**John 21**

I. The Greatest commandment

Essentially, God says that the greatest commandment is: “Love me! With all your heart, mind, and strength”

II. The man Peter

A. Background

He is passionate and impulsive in speech and behavior. He was an independent business man when called by Jesus. He’s a make-it-happen kind of guy. He is one of the inner circle and the only disciple to get a new name from Jesus: “The Rock.” He’s just another guy: imperfect but passionate, and Jesus used that raw material and steered it in redemptive ways.

B. Experiences in the gospel

1. Jesus walking on water: “Lord, if it’s you bid me come on the water.”

2. “Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life”

3. “You are the Christ, the son of the living God” followed by rebuking Jesus for talking about going to the cross

4. The transfiguration: “Lord, let’s set up booths for these three.”

5. Washing of the disciples feet: “Lord, you will never wash my feet.”

III. The passage

A. Peter’s betrayal

1. “Lord I will never leave you even if all these other guys do” followed by a three fold betrayal! After betraying Jesus he is filled with remorse and weeps bitterly.

2. After the resurrection, Jesus appears to Peter and the disciples, but the issue with Peter has not yet been specifically addressed. Peter is still carrying that remorse around.

B. The encounter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee

1. Jesus performs the exact same miracle (the miraculous catch of fish) he performed when he first called Peter.

2. Jesus recreates the scene of Peter’s betrayal (a charcoal fire)

3. Jesus’ question to Peter: “Do you love me?”

a. This three-times-repeated question must have cut to Peter’s heart.

b. Is Jesus asking, “Do you have warm affection for me?” or is he asking “Do you obey me?”

c. In John’s writings, love and obedience are inseparable. To love Jesus is to obey him. And yet Peter has disobeyed Jesus.

d. Feelings and behavior (love and obedience) are closely linked. A feeling can lead to a behavior but a behavior can also lead to a feeling.

4. Peter was in pain and Jesus goes to that place of pain in a way that was itself painful and yet ultimately very healing and redemptive

5. Peter becomes an amazing leader as a result of this encounter of restoration, forgiveness and healing with Jesus

IV. Conclusion

A. We must pursue that deep relationship of love with Jesus

B. Do you love him?

**Discussion Questions**

1. As you considered Peter’s life, how did Sunday increase your appreciation for and understanding of who he was?

2. As you consider Jesus’ treatment of Peter, how did Sunday increase your appreciation of who he is and how he works with his followers?

3. Consider the comments made on Sunday about feelings and behavior. Accordingly, love is both a feeling and an action. Feelings can lead to behaviors, but behaviors can also lead to feelings. What are the implications of this idea for our lives today?

4. Imagine Jesus asking that pointed question to you: “Do you love me?” How would you respond to that? What issues does that question raise in you?