



Clanking Chains: Peter's Restoration to the Promotion List for Permanent Apostle, John 21:15-19

- 11) The way to accomplish the development of this mental attitude is to employ benevolence as the primary approach and use severity only as a means of guiding the child to a place where benevolence can resume.
- 12) The Lord was gracious to Judas when he failed in a tragic manner at Gethsemane. Judas was never repentant, only remorseful and died the sin unto death.
- 13) But Peter also betrayed the Lord by denying his association with Jesus on three occasions the evening of His arrest. Had Peter not gone through self-correction and rebound, he, along with Judas, would not have been on the promotion list to the rank of permanent apostle.
- 14) But since Peter did enter into self-correction and sought forgiveness through Rebound, he was qualified to be reclassified as promotion eligible.
- 15) However, he had to be publicly restored in order to regain his lost authority. This is the background for the conversation Peter has with the Lord in John 21.
- 16) The key to becoming an effective servant and follower is to be motivated to do these things by reciprocal love. If Peter was to be restored as an apostle in good standing in the Lord's ministry, he had to demonstrate that he possessed the mental attitude of respect for the Lord.
- 17) Parental correction is designed to reveal wrongdoing to the child and to lead him to self-correction followed by forgiveness. This builds trust and lays the foundation for the development of reciprocal love and respect for the parents.
- 18) The Lord sought verification of Peter's mental attitude renewal. The exchange between Peter and Jesus in John 21:15-17 is designed to confirm that reciprocal love and respect for the Lord has been restored in Peter's soul.
- 19) The scene is early morning on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, also called the Sea of Galilee. On this occasion seven disciples are with Jesus and we learn from John 21:2 who they are: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two unnamed.

John 21:15 - So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love [ἀγαπάω, *agapaō*] Me more than these?" Peter said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [φιλέω, *phileō*] You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My lambs."

v. 16 - Jesus said to Peter again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love [ἀγαπάω, *agapaō*] Me?" Peter said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [φιλέω, *phileō*] You." Jesus said to him, "Shepherd My sheep."

v. 17 - Jesus said to Peter a third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love [φιλέω, *phileō*] Me?" Peter was grieved because Jesus said to him the third time, "Do you love [φιλέω, *phileō*] Me?" And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [φιλέω, *phileō*] You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

- 20) Two words in this context are translated with the English word "love." This is legitimate but it does not distinguish the difference between the two Greek words which are found.



- 21) The one first used by our Lord in his questioning of Peter is the present active indicative of the verb:
- ἀγαπάω, *agapaō*** - In context, this is the verb in a direct question that seeks to discover if Peter has the mental attitude required to put him back on the permanent promotion list. It connotes personal love for the perfect Christ expressed through reciprocity and respect.
- 22) However, Peter's shame, embarrassment, and a false humility prevent him from boldly stating before others that yes, he has reciprocal love for the Lord. As a result Peter opts for the less emphatic word for love, the present active indicative of the verb:
- φιλέω, *phileō*** - The love that one possesses for a friend but less advanced than *agapaō*.
- 23) *Agapaō* is the kind of love Peter needs if he is to fully and effectively perform the duties of a permanent apostle which require him to willfully follow, serve, and ultimately die for Jesus Christ.
- 24) In the Lord's third question He selects Peter's vocabulary and uses the word *phileō*, which inquires of Peter if he can love Him as a friend. Peter's response clearly indicates his recovery and willingness to perform the duties of an apostle:

John 21:17b - Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love [**φιλέω, *phileō***] Me?" And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [**φιλέω, *phileō***] You."

- 25) Peter is said to be "grieved." The word is the aorist passive indicative of the verb:
- λυπέω, *lupeō*** - Sad, sorrowful, distressed.
- This word contains the idea in the passive voice of repentance, or self-correction. This is the mental attitude one must reach before he can rebound.
- 26) Peter has done this but he hasn't been able to bring himself to use the word *agapaō* after all he's done. Now he is sorrowful afresh that the Lord is now inquiring if he even loves Him as a friend.
- 27) Peter applies the doctrine of omniscience by stating, "Lord, you know all things." As a consequence he then states that a part of that knowledge is the awareness that he does indeed love Jesus as a friend.
- 28) This is sufficient for the moment because Peter has given the Lord a commitment that will ultimately be expressed in the highest form of *agapaō* love:
- John 15:13** - "Greater love [**ἀγάπη, *agapē***] has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends [**φίλος, *philos***]."
- 29) By publicly affirming that he loved the Lord as a friend, Peter was committing to the ultimate sacrifice which in effect was an affirmation of reciprocal love to the point of martyrdom. The Lord then prophesies Peter's execution:

John 21:18 - "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, and bring you where you do not wish to go."



- 30) This prophecy was fulfilled in Rome in A.D. 67. Few details are known historically. Here's a synopsis by:

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, s.v. "Peter, Simon":

The tradition is that he died a martyr at Rome about 67 AD, when about 75 years old, ... which it is thought came to pass by crucifixion under Nero. It is said that at his own desire he was crucified head downward.

When Peter was a successful fisherman, he felt free to do as he pleased without concern for sacrificial service to the Messiah of Israel. But as an apostle, his reciprocal love took him all the way to a martyr's death in defense of the faith:

John 21:19 - Now this Jesus said, signifying by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. And when Jesus had spoken this, He said to Peter, "Follow Me."

- 31) Peter was on the way back from his trips into human viewpoint and self-absorption. Here the Lord has applied benevolence toward Peter in his recovery. He rewards him for being honest and again joining-up. He ends by offering Peter a challenge, "Follow Me." Peter accepted the challenge all the way to a martyr's death.
- 32) However, the Lord had to use severity on Peter when the apostle was functioning on emotion and self-centeredness. On two occasions the Lord drove Peter away by looking at him.