
Follow: Jesus on the Shore

DARRELL DELANEY

There is a song called *One Thing Remains*, by the group Jesus Culture. The chorus talks about God's love. It says: Your love never gives up; it never runs out on me. That part of the song resonated with me when I thought about the passage in John 21. On this episode of *Groundwork*, we will talk about how God displays this love to the disciples, and specifically Peter, and how we are all deeply encouraged by this loving God who resurrected from the dead. Stay tuned.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in the final part of our four-part series talking about the post-resurrection events that happened right after Jesus rose from the dead. In the first episode, we talked about Mary's witness, and the other women who went back and told the disciples that Jesus was alive, and they didn't believe it...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right

DARRELL DELANEY

Even though Peter had a chance to go see; and in the second episode, we talked about the road to Emmaus and the disciples who encountered the undercover Jesus and didn't recognize him until he broke bread and gave thanks.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Then in the previous episode, we looked at the end part of John 20, which is the chapter of the resurrection, and we thought about Doubting Thomas and the things that happened involving Thomas, and so forth; and that, then, leads to this final episode of this series and the final chapter of John's gospel, which is interesting, Darrell, because at the very end of John 20, at a verse we looked at in the previous episode, it looked like John was done: Jesus did many other things I didn't write about, but what I did write is designed to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. *BOOM*. It looks like the curtain comes down on John, but wait...one more chapter...John 21.

DARRELL DELANEY

There are specific parts in this chapter where, you know, you see the disciples who catch a load of fish; we see Peter being reinstated; and we saw how we are all called to follow the Lord as disciples. We will break that down in these segments like that.

So, let's look at Chapter 21, beginning with the first set of verses: Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: ²Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

SCOTT HOEZEE

⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. ⁶He [Jesus] said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. ⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. ⁹When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

DARRELL DELANEY

¹⁰Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” ¹¹So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. So, Scott; first, can you imagine the frame of mind that they are in at this point? I mean, they had these discouraging moments, of course, because Jesus had died; but then they had seen him; the scripture says specifically, this is the third time they had seen him, so they had seen him before. I think it is kind of interesting that they go back to fishing, even after they have already seen that he is alive; but the frame of mind that they are in when they go back to this is really interesting to me, because they could be all over the place: they could be happy, they could be sad, they could be excited. They had all that happen in a short span of days.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is an odd scene in a lot of ways, Darrell. I mean, for one thing, they have seen Jesus twice and still don’t seem to know what to do. They even had the Holy Spirit breathed on them, we saw in the previous episode, in John 20; and yet, they don’t seem to know what to do. They look bored; and we are even missing a couple of disciples, right? There are a few of them that John names and two he doesn’t name, but that doesn’t quite add up to eleven yet. So, we don’t know; and then there is the other thing: Jesus is alive; he is resurrected; he is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, why is he on a beach cooking fish? I mean, doesn’t he have anything better to do as the resurrected Lord? You would think so. So, it is a funny scene when you think about it, that Jesus is here, of all places, and the disciples are here, looking bored, so they go back to what they knew...fishing; and they did what they did before. They were lousy fishermen...I mean, they are lucky Jesus called them to a different life because they could never catch anything. It is sort of a curious scene.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, in this situation, you see it says that they did not recognize it was Jesus. So, we have undercover Jesus again.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

He is on the shore; and this passage is kind of an echo, because if you think about what happened in Luke Chapter 5, this is how Jesus recruited Peter. He says: Hey, cast your net on the other side; and he does that and he has so many fish, he needs another boat to come over and help him. They are nearly sinking, and he realizes that: Oh, away from me; I am a sinful man. If he could see in the deep part of the sea, he pretty much can see in my heart; and so, it is interesting how the scripture brings this back in John 21, where Jesus says put your net on the other side, so that he could see again that this is the same kind of thing; and it is really crazy that, even though Jesus is telling him this, it is a reminder of what he has already done.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; we will see in the next segment of this program, too, a lot of this is sort of back to the beginning. So, they started out as fishermen, they started out with a miraculous catch of fish. Jesus said: I am going to make you fishers of people; but they are not there yet. They are still fishing for fish, and so forth. So, it is all very curious. It is also curious that...I don't know, if I was on a beach somewhere, Darrell, and the resurrected Jesus was sitting right there, I think I would want to go talk to him; but obviously at least one of the disciples counted all the fish first: 153 fish...who does that? Well, fishermen do that. They always want to brag about how many they caught. So, they get 153 fish...endless PhD dissertations on what that number means, by the way, but I think it just means they caught 153 fish. Jesus already had some fish and biscuits cooking, but he gets some of theirs; but indeed, Darrell, this is beautiful that maybe the disciples are not doing what they are supposed to be doing; maybe they haven't quite put all the pieces together yet; but Jesus kind of meets them where they are. He kind of figures they are going to go back to fishing because they still don't quite know what it will be to be an apostle. They are disciples, but they are not apostles yet—the sent ones. So, it is lovely that Jesus meets them where they are.

