

The 3 Scenes of Grace

John 21:1-19

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Welcome and Intro:

- Week 20, Gospel of John Series. Thanks to Pastor for the way he's led us through this series.
- What an amazing journey it's been.
- Today, we conclude in John 21.

March 30th, 1962. A young boy by the name of Stanley Kirk Burrell was born in East Oakland, CA. His dad was a professional poker player, and his mom was a secretary. He lived in a small apartment with 8 siblings in a housing project in an under-resourced part of town.

He grew up in the shadows of the bay area, where he learned to hustle and make a dollar here and there. In fact, in one of his memoirs, he would tell about sitting outside of the Oakland Coliseum where he would sell baseballs in the parking lot that he caught from foul balls, and he would dance for passersby to make a few extra bucks.

The owner of the Oakland A's, Charlie Finley, saw the young 11 year old and hired him to come and be a clubhouse assistant and batboy.

"He had too much flair to keep him on the outside, he needed to entertain the crowd on the inside."

During his time with the A's organization, he was loved by many of the players on the team. One such man, Reggie Jackson, thought Stanley looked like "**Hammering Hank Aaron.**" One day, Reggie looked at Stanley and said "Yo, Hammer!" and the name stuck. The

other players around the clubhouse, and even around the league, referred to him as 'lil hammer.'

That young boy would one day go on to become an American Icon in the 1990's with songs that touched every teenager across the country such as "2 Legit 2 Quit," "Hammer Time."

That's right, Stanley Kirk Burrell, aka MC HAMMER, would become one of the most famous people in American pop culture throughout the mid 90's.

During his rise to the top, he accumulated approximately \$40million dollars of net worth in a short frame of time.

In 1996, as a result of over indulgence on things like cars, mansions, and even owning thoroughbred horses he found himself in \$13 million worth of debt, forcing him to file bankruptcy.

Just as quickly as he rose to the top, so too did he fall to the pit.

"I failed. My priorities were out of order. It took a long time for me to recover from the embarrassment of my failure."¹

Today, we're going to look at another man, Peter, who had experienced a few mountaintop highs, and was now sitting in the valley of failure, and we're going to see how Jesus addresses it.

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¹ Interview with MC Hammer, Entertainment News

Let me set this up for you: As you get to John 21 as the reader, you may find yourself a little perplexed. That's because the book of John feels like it should have ended in chapter 20. And you're thinking, man, is this going to be an attempt to make a "Part 2?"

It feels like "Hey, this thing is over!"

Not only has Jesus been raised from the dead, but Jesus has appeared to all the disciples.

- Everyone of them believes, except one goober: **Thomas**. If you are familiar with the bible, this is where Thomas gets tabbed with the nickname because of something dumb he said, right?
- Doubting Thomas says *"Unless I see the prints in his hand I won't believe,"*
- So Jesus, in an act of grace, appears to him, tells him to touch his nail scarred hands, and Thomas yells out "My Lord and my God!"
- Then John gives this great statement at the end, the CliffsNotes version of the entire book of John, he says:

"These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

End of story, right? RIGHT! Wrong. There is still one very important person that needs to see and believe. Peter. **And Peter's story really, is our story.** That's why John 21 is here. Let's read it together:

After this, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way:

² Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples were together.

³ "I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them.

"We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. ⁵ "Friends,"^[a] Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you?"

"No," they answered.

⁶ "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," he told them, "and you'll find some." So they did,^[a] and they were unable to haul it in because of the large number of fish. ⁷ The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea. ⁸ Since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards^[e] away), the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. ¹⁰ "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus told them. ¹¹ So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish—153 of them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.

¹² "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the

Lord. ¹³ Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time Jesus appeared^[1] to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵ When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John,^[2] do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.”

“Feed my lambs,” he told him. ¹⁶ A second time he asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.”

“Shepherd my sheep,” he told him.

¹⁷ He asked him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was grieved that he asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

“Feed my sheep,” Jesus said. ¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, when you were younger, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.” ¹⁹ He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. After saying this, he told him, “Follow me.”

Three scenes unfolding for us here in John 21, and I want to unpack them as we go:

- The Boat: Growing Restless in the Waiting
- The Campfire: The Gracious Call to Come
- The Call: A Reminder Of Our Supply and Strength

SCENE 1: The Boat: Growing Restless in the Waiting (v.1-3)

When you look back at the first few verses, it’s pretty easy to miss what’s going on here.

The disciples are not just randomly by the Sea of Galilee. They’re actually exactly where they are supposed to be. Jesus had instructed them after the resurrection to be in this place.

¹⁰ Then Jesus told them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”
Matthew 28:10

So here we are.....

² Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, Zebedee’s sons (*James and John*), and two others of his disciples were together.

