



Portrait of Christ

Sketches in the Gospel of John

Inductive Discovery Lesson 22
John 21:1-25

Jesus: The Restorer

It had been a frustrating night. Experienced fishermen on a familiar lake, catching nothing. So as the first rays of sunlight danced across the water, they began dragging in their empty nets. There they were, seven men in a boat drifting on the water.

So much had changed in the past three years; the sea wasn't their life anymore. After the past weeks in Jerusalem, nothing would ever be the same. The Lord's crucifixion raised a tempest in their hearts that swelled higher and broke harder than the waves in a Galilee storm. All their hopes had died with Jesus—but then, astonishing news! Jesus was alive!

He appeared to them at the empty tomb, in the upper room, on the road. Everyone who saw the Lord was amazed and overjoyed, taken by surprise yet filled with confident expectation. The news spread like wildfire...we haven't seen the last of Jesus! So they were watching and waiting for His instructions. How about you? What are you doing while you wait for His appearing?

Peter was never one to sit still. "I'm going fishing," he said, so the others had followed. Now they were rowing back to shore with empty nets and hungry bellies. Calling out from the beach Jesus replayed a familiar scene that filled their nets and opened their eyes. They couldn't get back to shore fast enough!

So there they were, seven men (one dripping wet) sitting by a charcoal fire watching our Lord grill fish and tear bread with nail-scarred hands.

After breakfast, Jesus asked a question. ***"Simon, do you love Me more than these?"*** What do you make of that question? From the scriptures (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5) we gather that Peter had already shared a private conversation with Jesus. Yes, he was forgiven; but would the Lord still have him? What did Jesus see in Simon Peter's heart? Surely He saw a broken man who still tended to approach things in a big way. One who had been so confident in his boasting was now consumed by his failure. But wherever God's forgiveness flows, restoration follows. The Lord's probing question drew Peter into a conversation meant for all to hear.

Working Text for John 21:1-25

New Living Translation (NLT)

1 Later Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. **2** Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. **3** Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.” “We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

4 At dawn the disciples saw Jesus standing on the beach, but they couldn’t see who he was. **5** He called out, “Friends, have you caught any fish?” “No,” they replied. **6** Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get plenty of fish!” So they did, and they couldn’t draw in the net because there were so many fish in it. **7** Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and swam ashore. **8** The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only out about three hundred feet.

9 When they got there, they saw that a charcoal fire was burning and fish were frying over it, and there was bread. **10** “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. **11** So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn. **12** “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. And no one dared ask him if he really was the Lord because they were sure of it. **13** Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. **14** This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

15 After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.” “Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him. **16** Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said. **17** Once more he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know I love you.” Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep. **18** The truth is, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked and go wherever you wanted to. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will direct you and take you where you don’t want to go.” **19** Jesus said this to let him know what kind of death he would die to glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.” **20** Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who among us will betray you?”

21 Peter asked Jesus, “What about him, Lord?” **22** Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You follow me.” **23** So the rumor spread among the community of believers that that disciple wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

24 This is that disciple who saw these events and recorded them here. And we all know that his account of these things is accurate. **25** And I suppose that if all the other things Jesus did were written down, the whole world could not contain the books.



INTERPRETATION — *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: “Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLICATION — *How does it apply to me?*

We don’t study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

John 21:1-8

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

John 21:9-14

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

John 21:15-25

Lesson: _____

Application: _____
_____ ?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a simple title to the chapter to help you remember what it says. _____



Take A Closer Look

**I suppose that if all the other things Jesus did were written down,
the whole world could not contain the books.**

John 21:25 NLT

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize from and re-write the verse here.

Meditate on God's Word

While you memorize this verse, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea—the longer it steeps, the richer the flavor. So give yourself permission to slowly savor God's Word! Use the questions below (like a tea bag) to keep dipping into this verse.

(Challenge alert: You won't always see an obvious answer directly from the verse.)

Look up. What does this verse show you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, or His promises.)

Look around. What does this teach you about life or people in general?

Look within. What does this teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter?
How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
and were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
and every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
though stretched from sky to sky.

- Anonymous -

Message Notes:

A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, resembling a notepad or message template. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the area. The edges of the rectangle are irregular and jagged, giving it the appearance of a piece of torn paper. The background of the area is a light gray color.

