

sheep].” In other words, *for believers of all ages*,
✦ feed them the Word and ✦ protect them from
false teachers! Please give me the opportunity to
do such things for you – *by faithfully attending!*

- iii. ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love [φιλῆϊς] 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 [φιλῶ] you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” In other words, *my dear sheep, my precious ones!* The love Peter had for Jesus was now to flow to those who trust in Jesus!

3. **Though It will Not be Easy, Jesus Calls Peter to Follow:**

In a roundabout way Jesus told Peter how he would eventually die, *which would glorify God* – as Peter remained faithful to the very end! Then, *with everything having been taught and said* – → Do what I say – *no matter what*, → Have no doubts – *you are forgiven*, → Love Me – *by feeding My precious ones* – Jesus said to Peter: ¹⁹ ...**“Follow me!”** Then, *forgiven and instructed*, Peter followed – *all the way to the end of his earthly life!*

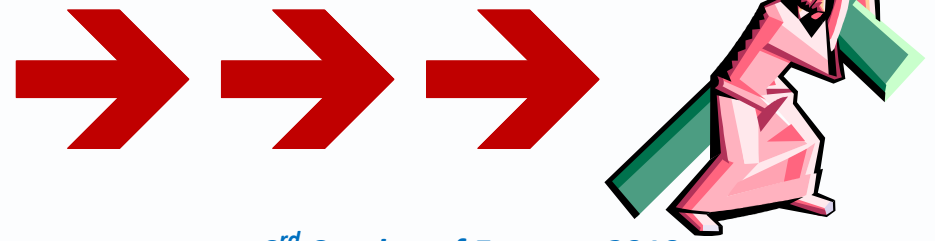
Conclusion: Jesus says to US today:

- **Do things My way** – *even when it doesn’t make sense!*
- **Be at peace** – through My finished work and our relationship with each other – *you are forgiven!*
- **Follow Me** – though life may be difficult, I will lead you all the way to heaven! If you agree, say “Yes!” Amen!

This and other sermons are available on Bethlehem’s website: www.blc7500.com
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“Forgiven in Jesus, Let Us Follow Him!”

Based on John 21:1-19 NIV



3rd Sunday of Easter – 2010
April 18 → 8:15 & 10:45

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, we all have a tendency:

- To do things our way!
- To beat ourselves up over our sins!
- To take the easy way out!

In today’s gospel reading, Jesus is calling us to the *opposite*:

- To do things *His way!*
- To be *certain of God’s forgiveness!*
- To follow Him, *even when doing so could be very difficult!*

1. **Peter Learns a Valuable Lesson:**

- a. Peter decided to go fishing, and six other disciples decided to go with him. ³ ...**So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.**

⁴ Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵ He called out to them, “Friends [literally *children*], haven't you any fish?” “No,” they answered. ⁶ He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” Peter and the others could have rejected the advice for these reasons: ✦ Now it is morning – *nighttime is best*; ✦ we are professional fishermen – *He is not*; ✦ if there aren't fish on the left side – *there won't be any on the right side!* Nevertheless, they took the advice!

- b. The Bible records the results: ⁶ ...they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then John said to Peter, ⁷ “It is the Lord!” So Peter immediately swam to the shore, while ⁸ the other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish... This is the key question: *Whose way is best – both then and today?*
- i. Lenski wrote: “...their success was absolutely sure if they would obey his command and rely only upon his Word, no matter what their own skill and reason might advise, or how foolish they might appear to the multitude.” (1415)
- ii. The Bible says: ^{NAS} **Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

2. **Peter is Assured of God's Forgiveness:**

- a. Why did Peter need assurance? Remember, he is the one who denied three times that he knew Jesus – a

terrible thing to do (Matthew 10:32-33)! After doing so, the Bible says that Peter was very sorry – he “wept bitterly (Luke 22:62).” Now Peter needed to be certain of God's forgiveness!

A note about Peter's name – It was Simon, but Jesus gave him a Christian name, Peter, *meaning rock* (Matthew 16:18)! Sometimes Peter functioned like a rock, a bold follower of Jesus; other times he functioned like Simon, a nonbeliever.

- b. Now, after three denials, Jesus gave Peter three SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT opportunities to affirm His love for and trust in Jesus his Savior. Also, in three SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WAYS, Jesus assured Peter he was forgiven by giving him pastoral responsibilities!
- i. ¹⁵ ...Jesus said..., “Simon son of John, do you truly love [$\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ – unconditional love] me more than these [My other disciples]?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love [$\phi\iota\lambda\omega$ – brotherly love] you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Following Jesus question, Simon replied by confessing that Jesus is omniscient – *all knowing*, thus the One He loves and in whom he is trusting. Then Jesus said: “Feed my lambs.” In other words, *teach the Word of God to children!* Even today, let us thank God for ✦ our Sunday School teachers, ✦ those who train them, and ✦ the parents who bring their children to be fed God's Holy Word!
- ii. ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love [$\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$] me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love [$\phi\iota\lambda\omega$] you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep [literally, *shepherd my*