

## SINGLE ALLIANCE

### The Story of Two Fires

#### I. Introduction

- A. Last week we looked at the story of two nets.
- B. This week we will look at the story of two fires
- C. Texts: [**John 18:15-27**], [**John 21:10-19**]

#### II. The First Fire

- A. [**John 18:15-27**]
- B. Peter boasted in his love and dedication for the Lord at the last Supper.
- C. Just a few hours later Peter "the Rock" was about to crumble.
- D. It was cold the night that Jesus was seized, so the guards made a **fire of coals** to warm themselves. Peter warmed himself at the fire. (\* Note: **Jesus was flogged early in the morning so it would have been chilly when the whip dug into His back**)
- E. At this fire he denied the Lord three times before a young servant girl and a few bystanders. He denied any connection to the Lord. Just a few hours earlier he said that he would stand up for and fight for the Lord to the death. Now he is comforting himself by a warm fire while Jesus is being interrogated and beaten.
- F. [**Luke 22:60-61**]- After Peter denied the Lord for the third time, Jesus looked at him. The Lord's eyes penetrated into his soul. Although in spite of all that Jesus was going through He turned and looked at Peter and made a connection with him. The word for "looked" in this verse comes from two words- **en-** in; **blepo-** to look. This word means to **look into**. It means a penetrating gaze. Jesus looked right into Peter's soul and Peter discovered at that moment the depth of his depravity.
- G. Peter went out and wept bitterly. Those three days were most agonizing. Peter found himself in a place of brokenness. He had to come to realization that the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love he boasted he had for the Lord with was not resident within Him after all.

#### II. The Second Fire

- A. Jesus told the women at the tomb the morning of His resurrection that He would meet Peter and the disciples in Galilee. He specifically singled out Peter to reveal his grace and love.
- B. [**1 Cor. 15:3-5**]- Paul mentions that Jesus first appeared to Peter alone and then to the rest of the disciples.
- C. [**John 21:10-19**]- The third time Jesus appeared to Peter it was to bring total restoration to Him.
- D. Jesus again performs the miracle of a great catch of fish for Peter. This time Peter's net did not break.

E. Once the fish were hauled to the shore Peter finds that the Lord had a **fire of coals** (the exact same words for the fire where Peter denied the Lord) prepared for him.

F. At the first fire of coals he denied connection to the Lord three times. The Lord prepared another fire of coals for him to re-affirm his connection to the Lord. He gives Peter three opportunities for the three times he denied the Lord.

H. Three times the Lord asks Peter if he loved Him. These three times again are in correlation to the three times he denied the Lord. He asks three questions to descend in order. These questions are also to display the change in Peter's heart and life.

1. **Do you love [agape] me MORE THAN THESE?** Jesus uses the Gr. word Agape- self-emptying, self-sacrificing love. He adds the phrase "more than these". At the last supper Peter boasted he was more committed to the Lord than all the other disciples. He showed his great pride in this statement.

a. Peter replied that he loved the Lord. He used the lesser word for love- phileo- to be fond towards. Peter no longer boasted of a great sacrificing love and no greater love than anyone else. He left off the phrase "more than these"

2. **Do you love [agape] me?** Jesus asks the same question using agape but now leaves out the extra phrase- "more than these"

a. Again Peter replied that he loved the Lord. Again he uses the lesser word phileo.

3. **Do you love [phileo] me?** Jesus now changes the Greek word for love from agape to phileo.

a. Peter replies that he loved the Lord. He again used the word phileo.

I. Peter now realized what he was capable of, and what he was not capable of. He knew what sin he was able to commit and what was not resident naturally inside himself. He could not love the Lord as he should. Peter knew that agape love was not native to his own soil, his own flesh. It was foreign to Him, but it was resident in the Lord who loved Him. Peter was to learn now what the Lord could do for, in, and through him because of His love for him.

J. After each question, the Lord gave Peter a commission which extended beyond catching men but to feeding His lambs and sheep. Before Peter was broken of self-will, pride, and legalism he was not fit to do either. His net had broken and he was only concerned about taking care of himself. The grace and love of God for Peter prepared him for the Lord's work of catching fish and feeding sheep. God's grace strengthened both his net and provided overflowing sustenance for others to feed on.

### **III. Boasting in the Lord's Love**

A. Before Peter was broken he boasted of his love for the Lord. After he was broken he now boasted in the Lord's love for Him.

B. Peter and John were often together but what took Peter a great fall to learn, John had learned before the last supper.

C. At the last supper it was John who lay on the bosom of the Lord. This signified John resting upon the love the Lord had for Him.

D. Four times in the gospel of John, John refers to himself as "**the disciple who Jesus loved**". He does not refer to himself as the disciple who loved the Lord.

E. John boasted in the Lord's love for him and he was the only disciple to follow the Lord to the cross. Peter had boasted of his great love for the Lord but was nowhere to be found in the hour of His offering. The rest of the disciples did the same and they were not there either.

F. Authentic Christianity is rooted in receiving from the Lord, not in giving to the Lord. We love because He first loved us. [1 John 4:19]

G. Boasting in and receiving the Lord's love for us will empower us to love God and others with a self-emptying and self-sacrificing love. What is poured into us will be poured out of us.

H. Jesus knew Peter did not have agape love for him then, but Jesus would supply it. Jesus told Peter his future and how he would die. He said that when he was young he dressed himself and went where he wanted to go, but when he was old, someone else would dress him and take him and stretch out his arms like Jesus arms were stretched. Jesus was relating to Peter that although he did not have agape for the Lord right now that He would be filling Peter with that very love which would empower him to lay down his life for the Lord in the coming days. Church history records that Peter was crucified upside down for the testimony and professed connection to His Savior.

I. When we start boasting and focusing on the Lord's love for us it will fill us and empower us to love Him back and love others.

#### **IV. What goes around comes around**

A. Peter had a test at the first fire and failed miserably. He failed because he trusted in Himself. He got burned at this fire.

B. The Lord restored Peter, but the final step of restoration was to face the same test in which he failed and in the same setting. The Lord provided a second fire in which he would pass this test. He passed the test because he no longer trusted in Himself but the Lord.

C. When we fail spiritual tests and get burned, God will restore us and heal us, but we many times will have to face the test again and pass it.

D. Israel failed the test in entering the Promise Land. They faced the test again. Their children had to pass the test the fathers failed. Let's pass the tests of life so that our kids don't have to be faced with passing our tests. They have their own battles to face.

E. God will give us opportunities to get right what we got wrong. This will happen when we each morning go before the Lord and commit our hearts and lives to Him and forsake self trust and our way and direction.