

# Christian Growth 7

by Alan Redpath

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and love in our lives, using Peter's story as an example of how we can respond to God's love and acceptance, even in the face of defeat and failure.*

**Duration:** 24:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 26:56, Matthew 26:74-75, Luke 22:54-62, John 21:1-5

**Topics:** "Christian Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Simon Peter meeting Jesus on the shore of a lake. The speaker emphasizes the new humility that Peter displays after his night of despair. Jesus addresses Peter as 'Simon, Son of Jonas,' a name he had not used since their first meeting. The speaker highlights the importance of not giving up in times of personal failure and inadequacy, as there is always a new dawn breaking in our lives. The sermon also emphasizes the need for inspiration to lead to action, and the disciples' miraculous catch of fish serves as a reminder of the power and presence of the Lord.

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## Transcript

Well now, let's turn to business, to the word, and would you open your New Testament with me at John, Chapter 21. John, Chapter 21. I'm reading this morning from the NIV.

Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way. Simon Peter, Thomas, called Zinamas, Nathaniel from Canaan in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

I'm going out to fish, Simon Peter told them, and they said, we'll go with you. So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, friends, have you caught any fish? No, they answered. He said, throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, it's the Lord. As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, it's the Lord, he wrapped his outer garment around him, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a

hundred yards.

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals. There was a fish in it and some bread. Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish you have just caught.

Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast.

None of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these? Yes, Lord, he said, you know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my lamb. Again Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you truly love me? The lamb said, yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

Jesus said, take care of my sheep. The third time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my sheep.

Now I tell you the truth, when you were young, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you don't want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of dress by which Peter would glorify God.

Then he said to him, follow me. Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, Lord, who is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him? Jesus answered, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.

Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.

We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the book that would be written.

This is the word of the Lord. Just a prayer together. Let's just quieten our hearts for a moment and ask that the Holy Spirit may be free to speak to us.

This morning may be the climax of blessing of the whole week. As we meet around the Lord's table shortly, may it be to worship him in spirit and truth. And as we hear his word, ask the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and reveal them to us.

Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Speak thus now. The message to meet my need which thou only dost know.

Speak now to thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth. Thou hast to show to me for Jesus' sake. I would just take one moment, if I may, to ask you please to pray for us as we continue our itinerary.

We leave this morning and I start preaching this evening in Kansas City. And then after a week there, we go to Moody Classic Convention in Conference in Florida. And after a week there, where we have two services a day, we then preach in Moody Church at Nostalgic and also at Moody Founders Week.

And then we return to Britain. But only for five days. And then after that, we set out for Japan for three weeks for Japanese Classic Convention.

The difficult part about that is preaching by interpretation. And that slows you up a little bit. But those are wonderful people and it's a wonderful privilege and opportunity.

But we will be grateful for your prayers as our days, so shall our strength be. Our times are in his hands. I don't want to, I don't want to rush out, but I want to last out.

And you can understand why there's a little check in my spirit, both of us, regarding travel overseas in future. Certainly for 1983, when our time is fully occupied in Britain, mainly teaching at Capernaum Bible School and universities, Christian unions, and various conferences throughout the country. As to 1984, the Lord only knows.

I'm holding that open. But if George Orwell is right, 1984 isn't going to be a good year to travel. But the Lord is on the throne.

And right until the day of his return, we want to be climbing on track with the Lord Jesus. And we shall never, never forget the strength and blessing and help that's come to us personally through your response and your receptivity to the Word. It's been tremendous.

We have been thinking together, as you know, on the themes toward spiritual maturity. And our goal, we described at the very beginning, is that we might be filled up with all the fullness of God. That we might be conformed to the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

That spiritual maturity, and we have gone over various areas where that maturity panics. The area of love. The area of love.

Simon, son of John, you love me, said Jesus, more than these. This chapter is really quite a wonderful one. As we leave this conference, inevitably, there's going to be a time of assessment.

When we think back upon it, to what we've heard and what we've seen. Not merely at the sessions, but we've heard from all sorts of sources in conversation with others and so on. What we've heard and seen and felt of the touch of God upon our hearts.

Of course, you know, inspiration must always lead to action. And if it doesn't, it ends in stagnation. And that would be a tragedy.

Let me just repeat that. Inspiration must lead to action. You must do something about it.

If you don't, it leads to stagnation. Some perhaps, judging by conversations with my wife and myself, have felt such a sense of personal failure and personal inadequacy that they're almost at the point of giving up and saying, well, I don't see what part I can have in all this and what God would have me do in the future. But I want you to see this morning what a tremendous dawn was breaking in Simon Peter's life on this day.

After a night which he thought would never end. And he must have thought that as far as he was concerned, he'd had it. The Lord would have nothing more to do with him.

And to hear the Lord Jesus say to him, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me? Quote. This was the last opportunity the Lord Jesus would have to talk to him. I mean, this was a strategic situation.

It was a wonderful opportunity for a real solid talk on systematic theology. Wonderful thing to open up some doctrine to him and really give him some solid truth, but he didn't. One thing was going to matter more than anything else to the Lord Jesus, do you love me? Do you love me more than these? Just for a moment, you think about the background of that man's life, about what he must have felt.

