

Feed My Sheep

by Richard E. Bieber

Jesus calls us to feed his sheep, which is our opportunity to express our love to the Master and thank him for his goodness to us.

Scripture: Luke 14:23, Luke 15:4, John 21:1-12

Topics: "Discipleship", "Evangelism"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the temptation to go back to our old routines and comforts after experiencing the power of God, similar to Peter going back to fishing. However, Jesus patiently waits for us to realize the emptiness of our pursuits and calls us to feed His sheep as an expression of our love for Him, emphasizing the importance of actively sharing the Gospel with those around us and reaching out to the lost and broken in the world.

Transcript

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing, John 21:1

Most of us have at least tasted the joy of commitment to the kingdom ... the freedom of making a clean break... of saying to ourselves, "That's it from now on it's the kingdom!"

Most of us have known the joy of seeing the power of God move through us to others. But after the novelty wears off, it doesn't seem so joyful. Things start to get hard.

When the Israelites got through the Red Sea they were singing and dancing. But when they began trudging through the wilderness, Egypt began to look pretty good.

They forgot the whips, the bondage, the pain ... and remembered only cucumbers and the tasty stew.

Peter saw the glory of the kingdom as only two other men on earth ever did ...

- Jesus' miracles,

- Jesus transfigured ,

- Jesus on the cross,

- Jesus alive from the dead

And yet, after seeing all this he up and says, "I'm going fishing. I'm going back to my old routine."

And there's something in us which says the same thing. "This Kingdom of God business is too intense. I need a break! Can't I just get off this train for a while and vegetate spiritually like other people do?"

So we try. Like Peter we go back to our old routine. Peter was into catching fish. It was really fun to catch fish all night and then in the morning count them and see how many we have.

Some of us were into making money. The fun of it was to see how much we could make in a week, in a month, in a year.

Some of us were into creature comforts, or cars, or boats, or even planes.

Or sports or antiques or collecting DVDs or pieces of art ... so we go back to our fishing.

Jesus doesn't say,

"Hey, where are you going? I thought you made a commitment to me!"

No ... he lets us go and do our thing. It took Peter one night. Some of us dabble with our fishing for a year, or two, or more. But eventually we end up like Peter with an empty net.

...They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" John 21:3b-7a

This probably didn't happen to Peter until he began to ask, "What am I doing in this boat? Why did I come back to this?"

When we start having our doubts about our flirtation with our old lifestyle ... when we begin to see how empty it is ... suddenly there's this stranger on the shore.....

"How's it going? Did you catch anything?"

"No. What a lousy night!"

"Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you'll get something."

Suddenly we have all the fish we could ever want ... but is this what we want? Is this what you want to live for? ...these fish? Now it's time to decide again and perhaps for the last time where our hearts really are.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

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, "Feed my lambs." A second time, he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "feed my sheep." 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 everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." John 21:12-17 "It's not these fish...it's you Lord that I love. Yes, Lord. You know that I love you." Peter said it and he meant it. "Okay; if you mean it Peter feed my lambs." "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord you know that I love you." "Tend my sheep". "Simon, son of John, do you love me." "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." "Feed my sheep."

The reason Peter was tempted to go back to his old lifestyle was because he wasn't doing anything about his love for Jesus. When we don't do anything about our love for Jesus that love stagnates, shrivels and dies. We have to do something with our love for Jesus or we'll keep running back to our old fishing boat until our vision of Jesus is gone completely. -- And there really is only one thing we can do with our love for Jesus feed his sheep. "Do you love me?....Do you love me?"

"Feed my sheep." And those sheep Jesus is sending us to feed are not our burden; they are our life! They are our opportunity to express our love to the Master. - To feed those sheep is the ultimate way of thanking Jesus for his goodness to us. - To feed those sheep is our one reason for being in this world at all. Who are these sheep, where do we find them? "My sheep," Jesus calls them, "my sheep".... "I've already chosen them..... I've laid down my life for them...." "I've claimed them for myself."

"But they will only know they are mine when you go to them and feed them the bread which will open their eyes and quicken their minds." We're talking, first of all, about people who are in our lives already; to whom we've never given even a crust of the living bread. And we don't have to put a "predestination scope" on them to find out if they are really one of the elect. All we have to do is feed them. Sit down and say, "There's something on my heart I've been wanting to share with you for a long time."

Do you know that the living God loves you personally? Do you know that Jesus is alive from the dead and wants to flood your life with blessings? Do you know that Jesus really is a door out of your situation? Do you realize the Kingdom of God is here right now?" ...a living word given directly to this person. Or, sit down and send them an e-mail or a letter.. Or, pick up the phone, starting with the people already in our lives to whom we know we have to speak directly and personally and earnestly about Jesus.

"Do you love me? Feed my sheep!" But there are also sheep we are to feed who are not now in our circle of friends. They're out there wandering the streets of the cities of this world roaming the highways and hedges, discontented, lonely, troubled, guilty, angry, frustrated. They don't even know what they're looking for, but they're looking for the Kingdom of God, waiting for us to bring it to them. These sheep are easy to spot because they're lost. And if you talk to them five minutes they'll let you know they're lost.

And when they say, "I'm lost. I don't know where I am or where I'm going," you can say, in your heart, "Thank you Lord for showing me one of your sheep!" Then you start to feed them. But we can only find lost sheep and feed them if we go out to where they are. "...Go into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the maimed, the blind...the rejects. ...go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Go out ... go out into the world ... you'll find them.

And those lost sheep out there are not only easy to find, they're easy to feed. They're hungry ... they're open ... they're receptive, if only we will go out to them and start talking to them ... and listening to them, waiting our chance to feed them with the Bread of Life. One of the main reasons we find ourselves, going back to our "fishing," is that we have lost sight of those lost sheep. We have become a bit too comfortable, clubby, respectable. Somebody says we need new carpeting in our church.

What we need is a red carpet of welcome for those lost sheep! Even if their feet are dirty, even if whiskey bottles fall out of their pockets, even if they're up to their eyeballs in immorality. A fellowship of believers is not a country club, it's a Gate of Heaven. "Those are my sheep. My blood has them clean. My Spirit is here to make whole. So you go find them, feed them, bring them, welcome them, nourish them, until they are strong in me." "Do you love me?.... do you love me? do you love me?

.... feed my sheep."

PRAYER

How else, Lord Jesus, can I show my love for you, but by feeding your sheep? Enable me to hear your voice clearly, that I may speak a sustaining word to the one who is weary. Give me your heart, Lord, for your sheep.

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