

REDEEMED: PETER, PAUL, AND ME

(John 21:1-19)

(Acts 9:1-20)

Intro: Please do not answer this question out loud.

-Don't speak.

-But think.

What is the worst thing you have ever done?

-Most hurtful.

-Most horrible.

-Most shameful.

-Most immoral.

-Most ungodly.

#You have thought.

#You have said.

#You have done.

*Something you don't like to talk about.

*Something you don't want to talk about.

*Something you don't even like to think about.

-But think about this for a minute.

Now think about God's mercy and forgiveness.

-Is there anything?

#Too hurtful.

#Too horrible.

#Too shameful.

#Too immoral.

#Too ungodly.

-God cannot forgive.

#If you think your sin is too big or too bad to be forgiven.

*Maybe your God is too small.

Think about this:

-There is no sin beyond God's forgiveness.

-There is no sinner beyond God's redemption.

I. Exhibit A: Peter.

A. Peter Denied Jesus.

1. He hadn't planned on it.
 - a. In fact, he had denied the possibility.
 - b. Telling Jesus.
 - He would go to jail first.
 - He would die first.
2. But when Jesus was arrested.
 - a. When push came to shove.
 - b. When Peter was accused of being one of Jesus' followers.
3. Peter said:
 - a. Not once.
 - b. Not twice.
 - c. But three times.
 - “I don't know what you're talking about.”
 - “You must have me confused with someone else.”
 - “I've never even met the man.”
4. That's pretty serious.
 - a. Jesus had told his disciples earlier:
 - “Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”(Luke 9:26)
 - b. Peter had done a shameful thing.
 - Hurtful thing.
 - Horrible thing.

B. Yet Jesus Redeemed Him.

1. By dying on the cross for him.
 2. By appearing to him after the resurrection.
 - a. By asking him:
 - Not once.
 - Not twice.
 - But three times.
 - #“Simon son of John, do you love me?”
 - *Simon son of John.
 - +That's serious.
 - =To use a person's full name.
- Not:
#Simon.
#Peter.
-But Simon son of John.

+Like when your parents may have been mad at you.

=Not:

-“Norm.”

-“Norman.”

=But:

-“Norman Paul Dake.”

-“You get in here right now.”

=You knew it was serious.

*Do you love me?

+Not once.

+Not twice.

+But three times.

b. By telling him.

-Not once.

-Not twice.

-But three times.

#Are you getting the pattern here?

#“Feed my sheep.”

3. Peter thought he could go back to his old way of life.

a. Catching fish.

b. Peter was a fisherman.

-When Jesus appeared on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias.

#AKA The Sea of Galilee.

-Peter said:

#“I’m going fishing.”

*John 21:3.

c. Peter was a professional fisherman.

-But nowhere in any of the Gospels.

#Does Peter.

*Or any of the other disciples.

#Catch even one single fish.

*Without Jesus.

-But when Jesus is present.

#They catch so many.

*They can’t hardly handle them all.

*153 in all.

+Why 153?

=Did someone count them all?

=Some have suggested:

-153 is a triangular number.

#Sum of numbers 1-17.

*17 is the sum of 7 and 10.

+Perfect numbers.

=In the eyes of some.

- + Seven.
 - = Days in the week.
 - = Seals.
 - Revelation 6 & 8.
 - = Trumpets.
 - Revelation 8-9, 11.
- + Ten.
 - = Commandments.
 - = Plagues.
 - Exodus 7-11.
- + Perfect catch.

-153 was the total.

#Of every known species of fish.

*Perfect catch.

4. But there could be no "business as usual" after the resurrection.
 - a. Jesus had something else in mind for Peter.
 - Catching human fish.
 - Tending human sheep.
 - b. "Follow me."
 - Jesus says.
 - #Repeating the first call to discipleship.
 - *Matthew 4:19.
 - *Mark 1:17.
 - c. "Follow me."
 - Jesus says.
 - #Perhaps suggesting that Peter may yet have a chance.
 - *To die for him.
 - +John 21:18-19.
5. This is Exhibit A.
 - a. Jesus not only forgave Peter.
 - b. Jesus had important work for Peter to do.

II. Exhibit B: Paul.

A. Paul Had Blood On His Hands.

1. St. Paul.
 - a. Not always a saint.
 - b. Not always named Paul.
2. As Saul he went around.
 - a. "Breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord."
 - b. Acts 9:1.

