

RESTORING MERCY

Intro: Earlier Jesus had privately restored Peter through forgiveness.

Now Jesus publically restores Peter as an apostle. His sin was not only against the Lord but also against the brethren.

I. JESUS' THREE-FOLD INTERROGATION.

- A. The name that Jesus uses.
 1. It is the name that Peter acquired at his birth.
 2. Jesus had given him a new name, meaning rock, but Jesus does not use that now.
 3. It is a reminder to Peter of his actions, the old Simon: self-reliant, self-seeking, boastful.
- B. Why does not the Lord let the matter rest?
 1. Peter already confessed his sin privately with bitter tears.
 2. Why probe this old sore and that in presence of all the disciples?
 3. Is this what love does?
 4. The pedagogical purpose of Jesus' three-fold question:
 - a. to restore Peter to office
 - b. to restore Peter to a right relation with the other disciples.
- C. The three-fold question:
 1. Do you indeed love me more than all of these?
 2. Do you indeed love me at all?
 3. Simon, do you even like me, have affection for me?
 4. The three-fold question is set forth over against the three-fold denial.

II. PETER'S THREE-FOLD CONFESSION

- A. Peter's answer is no longer a boast in self.
 1. Peter does not boast in his strength.
 2. All boasting is gone.
 3. Peter appeals to the Lord's knowledge: omniscience and knowledge of love.
 4. Not Peter who must answer, but only the Lord can and could answer.
- B. Peter does not complain of this interrogation.
 1. Peter does not make excuses.
 2. Peter does not make comparisons.
 3. Peter does not point out mitigating circumstances.
 4. There is only a simple confession: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."
- C. The term that Peter uses:
 1. Peter does not use the stronger term of 'agape' love.
 2. Peter only dares to use the weaker term of affection.
 3. Is this not true for us. We have only a small beginning of obedience, our zeal is not what it ought to be.

III. JESUS' THREE-FOLD CHARGE.

- A. The charge to Peter is the care of Jesus sheep.
 1. This care of the sheep is both feeding them and oversight of them.
 2. This care for the sheep is for the lambs and the sheep.
 3. The care distinguishes the needs of young and old, new members and saints of long standing.
 4. But all the sheep need this loving and careful tender care.
- B. These sheep are the Lord's sheep.
 1. Jesus is the chief shepherd. He says, "My lambs...My sheep".
 2. We are precious because we were given to him by his father & purchased with his precious blood.
 3. All of the flock, each of the individual sheep are precious. And that is the way that we must view them.
 4. Those who care for these sheep must not be self-serving but humble, motivated by the love of Christ!
- C. Restoration:
 1. Peter is restored as an apostle and again takes the lead as their spokesman!
 2. Peter is resorted in the fellowship of the church as a forgiven sinner saved by grace.
 3. Peter is made by God a writer of the gospel. By experience God uses him to teach us:
 4. What mercy of God taking Peter down this terrible path so he can better shepherdize struggling sheep.
 5. Let us sing of God's restoring mercy.
 6. Some brief applications: