

CONCERNING PETER, JOHN 21:12-14

Let us go to the twenty-first chapter of John for our spiritual thoughts for the day. And we find these beautiful words beginning in verse twelve through fourteen.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead (John 21:12-14).

You remember the story. The Disciples were, I suppose, a little discouraged on this occasion and they had gone fishing in their own will and out of their own will. Finally, then, Jesus appears to them and He asks them, "Do you have any meat?" And they answered, "No." Any time that we take our own will and way, we are not going to find any meat in God's Word or very little anywhere else when we are taking our own will and way. So Jesus said, in so many words, "You are casting your net on the wrong side of the ship. Put your nets on the right side of the ship." And if you remember the story, they got so many fishes, a whole multitude of them, they were unable to draw them. Then when Simon Peter knew it was the LORD he cast himself in to the water and rushed to meet the LORD. And when they got to the shore, they found that Jesus had prepared food for them.

Jesus said, "Come and dine." The word *dine* means the best meal. It is a superlative word that means the main meal, just the nicest one that you could hope to find. So the Principle of the lesson today is that before we can feed someone else, we must eat ourselves first. So many people want to tell somebody else how to eat, what to eat, both naturally and spiritually before they themselves have tried the menu, before they have eaten, before they have dined. So Jesus had the meal there for them and invited them.

So they came and Jesus then cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise.

What a personal relationship. Jesus did not send the angels. Here is Jesus Christ the Resurrected LORD. Here is Jesus the One Who has been made LORD and Christ. Here is Jesus the One Who has been given all power and authority in heaven and in earth. Here is Jesus Christ Who has been given the exalted position at the right hand of God the Father, becoming a servant and serving His Disciples because He wanted them to know that personal ministry and relationship of receiving food from His hand to their mouth, as it were.

So after they had dined, the Word says in verse fifteen:

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep (John 21:15-17).

After they had eaten, after they had been appreciative, after they had enjoyed, after they had partaken, after they had assimilated to some degree the food that Jesus had served to them, note the order then. Then Jesus demanded that they feed His lambs and His sheep and His sheep — three different classes of people here.

Remember Peter had bragged that he loved Jesus more than all the other Disciples that though the rest of them would forsake Him, that he never would, so Jesus had to humble Peter, if you remember, by allowing Peter to be exposed, that his mouth was bigger than his heart at that time in his life. “He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.” The word *feed* in the Greek means to pasture them. To give them fodder. To graze them. The idea here is to give them fresh pasture, small food. Then, also give them mature food. That is what fodder is. Fodder is the mature food of the plant, the corn that is grown to maturity. And even when we start out feeding people after they are saved, we need to give them a

little mature fodder, as it were, give them a vision that they can grow up in the Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ. Give them a vision of growing on in Him. But we also must remember they are lambs and we must feed them, we must pasture them with the tender small grass and the tender small plant that will help them to grow.

So after Peter had dined at this sumptuous table that the LORD had prepared, and if had been nothing but bread, had it been nothing but fish, it would had to have been a sumptuous table because His Divine Resurrected Glorious Hands prepared the table, provided the table and served the table. What an honour! What a banquet! So after Peter and the rest had partaken, then they were advised and commanded to feed God's lambs and sheep. Feed the little ones in the LORD Jesus Christ.

He continues. "He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep." I like the order here in the Greek. It is so beautiful. First of all, we just concern ourselves with sharing the Bread of Life, sharing the Divine Spiritual Truths of God. Then, the second time around, He said, "Feed my sheep," which means to tend as a shepherd. It means to supervise. It means to rule. It means to superintend and so on. And how often we get this order, beloved, out of order. And we would rather walk in as a pastor, we would rather walk in as a leader and announce that we are the Commander-in-Chief. We are the supervisor. We are the ruler before that we have fed the lambs and let them grow up into sheep. Grow up into the maturity of Jesus Christ in His surrender, in His obedience, in His humility, to where they would be able to come under supervision and rule of a spiritual shepherd.

And how can we be a spiritual shepherd if we are not willing first to eat and partake of the food that we receive personally from Jesus Christ, from His hand to our mouth, and, then,

beloved, to feed His little lambs and share that Word, the green grass, as it were, and the fodder of the Word. Then we will be in a position then to superintend, to rule, and to be an overseer to take oversight, as Peter said later on. He learned this lesson, not as lords over God's heritage.

So, then, Jesus asked him again the third time. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." He goes back and uses the first word. Go back, then, again and feed the small food and the mature food. Do not spend all your time ruling and reigning. That is only one-third of it. The other two-thirds is giving the precious divine words of Truth. So let us remember these divine Principles here as our thoughts for the day.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, we thank You again today for Your marvelous Light and Life that is hidden in Your Word. We thank You for Your divine concepts and principles. We thank You for Your Word that is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway. Bless the Light of these Principles. May we find them moving and living and ruling and reigning in our lives because we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen. Ɔ