
Breakfast Barbecue

Mike

Scriptures:

John 21:3-25

Matt 26:33-35

Luke 22: 59-62

It was just over 2000 years ago that a stranger lit a fire on the shores of the Sea of Tiberius, the hot coals were slowly cooking portions of fish and freshly baked loaves of bread were waiting to be served to cold and tired workers. Breakfast barbecue was fully prepared.

The stranger calls to the small fishing boat that had appeared out of the early morning mist, about 100 yards from the shore, *"children have you caught any fish?"* *"No"*, they replied, *"we haven't caught a single fish tonight"*.

"Cast your nets on the right side of the boat" the stranger commanded *"and you will find many fish"*. Having caught nothing all night it would certainly have been worth trying, so they cast the nets and found that they were not able to bring the nets to the boat because of the great multitude of fish.

It was John who first realised that the stranger on the shore was Jesus calling to His disciples, he tells Peter, who immediately puts on his fisherman's coat, leaps into the water and starts swimming to shore. I have spent years wondering why Peter would have done this, what drove him to brave the cold waters of the Sea of Tiberias in early spring.

If we rewind a week or so, the picture may become clearer. It was Peter who had so vehemently stated to Jesus that he would be prepared to die for Him. Jesus had other ideas, *"No Peter, I'm afraid that before the cock crows you shall deny me three times"*. *"No Lord that is not me, I will never do that, I will never deny You"*.

In the judgement hall, while Peter was in the middle of his third denial, the cock crew and Jesus turned to look at Peter and Peter remembered the words Jesus had said to him. Luke records that Peter left the hall and wept bitterly.

No wonder he left the boat in such haste, he didn't want the other disciples around when Jesus reprimanded him; he needed to explain, he wanted to set the record straight before the others turned up. The events of that night would have been racing through his head, *"I blew it, I was wrong, I denied my Lord"*.

As soon as they got to land, they saw the fire with the fish and fresh bread, and Jesus tells them to bring what they had caught. No reprimand for Peter who by now was drawing the net full of great fishes to the shores of the Lake. *"Come and dine"* He said, *"You must be cold from the night's fishing"*, and He gave them bread and the fresh fish cooking on the barbecue. You can only imagine the conversation, just like old times, Jesus was alive. The dream of a redeemer that would free Israel was a reality again, new hope and shortly a new covenant for all.

Shortly after the meal, Jesus pointed to the great multitude of fish and said to Simon Peter, *"Do you love me more than these Simon?"* Peter replied and said *"Yes Lord, you know that I love you"*, Jesus said to him, *"Feed my lambs Simon"*.

There was no rebuke for the human failings that had fallen on Peter that night, a time of tremendous ordeal and confusion among the disciples about the future.

Jesus said to Peter for the second time, *"Simon, do you love me?"* He said unto him, *"Yes Lord, you know that I love thee"*. Again, Jesus said to him, *"Feed my sheep Simon"*.

For the third time Jesus asked him, *"Simon do you love me?"* This time Peter was grieved because Jesus has asked him for the third time, he said unto him, *"Lord, you know all things, and you know that I love you"*. Again, Jesus said to him, *"Feed my sheep Simon"*.

Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him, the same number of times that Peter denied Him after his arrest.

Jesus continued and said to him, *"When you were young, you dressed yourself and you did your own will, you chose to go fishing and whatever else you wanted to. But from now on you will stretch forth your hands as a child would, you will be clothed with a wedding garment and you will be led forth in the power of the Spirit, come and follow me."*

But Peter still hasn't quite seen the big picture and said to Jesus, *"But what about John, what will this man do?"*

Jesus replied *"What I do with John is not your problem, I want you to follow me and be led by the Spirit"*.

There is something of Peter in all of us. We have all at some time denied our Lord in either word or deed, but let us not be slow to leap out of the boat of life and come to the Lord in humility and repentance. Then we, too, will hear the words, *"feed my sheep, my child, feed my sheep."*

Prayer: Lord, help us to learn from the lessons of scripture given so long ago, that still teach us today of the gracious forgiving God from beyond the beginning Who laid down His life for us.