



Many of us today, would love to do wonderful things unto the Lord and to bring forth His glory. The Lord indeed does have a specific task for each and every one of His people. The fact is that most of us really do not know what we are to do in bringing forth His Kingdom. However, our God has most definitely assigned, to each one of His people, a particular task to accomplish while they are living here on this earth.

I would like to draw our attention to the last chapter of the Gospel of John – Chapter 21. As we read the conclusion of the Gospel of John, we see an interesting conversation between Peter and Jesus. We all have read this account where we see Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee telling the disciples, after they had fished all night and caught nothing, to go out and cast their nets again - to catch fish. This time they were told explicitly by Jesus to cast their net on the “right” side of the boat. Hmmm. Why would He say that?

If you were a fisherman living in that time, and even today, you would know that the morning was not the time to cast your net and catch fish. They were also told to cast their net on the “right side” of the boat which to us may not mean much but to them at that time it meant that they would be casting their net on the opposite side of the boat that they were used to. This does not make much sense to us today but it was exactly what Jesus wanted. Why? It was because it would be on the **opposite** side of the boat that they normally would have been doing their “normal” fishing routine.

You see they actually would have fished and placed their net on the left side so that when they would haul in the fish it would be easier for them to sort the fish and get rid of any of the catch that was not good. Jesus, told them to cast their net on what would be considered by the fishermen, to be the wrong side of the boat. Nevertheless, we see that the disciples who were there did exactly as they were told. We read of the result – they caught an abundance of fish.

This got their attention. They knew it had to be Jesus. Why? I believe it was because Jesus did things many times in a way that would be opposite to the way things were used to be done. He did this to prove that He was who He said He was – the Son of God. He also did this, I believe, to show the disciples, as well as all of us today, that we should always be thinking “outside of the box” when it comes to doing the things of the Kingdom. The disciples realized that this must be Jesus. When they all came to shore, we read that Jesus had a fire going, ready to cook the fish they had caught for their breakfast that morning.

The next thing we read of in this encounter with Jesus was Peter being asked by Jesus, “*Do you love me?*” He asks Peter this question three times. It is interesting to note that we see in all three of these times of questioning that Jesus refers to Peter as “Simon.” Hmmm... That is interesting.

I believe that was because “Simon” could not truly become “Peter” until the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given unto him and the other disciples on the Day of Pentecost. It was only when he was filled with the Holy Spirit did “Simon” become truly the “Peter,” the rock, that he was destined to be. After all, we still see him being referred to as “Simon” even now by Jesus, Himself. We see Peter that had gone back to fishing fish – not men. John refers to him as Peter in his Gospel account because the account was written many years after and everyone knew Simon now as, “Peter.” However, in “real time,” he was still Simon.

We see Peter, or should we say Simon’s, last response to the questioning of Jesus as to the question, “*Do you love me?*” After his first two responses Peter finally states that Jesus “*knows all things.*” Yes, Jesus does know all things. We see that in the Greek there is a difference between the words for “love” that Jesus used and what Peter had used. Jesus used the word “agape” the first two times He asked this question. “Agape” refers to the highest form of love that can be given.

The essence of “agape” love is - goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of love. Unlike our English word for the term love, “agape” is not used in the New Testament to refer to romantic or sexual love. Nor does it refer to close friendship or brotherly love, for which the Greek word “phileō” is used. Agape love involves faithfulness, commitment, and an **act of the will**. It is distinguished from the other types of love by its lofty moral nature and strong character.

The third time, Jesus uses the word “*phileō*,” which Peter had responded with the two previous times. Peter reciprocated by using the word “*phileō*” to answer this third time, again. He answered this same question three times the **same way**. There is a difference, as we had mentioned, between the two Greek words that our English language presents to us as “love.”

Peter knew that “*phileo*” was the highest form of love that he would be able to give to Jesus – at that time. Soon, as mentioned previously, when they were all filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit, then we could see that all of their love for Jesus grew from the “*phileo*” to the “*agape*” type of love.

Jesus told Peter three times to, “*Feed my sheep.*” Yes, that was to be Peter’s task, to feed God’s people the truth about Jesus and about the true Word of God. I cannot understand when people talk badly about Peter and say that Paul is the only one who can tell us the truth concerning Jesus. Jesus, Himself, commends Peter to “*feed His sheep.*”

He may not have been ready at this time but after the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given to him and the other disciples they all received the fullness of the Holy Spirit to understand the true Word of God. It was at that time that they all truly understood what Jesus had taught them while He was with them on this earth. Did Peter make mistakes during his ministry? Yes!!! They all did, but the Spirit led them back into the truth.

Yes, there will also be others who will come to “feed the sheep,” the true believers, and tell them God’s truth. Peter’s expressed mission was to the Jewish people. Paul’s work dealt mainly with the Gentiles. However, if we take a good look at the New Testament writings we can see that Peter and Paul ministered to both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. Peter, Paul, the other Apostles, as well as other teachers and leaders and the many, many other men and women of God, brought the Good News of salvation through Jesus to both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. They are doing this even to this very day.

As we return to our text we see at the conclusion of that discourse, Jesus emphatically tells Peter again to, “*Follow me.*” That was the task that Peter was given. Simply “follow” Jesus and do what he was called to do. However, as we will see, Peter was still “Simon” and his mind had drifted someplace where it had no business drifting to.