These guys were in the right place. They were gathered together. WAITING. Waiting to see Jesus. **But then, Peter grows restless.**

³ “I’m going fishing,” Simon Peter said to them.

“We’re coming with you,” they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing

When Peter got the Galilee, ***I would suppose*** his hopes were high. His head (**what he was hearing was true**) was lined up with his heart (**what he WANTED to be true.**)

Remember, Peter is the guy that denied Jesus 3 times during the time of his arrest. He swore he would never be that guy, but he was that guy. It happened. And he was living with some pretty heavy regret.

“All these other guys have seen Jesus. After all that I’ve been through, after all the regret, the shame, I CAN’T WAIT TO SEE HIM.”

But he waits. He waits. And waits. And nothing. All of a sudden, hope for Peter, is deferred. So, he makes himself busy.

I tend to resonate with Peter. I don’t like wasted time. I often feel the need to fill empty space, to occupy my time with other things. Peter just wanted to go fishing, right? I get it.

Except this isn’t ‘let me go throw my line out, enjoy the day with a cold glass of sweat tea in my hand.’ This is WORK. This is what they did when Jesus called them AWAY from fishing and TO a new task. In fact, it’s the same spot! (Jesus called the first disciples, Peter and Andrew, in Matthew 4. Where were they? Sea of Galilee. What were they doing? Fishing. They were fishermen.)

But that’s not what God had commanded of him. Jesus told him to go to Galilee and ‘wait.’

Now, there are some scholars that think that Peter’s fishing excursion is sinful rebellion. I tend to disagree.

- I think it’s just occupying the time in the waiting. Distracting himself with the familiar.
- A return to the things he can control.

Waiting on God forces us to throw our dependency, our expectations, and our control completely on him.

I can move, but I need him to show up and do it.

Anyone ever been there? You’ve just been waiting on God. Waiting on the Lord. Waiting for him to move. And you’re growing antsy.

In your mind, you KNOW He can do what you need him to do. I mean, He’s God, right? He created all things by speaking it into being. He holds the world together with his righteous right hand.

And your heart is hopeful...you’ve heard and even witnessed God at work

- Your child is still running in the far country, but you’ve seen your best friend’s son/daughter come home after years of running from God
- Your spouse was diagnosed with terminal cancer, but you have a friend at church that had the same diagnosis, and God healed.
- You’ve seen marriages overcome more than what you are going through.

But nothing. Nothing YET. That NOT YET, is where it’s the hardest, but God tends to do his best work. Don’t shortcut the waiting

Lamentations 3:25 says, “The LORD is good to those who wait for him ...” The prophet Isaiah says, “Blessed are all who wait for him” (Isaiah 30:18 NIV) and, “... those who wait for me shall not be put to shame” (Isaiah 49:23 ESV).

One pastor friend of mine said it best this way “The only thing worse than waiting on God, is wishing that you had.”²

² Bryan Lorrits, Waiting on God Social Media Post, 2021“

Second Scene:

The Campfire: The Gracious Call to Come (v.9-17)

What unfolds next for Peter, and for us, should cause us all to step back in awe, and it's all wrapped up in this one word "Come."

Peter is out with the homies. They're fishing. They catch nothing. Someone from shore shouts out, as do we all when we pass someone with a line in the water...what do we say?

- "HEY! You catching anything ?
- "Nah, nawtch et!"

"Have you considered fishing on the other side of the boat?"
Who does this guy think he is?

So, they throw their nets. And BOOM, 153 fish. A massive haul.

That was the moment the waiting turned to wonder. Peter knew. He knew who that man was from the shore. There was no Question. IT WAS JESUS!

So, Peter, in a funny and random turn of events the bible tells us, puts his clothes on and jumps in the water and swims to the shore. *Was my guy fishing in his undies!?!? I think he was. HAHAHA!*

The other disciples just start rowing back to shore, Peter swims. What a great moment. And then, Jesus makes this statement to them....

21:12 "Come, have breakfast with me."

If I am Peter, I as I'm swimming back to shore, I'm probably thinking "**How is Jesus going to respond to me?**" I'm probably playing out conversations in my mind as I'm swimming.

You do that right? Play out scenarios and conversations before they happen? You get all worked up, and then most of the time, it turns out differently. That's probably Peter here.

Remember Peter, standing near a fire warming his body just days ago, is confronted 3 different times about his relationship with Jesus. And 3 different times around that fire, Denial.

And now, as he's swimming, he sees Jesus through the dawn of the new day, standing beside a campfire.

I have this picture of my dad standing on the porch with his belt in his hand after I get home from school when I get sent to I.S.S. It's about to GO DOWN!!!

Jesus replies with "come, eat with me."

