

Making the unforgivable forgivable!

John 21:1–19

Introduction:

Grace and peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Did you know that God is a God of second chances? A continual second chances for that matter.

In fact, Jesus loves so much those who trust in him, that even when they blow it big time, even when they fail him badly, utterly deny him, He doesn't deny them, or reject them, instead calls them back, calls them to come to him again, and again, to come to his merciful arms, to be forgiven and to be renewed for his purposes.

Truly Jesus is the Lord of second chances as the Gospel of John 21, the reading for this morning tells us. In these verses we see that the risen Jesus turns the unforgivable to forgivable, he restores his disciples in a good fellowship with him, through the forgiveness of their sins, and renews them in their call to follow Him.

I. Several times Jesus' disciples mess it up.

All through the Gospels we see that the disciples proved to be weak and louse at what they do, the continually messed it up. Take Peter for example, he was impetuous, yet he proved to be weak and afraid. Three times he denied Jesus when Jesus needed the most His disciples support during His trial. (Jn 18:15–18, 25–27).

And after Jesus' death, Peter was still afraid, afraid of the Jews (Jn 20:19). But when Jesus resurrected and appeared to him and the others. Peter realized that the Lord is good and merciful, when he gave Peter and the rest His peace, the peace that surpasses all understanding. And not only restores peace in them, Jesus gave them, Peter and the other disciples, the Holy Spirit and authority to remit and retain sins (Jn 20:19–23). What a change! The truth is that Faith in Christ is not just about knowledge but change, a Change of life, a change of life that bids Jesus purposes for his kingdom here on earth. A change that will produce fruits, the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of being a disciple, fruits that come because of God's grace, through the resurrected Christ, that changes lives.

Peter realized that a few days after as John recounts it in his Gospel this morning. He tells us that Peter was still a broken disciple who still needed help (Jn 21:1–4). Now, what do we do when things are not going the way we expect? We go to the things we are used to. In this case Peter went fishing, perhaps to kill time, or perhaps to sort through what had happened recently, or simply that life has to continue, one way or another. The fact is that he and his companions went to do what they where pros at, fishing. And even there, even when they where professionals at what they were doing, still needed help. John says that they were fishing all night but caught nothing. Those who fish, know the feeling of not catching anything on a fishing trip, now imagine these men who where professionals, this was indeed a lousy fishing trip. But life has to continue, one way or another. Yet in that process, in the lousy outcomes of our lives, Jesus still comes and shines over us his mercy, his love, and his miracle!

Now, isn't that what happens with us too? The text shows us a picture of what happens when we make our way without Jesus. When we go our own ways, in the experience and reason of our wisdom, we will fail, we will have a continue "lousy fishing night".

We know how that goes. We've seen friends and family members going through life without a clue as to what's important. They make a lot of money and think they're happy, they dedicate their lives to have fun, the kind that makes their heart glad, people follow their own reason, their own heroes, their own strength. They pretend life is satisfying. But we have seen how some ended up, and probably can visualize how they are going to end up. And we do the same, let it be known that we might end up in the same way too. Let's face it, we who are his disciples, do things that betray our faith or deny Jesus. Do things in our ways and reason. We do things without considering God's will. We chase our toys, our good times, our next raises with real eagerness, yes we hear God's words, but, maybe we go through the motions, and answer God's call with indifference.

The Good News is that the Lord doesn't leave us on our own. For even despite the attitude of His disciples, the risen Lord in His mercy appears to Peter and with those who were with him that day. There's some unfinished business the Lord needs to take care of, and so He comes to the disciples again.

II. Jesus always comes to fellowship with his poor disciples.

This time the Lord helps Peter and the rest catch fish and lots of them, and more (vs 5–11). Jesus turns their lousy night of fishing, into a productive mission, that prompts the disciples to follow the words of the risen Lord, whom they at first do not recognize. The point is not so much the abundance of the fish, but the words Jesus spoke. And that was a good lesson Jesus taught them because soon enough they were going to be come truly fishers of men. And as such their mission was going to bear fruit only with and when the Lord blesses their efforts.

The disciples recognized that it was Jesus, there appearing again to them. Reassures them of his peace, and Jesus renews His call to Peter and the others to catch fish, that is men, souls for God's Kingdom, the Souls for which Jesus came to rescue. In turn the disciples responded to His call, but this time recognizing that they are the workers only, and that it is Christ who will bring this "fish" "men to them.

And for that purpose is that the risen Christ restores Peter and the rest to their call (vv 12–14), but first he restores their identity as disciples, with his peace and a restored relationship with them.

His call was simple, it was just the invitation to come, and with that invitation Jesus renewed His very first call to them.

But there is more, as you see Jesus not only restores as his disciples but brings them into a more intimate relationship with him, and does that through a meal. Jesus gathers His disciples at the shore and invites them to join Him at His table as a sign of friendship and communion with the risen Lord.

III. Jesus offers and starts a fresh start (vs 15–19)!

Jesus calls and relationship with the disciples that morning is also the same call and relationship he has for each one of us this morning. And he does it individually, according to our needs, attitudes and characteristics. Let's take Peter for example. Jesus deals with him individually, not for the sake of chastising him, but for the sake of comforting him as His disciple.

Remember Peter had denied the Lord three times, so I'm sure this was bothering him. I can imagine him thinking: "after denying Jesus three times, He still wants me to follow Him. How is that possible?" For Jesus all is possible, so in turn Jesus gives

Peter the opportunity to confess his love for Him again and again and again, three times—a stunning reversal of Peter’s earlier threefold denial of Jesus.

That’s why Jesus asks him for the third time: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” (v. 17) 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 you.” Jesus said: “Feed my Sheep.”

Jesus wanted to show Peter and all of us that the love for God is seen in the way how we respond in treating our love for God’s Sheep. So when Peter announced that He loved Jesus, his call was renewed.

Like Jesus disciples of that time, today’s disciples we fail to listen to His call again and again. But just as with the disciples then, today Jesus always restores us once again and again, after we fail him time and time and time again. He restores us through His offering of forgiveness, forgiveness that comes through Absolution, the absolution that we hear every Sunday really works again and again and again.

And through the fellowship of the Lord’s Table, the Lord welcomes us back, and through the Supper we receive He reinstates us over and over again.

So today, Jesus welcomes us again and calls back to be His true disciples, and to follow Him and tend His sheep, one another as one family that belongs to the Heavenly Father.

Conclusion:

Even though we, like Peter, at times have been embarrassed, slow, or afraid to admit before others that we are disciples of Jesus, or like the other disciples we have run away from God’s call, have taking His word lightly, the Lord is never embarrassed of those whom he calls disciples, and always welcome us, bringing us back to Him. And more, He restores us through fellowship with Him.

So today, if you feel broken inside, if you have run away before, and have done contrary to God’s will, then come and hear His call. Is there anything in your life for what you feel ashamed, anything satan is using against you in your life, well today is the day to hear Jesus call.

Just as the risen Lord called His broken and fearful disciples then, He is calling all broken disciples today as well, He is calling us to come to Him, so that through His fellowship and the fellowship of His table, He is able, willing and ready to restore us, send us out and bear much fruit.

I have video that some of you have seen already but would like us to watch again that describes God restoring mercy and grace... let’s watch.

It is so good to experience God’s forgiveness, his restoring fellowship and his continual presence. Because he makes the unforgivable forgivable of that we can say with the Psalmist:

“All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, ¹² to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.” (Psalm 145:10-12)

The Lord is Indeed Good!

Amen!