We see that the very next thing that Peter does (which is why Jesus still referred to him as “Simon”) was to turn and ask about “the other disciple” who was with them. We are not told, but it is very much thought to be the Apostle John. John referred to himself in his Gospel account as “the other disciple” and “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” We know that Jesus loved all His disciples. He was very close to Peter, James and John throughout His ministry. However, John sensed even a greater kindred spirit with Jesus. After all, we are told that Jesus, while on the cross, had entrusted His mother, Mary, to this “same disciple” (John 19:25-27).

We see that Peter had asked Jesus what would John be doing or what was going to be his role in bringing forth the Kingdom in the future. Peter asks Jesus straight out, “*Lord, and what shall this man do?*” We see that Jesus replied in John 21:22, “***If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.***” We see that Jesus never did answer the question. What was Jesus telling Peter, as well as all of us, today?

We must all realize that the main issue was not what John may or may not be doing. The real issue in this conversation between Jesus and Peter was Peter's heart. We see that Jesus had just told Peter what he was to do in bringing forth the Kingdom – *"Follow me..."* Instead of dwelling on and asking Jesus questions on that very important aspect of what he was to do in his life, we see Peter focused on another person - John.

Was Peter a little jealous of John? Did he think that John would have a greater role in the plan of bringing the Kingdom upon this earth? Was he just inquisitive? We are not told. The only thing that Jesus tells Peter concerning the question was, *"...what is it to you. Follow me."* Wow...

Here again, we see Peter being rebuked by Jesus. The first time was when Jesus was with the disciples and He had asked them who they thought He truly was. Peter expressed to Jesus that, *"...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* However, we know that as we read in Matthew 16:21-23 and Mark 8:31-33, when Jesus said that He was going to die, Peter, in his arrogance, had told Jesus that He should not speak that way as he told Him, *"...this shall not be..."* Jesus then had to correct Peter immediately at that time. He told him to *"Get behind me, satan."* Wow!!! If that wasn't a rebuke, I do not know what would be.

However, here we are again. Peter was still being "Simon." He was missing the point. The point was that it did not matter what John or anyone else was to be used by Jesus in bringing forth the Kingdom of God on this earth. No, it did not matter. What mattered at that moment was what Jesus was calling Peter to do. That is so important for each of us to grab a hold onto and take heed of within our own lives and within our own walk with the Lord. What is God calling each of us to do to bring forth His Kingdom?

It should not matter to us concerning whoever God desires or is going to use to bring forth His Kingdom here on this earth. What truly matters is simply to know that God desires His people, each of us, to do His will for our own lives while we are here on this earth. Yes, each of us has a distinct "mission" and call upon our own life when we come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

However, we must realize that the task in which He gives each of us is given to each of us for the purpose of accomplishing His purpose and plan in bringing forth His Kingdom here upon this earth. It really has nothing to do with us. It is all about Him and His Kingdom and His lifestyle being brought forth by His people for **His** purposes and **His** people. That should be, and actually must be, our mindset – it must be all about Him!!!

That is what Jesus was speaking to Peter about when he told him to not worry about anyone else and what they were going to do. Each one of us has a call upon our own life. Nothing is too small or nothing is too big. Our mindset must be that it is all about our God, His purposes and His Kingdom being brought forth in every moment of our lives.

Yes, we are each called by God for a distinct purpose. It may not be something that will be written down for anyone to read about. It may not be anything that will give us fame or glory. We may just be called to do our everyday jobs and activities in a Godly manner. It may be simply to raise our families in a Godly way – to trust and believe in God. That is the number one thing that we are all called to do – live our lives and train up our families and others to trust, believe and serve our God. We can be assured that if we are obedient to the One and only true living God, it will be "written down" in His heart. Yes, He will know, and He will be blessed by each of us as we do His will.

In our account that we were discussing in the Gospel of John, we see that Jesus was still calling Peter by his given name, Simon. Peter was not Peter, yet. However, we do know that through His faith in Jesus and then by the infilling and power of the Holy Spirit, he did finally change – from Simon he became Peter, the rock. He then proceeded to go forward to help change the world and tell the world about Who Jesus was - the true "Rock of our salvation."

Peter had to grow in his understanding of Jesus and the ways that He did things. Peter had to learn to not be concerned with anyone else's role but rather he was to be concerned with what he needed to do and what he still needed to learn and grow in. He still needed to simply learn to concentrate on what he was called to do. It was not to be a competition.

Rather, Peter needed to learn, as do each one of us, that everyone has a role in bringing forth the Kingdom. It should not and does not matter what that role may be. Peter simply needed to learn how to grow and do what he was called to do. Yes, he could support and help others in fulfilling their role and purpose, however, he first needed to grasp and understand his own role - first.

The same is true for each of us, today. It does not matter what we are called to do as long as we do it and fulfill what each of us are called by God to do in this hour. Our role may change over the years. However, our heart needs to and must stay focused on our God. Our role must be to "*Feed the sheep...*" He told Peter that three times.

If God desires to change that role, then we are to allow him to do that and simply "follow" him. Hey, wasn't that what Jesus told Peter, twice, when Peter was losing focus on what Jesus was telling him. Jesus told Peter quite firmly, as He is telling each of us today to simply - "*Follow me...*" Hmmm.....