DARRELL DELANEY

And it is also interesting that he is always willing and ready to fellowship with them. This is another incident like the road to Emmaus, where he breaks bread with them; and no matter where they are in their walk with God, Jesus always seems to find a way to get into their world and encounter them where they are; and I love that because he does that with me...he does that with you. Have you ever been discouraged? He says: Come to the table. Have you ever been afraid? He says: Come to the table. If you are hurt, confused, that is when you come to the table. Jesus is willing and waiting to fellowship with us at any time; no matter what we are going through, if it is good or bad, he wants us to come. So, I love the fact that he is always ready to receive us with open arms.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and I have a sermon on this first part of the chapter. There is more to come, of course, but I love the fact that the very last thing Jesus says in this part of the story is: Come and have breakfast...you know...Hey guys; let's eat. And why is that significant? Because it is so ordinary. It is just breakfast; that is all it is; it's breakfast, and Jesus is there; and for us, too; it is just breakfast; it is just taking a walk; it is just visiting somebody in the hospital. It is ordinary stuff, but Jesus is there in the ordinary, and that is a beautiful thing. But Jesus does have a few more things to say, specifically to Peter, and we will look at that in just a moment.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, let's go right back to John Chapter 21, and pick up the action at verse 15, where we read...so, Jesus had just said come and have breakfast, so they do. So, now verse 15: When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love 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 you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he [Jesus] said to him [Peter], "Follow me!"

DARRELL DELANEY

Man, Scott; this is powerful. I was thinking about how, you know, there is a context for this passage. Peter is the outspoken one. Peter is the one who says what everyone else is thinking...

SCOTT HOEZEE

He's the rock, man; yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

He says it; he gets it right out there; he is the first to jump in head first; and so, he said to Jesus before the crucifixion: I don't care if all these other guys forsake you, I am going to be with you to the end; and Jesus says: Oh, really?! No, you are going to deny me three times before the rooster crows; and Peter was adamant against that; and so, then he ends up denying Jesus and it is probably the lowest moment of his life. This is really powerful that Jesus will come back and reinstate him; for every time he denied him, every time he asks him if he loves him.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; there is not much question that the threefold denial was met by this threefold restoration. There is something interesting going on in the Greek here, though, Darrell.

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, it is really powerful. So, for Greek, they have three different words for love: *éros* is like this passionate love that spouses have for each other. Like think Song of Solomon, that kind of love, right? Then they have *phileó*, which is the brotherly/sisterly sibling love...friendship love...you know, Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love; and then they have *agápe*, which is the God love; the unconditional, forgiving, sacrificial love...unconditional love, right? So, in the Greek, this passage becomes alive because Peter is asked: Do you love me by Jesus; and Jesus is saying: Do you *agápe* love me? And Peter is saying: Well, I messed that up. I tried that, and now all I have to offer is *phileó* love to you. So, the first two times Jesus says: Do you *agápe* me; and Peter says: I *phileó* you; and then the third one, Jesus changes it and he says: Do you *phileó* me? And meet Peter right where he is.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Though, it made Peter sad, we are told. It kind of looks like Jesus kind of came down to his level...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But Jesus still says: You gotta feed my sheep. You know, I will meet you where you are; you are going to grow; you are going to mature; you are going to glorify me in your death; I am going to meet you where you are. Interestingly, Darrell, the Bible commentator Frederick Dale Bruner is a friend of mine and a colleague of mine. He and I agree on almost everything except this. He doesn't think, and a lot of Greek scholars think that there is nothing to this alteration of *agápe* with *phileó*; and my colleague Gary Burge, who is on the faculty of Calvin Seminary, formerly at Wheaton for a long time, he doesn't think there is anything to this either, because, they say, there is some evidence that *agápe* was overcoming *phileó* as the standard Greek word for love, so there is nothing to this. I don't buy it because it is so obvious that there is this alteration going on here, and why else would Peter be sad the third time when Jesus switches? So, I think John is signaling something here...all due respect to my colleagues, who are smarter than me and know more than me...but I still think there is something to this, that Peter cannot quite dare to bet the farm again because he messed up so badly before; but the great thing is, Darrell, every time Jesus still gives him something to do: Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep, where you are; what you have now is enough, and I will grow the rest in you as time goes on.

