

# GETTING THE RIGHT DIET

## (Sermon Summary)

**Reading: John 21:1-19.**

This incident took place after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a famous occasion when the disciples who were present realize that it is the risen Lord who is with them after the stranger on the beach helps them catch a miraculous quantity of fish. They have breakfast together but there is a serious aim in view. The Lord communicates to Peter the important role he is to play in the early church. Peter is to have the right focus because the Lord will soon be taken up to heaven. Peter, and the other apostles, are being prepared for the greater works that the Lord promised that they would be doing in His name.

### **1. Putting Peter's mouth to better use.**

Peter is asked to confess his love for the Lord Jesus three times. These are better words than were heard from Peter's mouth when he denied the Lord three times. This incident on the beach and the words that Peter speaks in response to the Lord's charge to him, erase the memories of what happened in the courtyard of the High Priest. Then there were curses and oaths that proceeded from Peter's mouth and a relegating of the Lord to being 'That man', rather than someone whom he knows very well and loves deeply. Peter's mouth is now being put to much better use. In being told that he is to feed the Lord's sheep, it is not indicating a career change from being a fisherman to being a literal shepherd. He is now a fisher of men and an under-shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4).

So, in the future, Peter is to receive words from God and these words, as they become part of Scripture, will become part of the word of God for the church of all times. Peter is to preach some of the sermons and addresses in the Book of Acts (such as in Acts 2,3 and 10) which will be a model for preaching for all times. He is going to show future generations how preaching is to be bold and direct, and is to have Christ as the central theme. He will lay down some of the responsibilities of the church, such as her relationship to the state (Acts 4:19-20; Act 5:29). Then, in the two epistles that bear his name, he will show the place of suffering in the Christian's life and the need to be vigilant against the threat of false teachers.

On previous occasions, Peter would often speak and get it wrong. He was too self-focused, too full of his own ideas, too confident in his own abilities. He is now a team

player and his focus is upon serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Now he could say that he would die for the Lord Jesus Christ and actually mean it (John 21:18).

## **2. Sheep in need of feeding.**

The sheep that Peter is to feed are believers like us. This shows us the vital role Peter is destined to play in the early church, feeding the people of that day and, through Scripture, feeding us all. Peter shows us what the duties of ministers are and how they are to exercise a gospel ministry, and to edify and comfort believers. The sheep (Christians) need good food. They may need to be taught to move away from bad food. The right spiritual diet will help us to grow, be balanced as people, and be mature. Do we recognize what is good spiritual food? Are we able to tell the difference between what is false and what is real?

Our food supply is obviously the word of God. As such we are to draw from all parts of it, including the Old and New Testament. We should not just pick and choose our favourite passages but be familiar with the whole counsel of God. We should aim to be familiar with all the big events in the Bible and have a good grounding in the Bible timeline and know what happened when. This means that we should be familiar with something of Bible history and important people and what they did. It also means that we should be able to understand some of the key differences between the Old and the New Covenants.

We should receive the Word of God as the truth, remembering that any difficulty of understanding is a problem at our end and not with the Bible. The words of Scripture describe realities. The Bible speaks to us about the Person of God, giving us precise details about the attributes that God has. It teaches us about our own hearts and gives us tools to understand ourselves. It lays out the dimensions of the unseen world of eternity. Our duties and responsibilities are given to us. We are to have our thinking and convictions shaped by the teaching of Scripture on matters such as Six Day Creation and the sovereignty of God in all things.

This food is rich and contains all we need. We are to make the most of it and not rely simply on sermons but read the Bible at home in our times of personal devotion.

## **3. Avoiding imbalanced diets.**

We should not be making some of the classic mistakes that people make. Sometimes we can major on the law and not get the comfort of the gospel, or vice versa. Neither should we simply major on doctrine about God and then not apply it to our personal lives and worship. A big mistake is to under-play the importance of holiness of living.

Sometimes people can get too absorbed in 'end times' teaching and get too carried away by the ideas of some ministries that have perhaps unbalanced doctrines. Likewise we should be wary about following too closely big pronouncements on current events. Another thing that people can overdose is when they are always searching for promises of revival to come. Sometimes people are looking for easy fixes to urgent or long-term problems and issues.

There are many other mistakes that people make but the closer that we stay to Scripture, the less likely we are to fall prey to odd ideas and unbalanced thinking.