He almost gives that away when he begins by saying to the others, I'm going fishing. Back again to the old job. I've had enough.

I think he was really suffering from three things. Homiletics. The first of them, disillusionment.

He'd never, never settled for the cross. The moment the Lord Jesus began to unfold that program for him, the moment that the Savior told him that within a few months he would be crucified, Simon turned on him and said, be it far from you, Lord. I shall never be... And you remember the Lord turned on him and said, get behind me, Satan.

You favor of the things that be of the world, not of God. And he never accepted the cross. Always regarded it as a tragedy.

And he'd been completely disillusioned, any thought and any hope of him being a sort of prime minister in the kingdom, which he thought the Lord or the Messiah would establish, was shattered and blown. And he thought there was going to be a nice, pleasant, easy life. And I wonder if for some of us, the Christian life has been a bit like that.

We never thought. We never thought it would be such a tremendous, tremendous challenge to face the fact of Calvary. To face a personal thought in which I adhere to everything except the will and purpose of God's will.

Thought it would be so comfortable, so easy, so pleasant. But it hasn't been. And I've been disillusioned.

And with that disillusionment, of course, there came absolute defeat. That's the second thing. Defeat.

And we all know about that in Peter's life. Just the laugh of a seven girl did it. That's all.

Made him deny the Lord Jesus. I've heard many, many sermons preached about the disciple who follows far off. I've never heard one preached about the nine others who didn't follow at all.

But an awful lot of us have settled for criticism of this man who followed afar off and denied the Master. There was defeat. Cursing and swearing, he denied the Lord Jesus.

And defeat was followed by despair. Peter went out and wept bitterly. I can picture it, can't you? Luke's gospel record tells us that as soon as there had been that denial of Jesus, the cock crowed, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and the Lord turned and looked upon him.

I've often wondered how he looked. There's a picture I've seen of that incident. It is, I think, in the magazine *Ideals*, from Milwaukee, at Easter time.

And there you see the Lord in the shadow inside, Peter at the door, the cock, there, crowing, and Peter just turning around. And for a moment they've got their eyes on each other, Peter and Jesus. And Jesus is looking at him.

I wonder how he looked. Angry? No, I don't think so. Disappointed? No.

Bitter? No. Resentful? I don't think so. The sense of having been betrayed, shot? I don't think so.

I think that artist who drew that picture has got it. Because you see, the first time Jesus and Peter met, Jesus said to him, Simon, son of Jonah, that's your name, but you shall be Peter, a rock. He looked at him and said, I know your heredity, I know where you come from, I know your background, I know everything about you.

One day you're going to be a rock. And now he'd known it all, denied the Master, and thought he was finished, and Jesus turned and looked at him, and it's exactly the same word, looked at him. Same word as is used in the first time they met.

He turned and looked at him in exactly the same way. And in my heart, there's a conviction that Jesus was saying to him, alright Peter, I knew you'd do that all along, but you'll still be rock. And that broke Peter's heart, and he wept bitterly.

I'm not surprised there have been tears at times this week. Not surprised we've had to weep before God. Don't be afraid of that.

Tears. Tears of repentance, tears of regret. And Jesus knows about all of them.

Thou art God. Sifty, unreliable, unstable, can't count on you for anything, but you'll be rock. And in spite of all your failures, you'll still make it up.

And that moment was the moment of Salmon's broken heart. He went out and he wept bitterly. And when God searches us out, through and through, who can keep back the tears? And not a few during these days perhaps have been in the same place of despair as Simon Noah.

Now this is the man who met Jesus on the shore of the lake that day. Now what a wonderful verse, verse four is. When morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore.

Peter must have thought his night of despair would never finish. But it did. To find that there was something absolutely new for him, as there can be for all of us.

And I can picture in my mind Jesus and Peter getting up after they had a meal, and as they walk and talk together and go towards the lake, I see a new humility in Simon Peter. Simon, son of Jonah, by the way, Jesus had never called him that since the time they first met. Never.

But he was added again, the same word, the same person. Simon, son of Jonah, called you that, didn't I, when I first met you? I'm calling you that now. And after all these experiences and all these years, Simon, do you love me more than these? And I wonder if he asked that with a backward look at the others around the fire.

Listen to the answer of this man who only a few days previously had said to all men, forsake you, I never will. Simon, do you love me more than these? Lord, you know everything. You know that I, I care for you.

Jesus said, and I'm sure that all of you know this, Jesus said, do you love me? Agape love. Calvary love. Do you love me like that? Lord, I don't trust myself anymore.

I've saturated my self-confidence. I haven't gotten it. I can't use that word.

But you know I care for you. Phileo. P-H-I-E-L-E-O.

I want to be your friend. But I daren't say, after all that's happened, that I really love you. You see, Peter's defeat had been in public.

Everybody knew about it. His name and his witness had been discredited completely. Your defeat and mine have been in private.

Known only to God, maybe to a few.

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