



- **The Sequel**

At the end of a movie, everything is usually wrapped up. The hero often wins. The guilty are dealt with. The story is complete. Finished. And then the credits roll. And it's over.

But sometimes, after the credits, there's an epilogue. Another conclusion. An extra bit of the story that wasn't quite wrapped up is dealt with. And it's at that time, if you're sitting in the movie cinema, you start to feel sorry for all the people who have already left during the credits. You think "They're missing out on the extra bit!" That epilogue can often do two things:

First, it can wrap up an extra bit about a character you'd forgotten about. It makes you think: "Oh yeah, I forgot about that character!" And it's all dealt with.

The second thing is to open up the future – to introduce you to the sequel – what's going to happen next.

This is John chapter 21. It is the epilogue that we cannot miss. People walked out of church last week, hearing about the death and resurrection and appearance of Jesus. They left thinking: "That was a nice end to the story!"

But they've missed the epilogue! And John 21 does two things for us:

First, it wraps up about a character we might have forgotten about – Peter.

Second, it sets the scene for the sequel – for what's going to happen next.

And these are very important for us. Because the story of Jesus doesn't END with the resurrection. In fact, it is just the beginning.

So what happened to Peter?

Remember Peter? The lead disciple.

When Jesus said to Peter on Thursday night: "You will deny me three times before the rooster crows", Peter responded "I will lay down my life for you!"

What happened to Peter? While Jesus was on trial, Peter was approached three times by different people. Each of them asked him if he was with Jesus. Each time he denied even knowing Jesus. What happened to Peter? What happened to him as a disciple? What happened to his ministry?

This is what we find out in John 21.

7 of the disciples have returned to Galilee. In Matthew 28:10 Jesus told them to go to Galilee and they will see him there. So they've gone down North to Galilee. And they're waiting. And Peter says "I'm going fishing!" So the others join him. And why not. So they fish all through the night. And they catch nothing. And then Jesus appears, except they don't know it's Jesus. Jesus says "Put your nets over the right side of the boat!"

I went fishing last weekend with my family. We packed our rods and reels. Got our licenses. Bought two bags of bait. We fished and fished and fished for nearly two hours. We caught one tiny fish that we threw back. And a sponge. But nothing else!

Now if someone had appeared at the end of that time and said: "Try the other side of the jetty!" I probably would have thought they were an idiot. No fish on this side. Why would there be fish 2 metres away?! But maybe I'd try it.

Well, the disciples are 90 metres off shore. So I imagine Jesus would have had to yell pretty loudly – “Try the other side of the boat!” And they did. They probably thought “Why not”.

- **153**

They haul in 153 **large** fish. That’s significant. 153. Why is that significant? 153 isn’t significant. It’s significant that it was ... a lot! And they counted them! You would do that, wouldn’t you?! This was probably a record for them. So they say “Let’s count them!” 153 LARGE fish.

What does this remind you of?

- **Luke 5:3-6 –**

The first time Jesus meets Peter, he gets into a boat with him and says: “Go out to deep water and put down your nets”. Peter says “We’ve fished all night and haven’t caught anything! But OK. We’ll put the nets out AGAIN.” And they caught such a large number of fish that the nets began to break.

Well, I wonder if John remembered that event at this moment. Because as soon as they pull in the net with 153 fish, John realises and calls out “It is the Lord!” “It’s Jesus!” As soon as Peter hears this, he puts his clothes on (because he was probably fishing in his undergarments) and leaps into the water to go to Jesus.

The other disciples followed in the boat. But Peter couldn’t wait he rushes to Jesus – just like he rushed to the tomb when he heard it was empty.

- **Breakfast**

They all arrive on shore and Jesus says “Let’s have some breakfast!” And they eat bread and fish.

They sit down and have a meal. This is the third time Jesus had appeared to them after he rose from the dead.

So what about Peter and the other disciples? Is all forgiven? Did Jesus forget that they had left him, abandoned him, and even disowned him at the cross?

These next words of Jesus are hard to listen to as he speaks to Simon Peter. He waits until after breakfast. Then this is the conversation,

- From verse 15:

“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 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.”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him a third time.

Peter was hurt!

When Jesus was on trial, a person asked Peter “Do you know Jesus? Weren’t you with him?”

Peter says no.

A second time: “Weren’t you with Jesus?”

Peter says no.

A third time: "You were with Jesus weren't you?"

Peter says: "I don't know him"

The rooster crows.

Peter denied Jesus. Denied Jesus. Then denied Jesus.

And now **Peter** is hurt?

But here is the restoration.

Jesus says to Peter: "Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?"

And Peter says "Yes. Yes. Yes."

Here is Jesus saying to Peter: "I know." I know that while I was on trial you denied knowing me. Three times. You didn't love me. You walked away from me. You left me. You ignored me. You failed to even recognise me or associate yourself with me.

But here is the restoration:

Feed my lambs.

Take care of my sheep.

Feed my sheep.

Here is Peter, the lead disciple, after such a devastating act of denial, restored to leadership. Restored to ministry.

You might expect that Jesus might say: "Look, I'm handing over the lead to John. You obviously can't do it."

That's what we would do right? Here's someone doing ministry in the church. And they make a mistake. A big mistake. And that's it.

But with heartfelt repentance, with a **real** recognition of their love for Jesus, even Peter can be restored.

Then Jesus says:

- John 21:18-19

18Very truly I tell you, when you were younger 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 do not want to go." 19Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Jesus tells Peter that he's also going to die by crucifixion. Which he does about 30 years later. He restores him to leadership, then he tells him up front what it's going to cost. And he says "Follow me."

What does this say to us?

If you get up really early in the morning, and it's dark, what do you do? You might turn on the lights as you walk out of your bedroom and turn on the light up the hallway. Turn on the light in the kitchen or wherever you're going. You light the way as you walk. This is what it is to follow Jesus. It means to follow his light. His direction. We see his light. We follow his light. His path. His direction.

But the devil comes along and switched on other lights. Distractions. Detours. Other paths that aren't good. Every time he does that, we have the choice – do I follow Jesus? Or do I go down this other path? And sometimes we go so far down the wrong path, it's nearly impossible to find the way back. Maybe it's the path of self indulgence. Maybe the path of sexual infidelity. Maybe the path of anger, where we hold our anger against someone for so long it seems impossible to ever forgive them. Maybe it's a path of deception. Or a path of following a false god – the god of money or career or the god of self. And we can go so far down that path, we struggle to see how we can possibly come back.

Peter went WAY down that path. Deny. Deny. Deny. Hide. But when he's confronted with the risen Jesus, he runs to him. He jumps out of that boat and runs towards him. And he says "I love you. I love you. I love you." That's much more than just saying "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry".

That is the way to follow Jesus, no matter how far down the wrong path we have gone. Run to Jesus and declare your love for him.

But there's the other side to this:

Allow others to do the same.

Allow others to be restored. Allow others to come back to Jesus. Allow others to repent and follow Jesus and serve him.

When you come to the risen Jesus, with a heart full of repentance and love him, you are forgiven AND restored. That is what the resurrection is about. It's about what's NEXT. The sequel. You were forgiven so you could spend your life ***following*** Jesus. When we confess our love for him, he forgives us, and by his great grace, he calls us to follow him.

And when you wander off the path... and you will... come back. Run back. And follow him again. He is the God of great grace. The God of second chances. And third chances. And a million more.

Let's pray.

1Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.

It happened this way: 2Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3“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.

4Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6He 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.

7Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

8 Or about 90 meters

9When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

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20Peter 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?”)

21When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

22Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” 23Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers 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?”

24This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

25Jesus 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 books that would be written.