3. Saul was a bounty hunter.
 - a. Hunting down Christians.
 - People of the Way.
 - Disciples of the Lord.
 - b. Having them arrested.
 - Putting them in jail.
 - Putting them to death.
 - c. He had started in Jerusalem.
 - When he had cleaned out Jerusalem.
 - When Christians started to flee that city.
 - d. Saul got an open-ended search warrant.
 - To continue the pursuit in Damascus.
4. What Saul was doing.
 - a. Far surpassed the horror of:
 - Columbine.
 - Virginia Tech.
 - Oklahoma City.
 - #Events.
 - #Anniversaries.
 - *That have been very much in the news this week.
 - b. It was:
 - Horrible.
 - Hurtful.
 - Shameful.
 - Ungodly.

B. Yet Jesus Redeemed Him.

1. Jesus stopped him in his tracks.
 - a. On the road to Damascus.
 - b. Knocked him on his back side.
 - c. Took his sight away.
2. Jesus said:
 - a. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
 - b. Acts 9:4.
 - To persecute the church.
 - To persecute the people of God.
 - #Is to persecute the Lord himself.
 - To hurt the church.
 - To hurt the people of God.
 - #Is to hurt the Lord himself.

3. Glorified Lord.
 - a. Sent Saul to Straight Street.
 - To get straightened out.
 - b. Sent Ananias.
 - To lay hands on Saul.
 - To give Saul the Holy Spirit.
 - To give Saul a new vision.
 - c. In effect saying:
 - “Hey, from now on, you’re on my team.”
 - “You’re going to work for me.”
4. There could be no more “business as usual” for Saul.
 - a. He had a new business.
 - b. To go to:
 - Gentiles.
 - Kings.
 - People of Israel.
 - c. To proclaim that “Jesus is the Son of God.”
 - Acts 9:20.
5. This is Exhibit B.
 1. Jesus not only forgave Saul.
 2. Jesus put him to work in the service of the church.

III. Exhibit C: You And Me.

- A. Are We So Different From Peter And Paul?
 1. We deny our Lord in our own ways.
 - a. We don’t always act like God’s people.
 - b. We don’t always speak like God’s people.
 - c. We don’t always think like God’s people.
 - One of the questions I raised.
 - #At one of our Lenten services.
 - If we were to be accused of being a follower of Jesus.
 - #Would there be enough evidence to convict us?
 2. Maybe we don’t have blood on our hands.
 - a. Sometimes we have blood in our eyes.
 - b. Sometimes we have blood on our lips.
 - c. Sometimes we have blood in our hearts.
 - Because of the vengeance we want.
 - #When we have been hurt.
 - #When:
 - *People we love.
 - *Things we value.
 - +Have been attacked.

B. Yet Jesus Redeems Us.

1. He forgives us.

- a. No matter:
 - What we've done.
 - What we've said.
 - What we've thought.
- b. You cannot be too bad to be forgiven.
 - Only too good.
 - #Truth be told.
 - *None of us is too good to be forgiven.
 - Forgiveness is for Peter, Paul, and me.
- c. Forgiveness is giving up all hope of a better past.
 - It's letting go of all of the garbage from our past.
 - #That's literally what the Greek word for forgiveness means.
 - *"Let it go."
 - #Put the garbage in the can.
 - #Put the can on the curb.
 - #Let it go.
 - Jesus is our garbage collector.
 - #Who takes all of our sin upon himself.
 - #Peter's sin.
 - #Paul's sin.
 - #Your sin.
 - #My sin.
 - #He takes it to the cross.
 - #He takes it to the grave.
 - *He buries it.
 - +That's what we do with garbage. +We bury it.
 - So that when Jesus is raised from the dead on Easter morning.
 - #Lo and behold the garbage gets left behind.
 - *Peter's garbage.
 - *Paul's garbage.
 - *Your garbage.
 - *My garbage.
 - #No longer do we have to haul it around.
 - *Stinking up the joint.
 - #We can let it go.
 - *We give up all hope of a better past.

2. Instead Jesus calls us to a better future.
 - a. "Follow me."
 - b. "Let's go fishing."
 - c. "Take care of the sheep."
 - Even the ones who have done:
 - #Most horrible things.
 - #Most hurtful things.
 - #Most shameful things.
 - #Most immoral things.
 - #Most ungodly things.

Concl: It starts here.

-At this altar.

#In bread and wine.

-Forgiveness.

-Redemption.

#For Peter, Paul, and you.

#For Peter, Paul, and me.