Don't miss this.....

The word *come*, is actually the first "Benevolent Command"³ in Scripture.⁴ It's used in Genesis 7:1 when God tells Noah and his family to "Come into the Ark." An invitation into safety, to security, to closeness, to intimacy.

Come is also the how God chooses to close the scriptures, where he bids all the nations to "come to him, and drink the water of life freely."

Jesus says in the NT to "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

³ Thomas Constable, Dallas Theological Seminary, Gospel of John notes

⁴ This idea is derived from John Calvin's insights on Genesis 7 from his commentary. This is not a direct quote, but a summation of thought.

Peter is experiencing first hand the gracious call of God to come with your baggage. With your sin. With your failures.

Jesus is basically looking at Peter around another campfire, and He says “I know what happened around that fire a few days ago....and it’s okay. My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in your weakness.”

You see, we’re all broken people. Brokenness levels the playing field of humanity.

- We may try to mask ourselves with different things along the way
- But at the heart of humanity is a broken, sinful people in need of an outpouring of grace.

When Jesus says come, he destroys the distance between your sin and his grace to cover it.

The problem is that I don’t think Peter fully sees this playing out yet. Not yet. Look at it again.

Jesus then, around the fire, asks Peter if he loves him.⁵

Peter says, “Yes, Jesus, you know that I love you.” Jesus said “Feed my sheep.” Jesus says to Peter again, “Do you love me?” Yes, Jesus you know I love you.” Again: “Feed my sheep.” Jesus asks him a 3rd time, “Peter, do you love me.” John tells us that when Jesus asked him the 3rd time Peter got frustrated, because he’s now seeing the connection between the number of times he denied Jesus and the number of times Jesus is asking him this question about his love.

In fact, Jesus appears to set up this whole situation to remind Peter of his failure:

⁵ This section is inspired from JD Greear’s message on John 21.

He asks him the question around a fire: Peter had denied Jesus around a fire.

- “Do you love me “more than these” (the disciples)? Peter’s exact words to Jesus had been, “Even if all these denied you, I wouldn’t.” Jesus says, “Do you really love me more than these do, Peter? How well did you do on that boast?”

Why is Jesus doing this? Is this cruel? Is he trying to embarrass Peter? • No, it’s an act of grace.

- Jesus is trying to show Peter that the basis of his acceptance is not in his performance. Jesus’ love and acceptance are given as gifts based on his own finished work.

“if the gospel has one agenda in your life, it is to convince you that your performance is not the basis of your acceptance before God.”⁶

Your acceptance around the fire is an act of Grace. The distance of your sin and his grace is erased by the finished work of Jesus.

His grace invites you in. **The rooster of shame doesn’t crow for those of us in Christ, just the echo of grace for all who would come.**

Scene 3, and I’ll make this one quick:

The Conversation: A reminder of His Strength and Supply (v.19b)

After Jesus had this conversation with Peter, and extended him grace, he says to him “FOLLOW ME.”

You see, throughout this whole chapter, Jesus has been showing Peter (and the disciples) that everything they do in and of themselves in vanity.

But when they operate in his strength, greater things are ahead.

⁶ JD Greear, John 21. The Failure. Can’t Believe Series. 2012

Fishing:

- Went out...caught nothing.
- Jesus says "Cast your net over here."
- The harvest is plentiful. He is the Lord of it, not us.

Campfire: The Meal

- Jesus says "Hey, bring some of the fish and let's eat"
- Only, when they showed up, there were already fish on the fire.
- Church, *he supplies all things according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:19)

The Picture of what's ahead:

- "Stretch out your hands, and another will carry you where you do not want to go" is a picture of the death PETER would die one day for the sake of Christ
- Rather than denial, Peter would walk faithfully to the end.
- And his strength would not be in his own ability, but rather in the strength of the one who "Upholds you with his righteous right hand."

That's why Peter would not only run the race, but he would run it from this day forward FAITHFULLY. As the write of Hebrews would say, he would "fix his eyes on Jesus" (that's what grace does, right, it puts our EOJ) the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross and scorned its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the father.

CONSIDER HIM...look to him....he is our strength in the journey.

The Final Curtain Call: (LANDING THE PLANE)

- Where are you growing restless where God is asking you to rest? To wait?

- Is there something that you feel is keeping you from dining in grace with Jesus around the campfire? His call to you is 'come. The table is prepared. Feast with me. My grace is sufficient for you. My love crosses any boundary that you may perceive exists between us."
- Are you growing weary in your journey? Jesus reminds us that he supplies all that we need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Today, the call is the same as it always is. The altar is open. Come, Bring your burdens, your waiting, your weariness, before Jesus, He waits with open arms.

PRAY ---CLOSE ---