jn 2:6-10)
  - Peter as the informal leader was leading the Apostles astray; thus, he had to learn to serve so they would learn
  - They proved man does not learn by teaching alone; the *peirasmoi* are necessary to *experience* the deceitfulness of sin even though saved in Christ (Jn 17:8, Jn 1:5-8, 13-15)

## To Be Fair...

- Peter was not alone in his inflated self-assessment; all the Apostles were vying to be boss in the Kingdom
  - On the way to Capernaum the Apostles argued whose faith merited top position in Christ's kingdom (Mk 9:33-35)
  - James and John, with their mother, sought Jesus' right and left hand in the kingdom, angering the others (Mk 10:20-24)
  - They sought *power*, not servitude as Christ showed them

## Satan: Power of Darkness

- Satan came in the Darkness to test Peter
  - All three denials took place in the darkness huddled about a charcoal brazier for warmth; feeble light of man
  - At each instance when accused of being with Christ, Peter denied ever knowing Him (Mk 10:32-33)
  - If one could *lose* one's salvation it would be Peter; but Christ prayed for him that His Strength would not fail (Lk 22:31-34, Jo 10:27-30)

## Forgiveness is Not the Issue

- Peter had already wept bitterly when Christ looked him as the cock crowed announcing the coming of the day (Lk 22:54-62)
  - Peter's denial of Christ and the reality of his fleshly weakness, *asthenias*, tormented but did not change him
  - Peter has had time to meditate on his weakness
  - Now, Christ is ready to teach Peter the difference between a *hired hand* and a shepherd (Jo 10:12-13)

## Differences Between (vs. 30:11-16)

### Hired Hand

- No ownership for sheep
- Danger comes, he runs
- Does not love the sheep
- Saves his life; sheep die
- Peter saved himself

### Shepherd

- Sheep belong to him
- Danger comes, he defends
- Loves the sheep
- He dies; sheep live
- Christ saved all His elect

## At this Point Peter Could be Pope

- Before his peirasmos, Peter was the man who could be the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church: Pope
  - He would have built a religion that doomed millions to eternity without salvation for his own glorification
- The peirasmos was necessary so Peter would not be what Satan attributed to him through false teachers in the Dark Ages, Medieval Period (Roman Catholicism)

## Christ Talks to Peter in the Light

- Whereas Satan came to Peter at night, Christ comes in the Light to teach Peter truth of shepherding
  - There is a charcoal fire, not for heat but nourishment
  - Christ does openly what Satan did clandestinely
  - Christ builds up; Satan destroys
- After the meal, Christ takes Peter apart from the others to begin his teaching; finishing the peirasmos

## “Do You Love Me?”

- Much has been discussed about the two Greek words used by John and translated as love
  - ἀγαπάω - Sacrificial love as between God and man
  - φιλέω - Brotherly love
  - Both terms are used by Christ giving rise to the idea that Peter settled for an inferior love for Christ
  - John oft used these terms interchangeably stylistically

They spoke either Hebrew or Aramaic which, like English, only has one word for love  
John probably used φιλέω for stylistic reasons to avoid monotonous repetition

## Three - Completeness

- Peter denied Christ *three* times illustrating his utter weakness to control his heart due to fear (1)- 6:38
  - Reminiscent of Cain who failed to control his weakness (Ge 4:6-8)
- Christ asks Peter *three* times if he loves Him
  - This is not forgiveness but teaching
  - Does Peter understand what it means to be a shepherd?

## We Use Peter - Christ Used Simon

- Christ spoke to him using his Hebrew name, Simon; he was not the *pebble* on which Christ will build His church, that is Himself, the Rock cutout *without* hands (Ex 24:4-5; Mr 16:17-18; Jo 1:42)
  - Christ reminded Simon that he was not the beginning nor the end but was himself built on his father: Βαβ-Ιωνᾶς
  - Thus, Christ was both intimate and humbling (Blunt)

## Question and Answer

### Christ

- Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? {Other Apostles}
- Simon, son of John, do you love me?
- Simon, son of John, do you love me?

### Simon Bar Jonas (John)

- Yes, Lord; you know I love you.
- Yes, Lord; you know I love you.
- Lord, you know all; you know I love you; states the omniscience of Christ

*Peter originally boasted that he loved Christ better than the others; Christ is asking him if he still believes this. Christ begins with a probing question, getting Simon to think; which he does not do until the third time.*

## Simon Slowly Changes

- When Christ asked Simon if he loved Him more than the other Apostles, Simon answered, "Yes"
- When Christ asked Simon bluntly if he loved Him; Simon simply answers "Yes" without much thought
- When Christ asked a third time Simon became agitated but acknowledged Christ already knew the answer as He knows all things: Submission to Christ

## Christ's Commands Revelatory

- With each question and accompanying answer, Christ gives Simon a command
  - Feed my lambs (Ac 6:2)
  - Tend my sheep - Tend is ποιμαίνω, meaning shepherd
  - Feed my sheep (Ac 6:4; 8:26-40)
- Christ was telling Simon the sheep belong to Him, Simon was just the visible shepherd, to teach them (Ac 6:1-6; 10:26-29, 34-35, 42-48; Ep 4:11-14)



## Simon's Epiphany

- When Simon acknowledges the limits of his flesh and the unlimited divinity of the resurrected Christ, goal of the peirasmos was achieved: Enlightenment of Truth
  - Satan sought to show Peter was a hypocrite (Joh 1:2)
  - Christ knew all men's hearts, did not need Satan (Joh 1:24-25)
  - Christ allowed peirasmos to show Simon he had no strength; he could only be strong in Christ when weak (2Co 12:7-10)

Peter acknowledged that he was simply a fellow elder in Christ, urging other elders to shepherd God's flock. To humble themselves under the mighty hand of God so He may exalt them at the proper time because he cares for them (1Pe 5:14)

## Remember Peter's Boast?

- Peter bragged that though all the others may desert Christ, he, Peter, will even die with Him (Mat 26:33-35)
  - One would scarcely die for a righteous person
  - For a good person one might even dare to die
  - But Peter could not die for God: Sin is weakness
  - But Christ, as the Good Shepherd died for the unrighteous to reconcile Peter (Us) to the Father

## Christ Reveals Peter's Death

- Christ now reveals that Peter in his elder years will receive his wish; he will die for Christ
- He gives Peter one last command: Follow Me
- Then He rebukes Peter, again showing him his limits
  - Peter turned to John and asked Christ about John's end
  - Christ told him that was not his business: Follow me!

## Rumors Abound

- John writes of rumors that he would live until Christ returned; John sets record straight
  - Jesus said, "if," implying John would not live forever in the flesh: Man appointed to die then accountability (He 9:27-28)
  - It is enough for each person to deal with themselves; the lost and immature saved who seek to judge others as more wicked than themselves (Mt 7:1-5; Ro 2:1-11; He 5:10)

## John's Gospel Limited

- John acknowledges that his Gospel is limited in scope
  - If one wrote *everything* Jesus did during His ministry the world could not contain all the books
  - Remarkable admission as sinful man always wants to write about himself (He 12:11-14)
- This admission closes John's Gospel; he has completed his testimony of Christ: Son of God - Sacrificed for sin

## One Final Lesson

- John ends with the resolution of Peter's peirasmos so future generations will not be surprised at the fiery trials but know that though Satan means harm, Christ means the trials for good
  - If we reject His chastisement, we are not saved; just deluded (Mt 7:21-23; He 12:3-8)
- Our next lesson will be an overview to emphasize several aspects learned during our study of John