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^A 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Samuel 15:28; 2 Samuel 12:11-12, 2 Timothy 4:11

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^C 1 Peter 5:1-4

^D Romans 14:4

^E Psalms 40:5; John 20:31

A. Introduction

1. A Second Chance

- a. In the British writer-physician A.J. Cronin's autobiography, he describes being a doctor in the North of England when there was an outbreak of diphtheria. A little boy was brought in hardly able to breathe. As the Irish would say, "he had the dip," and in those days that often meant the patient would die. The doctor performed a tracheotomy which allowed the child to breathe, and put him in the care of a young nurse who would watch him through the night hours. The doctor went off to bed.
- b. In the small hours of the morning, a trembling nurse wakened him with the sad news that the little boy was dead. Exhausted herself, the nurse had slipped into sleep only to awaken and discover that the tube was blocked and the child dead. The physician was furious. He raged against the girl. He told her he would see to it that she would never nurse again. She stood before his wrath pitifully small, devastated by what had happened, and in a pathetic voice scarcely audible said, "Give me another chance." He told her he would not, and having dismissed her, went back to bed.
- c. Back in bed, but not to sleep. Her poor face haunted him, and so did her words, "give me another chance." And the next morning, when he got up, he tore up the letter of condemnation he had written during the night.
- d. Years later, Cronin tells us, he met the young girl, now grown to womanhood, the matron of one of the largest children's hospitals in England and known throughout the country for her commitment to her calling and her nursing skills. Acquittal had granted her "another chance."—{2}.

2. Forgiveness & Restoration

- a. "Two men who let the Master down"—{3}.
 - (A) several weeks back Greg and I did a little skit for the T&T club in Awana: Greg took the part of Peter, and I, of Judas Iscariot
 - (B) it traced the feelings and apparent motives of these two men through their time with Jesus up until His arrest and trial
 - (C) at the end, of course, there is a note of despair in both men:
 - (1) Peter says, "If only He could forgive me!"
 - (2) and Judas, "He could never forgive me!"
 - (3) and both ask, "Oh God, what have I done?"
 - (D) Judas, remorseful, but unrepentant, hanged himself

- (E) Peter continued to meet with his fellow disciples and was privileged to be one of the first to see the risen Lord, and presumably forgiveness
- (F) but Peter's restoration to service had to wait until today's record
- b. the difference between forgiveness & restoration
 - (A) when a Christian falls into sin in some way, whether they be one of the troops or a leader, we have the assurance of 1 John 1:9 that free and full forgiveness & cleansing is immediately available
 - (B) some think that if a Christian leader sins, then all that is needed is a confession and he is forgiven and can resume his position right away, regardless of the trust he has broken and the lives he has injured
 - (1) but today's passage teaches otherwise
 - (2) Peter had returned to fellowship with the apostolic band as one forgiven of his sin
 - (3) but it took the Lord, not man, to restore him to service
 - (4) restoration is God's removal of the encumbrances resulting from the sin – and that must take place in God's timing
- c. Some other examples
 - (A) Paul's concern: "but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27); some understand this to be for salvation, but the context is clearly that he should finish the race without breaking the rules in order to win the prize; otherwise this would taint all his ministry
 - (B) King Saul – on account of his repeated disobedience, and despite his early good attitude and success, he was disqualified by God from being king and the kingdom would be given to another (1 Samuel 15:28)
 - (C) King David, when confronted by the prophet Nathan for his sin, was assured that he had already received forgiveness; however, the effects of that sin continued, with the child's; death and later the insurrection of his son, Absalom (cf., 2 Samuel 12:11-12)
 - (D) It took many years of Barnabas' working with John Mark before the trust of Paul in him could be restored so that he again became profitable (2 Timothy 4:11)

B. Restoration Is for Service

21:15-17

1. 15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus *said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16 He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17 He *said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you

love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus *said to him, "Tend My sheep."

2. Do You Love? Yes, I love!

a. you have probably already heard that two different Greek words are used for love in this passage

(A) agapao,

- (1) not just involving emotion, but also the mind and will
- (2) deep-seated, thorough-going, intelligent & purposeful
- (3) includes respect and reverence
- (4) "are you really devoted to me?"

(B) phileo,

- (1) a warmer, more intimate love
- (2) that of friendship and family
- (3) more a spontaneous, natural & tender affection
- (4) "You are very precious to me"

(C) both are used of God's love & man's; both are used to translate the Hebrew word for love in the LXX, sometimes used interchangeably

b. three times a question from Jesus, three times Peter responds

(A) "are you really devoted to me?" ... "You are very precious to me"

(B) "are you really devoted to me?" ... "You are very precious to me"

(C) "am I very precious to you?" ... "You are very precious to me"

c. it is not that Peter is rejecting the Lord's word for love, for he responds

(A) Yes! (or, Indeed!), Lord, You know ..;

(B) Yes! (or, Indeed!), Lord, You know ..;

(C) Yes! (or, Indeed!), Lord, all things You know ..;

3. The Denials, The Affirmations

a. this scene needs to be seen in the context of John 13:36-38, where Jesus foretells the denials of Peter: 36 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." 37 Peter *said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus *answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times."

- b. as well as, "But Peter answered and said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.'" (Matthew 26:33)
- c. Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him "more than these" – more than these what? ... three suggestions have been made
 - (A) "more than these things?" ... the boat, the sea, the fishing; and there is a lesson in this which we can apply to ourselves; but the word of the question seems to exclude that meaning: "Are you really devoted to me more than you are devoted to fishing, &c?"
 - (B) "more than you are devoted to these other men?" ... again, a lesson is to be applied from this understanding, in that no matter how much we should care about men & their needs, we must love God more
 - (C) but Peter had boasted a loyal devotion to Christ that would keep him from falling away, so the question most likely means, "do you still claim to be more devoted to me than these other disciples?"
- d. Peter cannot repeat the same words as Jesus
 - (A) for the events of the night of Jesus' trial have proven otherwise
 - (B) in fact he was not ready to lay down his life for the Lord
 - (C) in fact he did not follow Jesus all the way
 - (D) nor does he have any evidence that he can give of his love
 - (E) but must depend on Jesus: "Lord, You know ..."
- e. in the last instance, Jesus uses Peter's word for love: "Do you love me? ... am I very precious to you?" and Peter is hurt at His apparent doubting of Peter's words – but Peter must answer: as he had denied His Lord on three occasions, so must he now affirm his love three times – not for Jesus' sake who knows all ;things but for his own sake – that he should be assured in himself – not merely boasting in his pride, but restored in humility in order to receive Jesus' command:

4. Then Serve !

- a. "feed my lambs ... shepherd my sheep ... feed my little sheep"
- b. the impulsive Peter, conscious spokesman of the disciples, had to learn that in the spiritual, as in the natural; in the fishing for men, as in the fishing for fish; he was completely dependent upon his risen Lord
- c. they were not his but Jesus' lambs, Jesus' sheep, Jesus' little sheep – too many a minister has forgotten this and boasted about his church
- d. forgetting Peter's own words "1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among

you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:1-4)

C. What of the Future?

21:18-23

1. Peter's Future (18-19) – 18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!"
 - a. what will it cost Peter to serve as now commanded?
 - (A) he will indeed lay down his life for Jesus Christ
 - (B) as a young man, Peter put a belt about his waist, symbolic of strength and acted just as he wanted
 - (C) meeting Jesus, becoming truly devoted to Him, changed all that
 - (D) from henceforth his life and death in in God's hands, to God's glory
 - b. the phrase, '[stretch out your hands](#)' was understood by the early church to mean crucifixion, the hands being stretched out upon the cross-piece of the cross –and church history tells us that this is what happened to Peter in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero
 - c. the language of this passage is such as to show that this had taken place before John wrote this gospel ... one of a number of indications in the book that shows it was written rather late in the first century
2. John's Future (20-23)
 - a. Peter's Curiosity (20-21) – 20 Peter, turning around, *saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter therefore seeing him *said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?"
 - (A) we are not told of the reason for Peter's question – in fact it is not entirely clear what is being asked about John, for literally the words are "and this (one), what"
 - (B) but as he has just been informed what will be the end of his own following of Jesus, namely an undesirable form of death, so Peter seems to be asking concerning his fellows disciple and friend
 - b. Jesus' Answer (22-23) – 22 Jesus *said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" 23 This saying therefore went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did

not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

- (A) Jesus abruptly rebukes Peter for this question – in today's language He says, in effect, "It is none of your business."
- (B) one lesson we often need to relearn is, "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4)
- (C) it appears that one reason this was written in this epilogue to John was to correct the brotherhood of this mistaken idea about John

D. Final Words

21:24-25

1. P.S. – Authentication (24) – **This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true.**
 - a. in this verse we encounter a striking phrase: "we know" without any further information of who are the "we"
 - (A) John's scribes? ... the leaders in the church at Ephesus where John spent the latter part of his life (according to church history)? Others?
 - (B) Not the editorial "we" which would be "we ... our witness"
 - (C) it doesn't say, but what it does say is important
 - b. by these words the Holy Spirit bears witness that the one who wrote this gospel is the same as the "the disciple whom Jesus loved"
 - (A) by examination of the four gospels, the eyewitness events that he recorded, as well as by the testimony of the early church, that disciple is John, one of the sons of Zebedee
 - (B) and the writer of the three epistles and book of Revelation
 - c. so multiple witnesses now affirm that what he wrote is indeed true
2. P.P.S. – A Selection by Necessity (25) – **And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they *were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself *would not contain the books which *were written.**
 - a. what this Jesus did is too vast to be recorded
 - b. this is a sign of His deity, echoing the Psalmist's praise to God, "Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders which Thou hast done, And Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with Thee; If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count." (Psalms 40:5)
 - c. "but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31 NAS)

E. Conclusion

1. Some Lessons

- a. don't boast of your devotion to Jesus, but humbly beseech that the Lord will keep you faithful in all circumstances
- b. don't be curious – nor envious – of how Jesus will use others to serve him but be faithful to the tasks to which He has called you
- c. be confident in the Scriptures and the witness they give to Jesus Christ; more than that, be confident in Jesus Christ and have life in His name.

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – The Gospel & Epistles of John, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:
John, by Merrill C. Tenney
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
- NICNT – The New International Commentary on the New Testament
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – New Testament Commentary, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TEC -- The Gospel according to John, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965

2. By Dr. Glendon Harris, Kerux illustration # 2592

3. *'Two Men Who Let the Master Down,'* – Kerux illustration #23470