DARRELL DELANEY

It also happened in Luke*, where Jesus says: Hey, Satan has asked for you to sift you as wheat; and he says: But when you get back, strengthen your brothers. So, even though this sifting process is actually part of Peter's trial of faithfulness, Jesus already has an assignment for him afterwards; and even with this, you see that Jesus is predicting how the kind of death that Peter will have. So, he is already past the denials; he is already past the forsaking part; he is already talking about this is how you are going to live for me, this is how you are going to die for me. I love a God who is willing to condescend to our level and say: You don't have all that? That's fine. What *do* you have? Let's work with that. Let's start right where you are.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; and you know, I mentioned the scene on the beach is so unusual. Why is Jesus there and so forth; and there are some comic parts of this story, I think, too. So, Peter had taken off a good bit of his clothing because, you know, hard work to do, fishing, and sweaty work; but when John identifies Jesus on the shore, Peter swims ashore. He is so eager, but first he got dressed again. It is like, Peter; you don't put your clothes on and *then* jump in the water. Most people do it the other way around; but he was so excited that he wasn't even thinking straight. So, he got dressed then jumped in the water. So, in this scene, I think it is kind of funny that I am just picturing Peter sitting there in this soggy robe, you know, and these soggy clothes that are still plop-plopping into the sand because he did that foolish thing in his enthusiasm. That just sort of adds to the preciousness of this scene, I think; just ordinary Peter, who does foolish things. Jesus renamed him from Simon to Petros—the Rock—and yet, the rock crumbled...turned out to have feet of clay at the end; and yet, there is all this love that Jesus is beaming into Peter here: You are restored; you've got work to do; maybe you don't feel like you're the strongest disciple anymore, but you are going to be by *my* power at work in you.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and Jesus also hinted, like I said earlier, of how Peter would become a martyr for him; and so, Peter...you know, he would have a purpose serving the Lord after the moments of what he felt like were failures; and I am so glad that we serve a God who continues to work with us even after our mistakes and failures; that he is in the long game; he is in the perseverance; he is in the preservation of his saints; he is in the sanctification that comes progressively; and that, even though we are not all there yet, we are on our way, and God is there helping us; because he knows how Peter is going to turn out. Peter also knows, and he learned a lesson. To demonstrate faithfulness doesn't need to come from his own strength...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

His own will; it needs to come from God's power to sustain him; and I think that is the power he took into Pentecost with him when three thousand came to be in the Church. That came from the power of God through him, and not his own ability.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; if it was up to Peter only, and his own motivation, if it was up to Scott Hoezee only, and Scott's own motivation, we don't go anywhere; we fail like Peter did; but when God is at work in us, when the Holy Spirit comes out... We are not quite sure when this incident took place...how many days it is until Pentecost yet; but within a couple of weeks, let's say, probably, it is going to be Pentecost. Ten days after Jesus ascends back to the Father, Pentecost comes, and Peter preaches such a powerful sermon...Peter... Three thousand people come to the faith. I don't know about you, but my preaching doesn't usually work quite that well; but for Peter, three thousand people in a day because of Peter, or all people. That is amazing.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is, Scott. Coming up next, we want to talk about how we are to live as disciples in the light of the resurrection of our Savior, as we wrap up this series. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Darrell, we are now coming to the very, very end of John Chapter 21. We have seen the breakfast on the beach and the miraculous catch of fish. We just saw what kind of looks like a one-on-one encounter with Jesus and Peter, where Jesus restores Peter. Peter denied Jesus three times; so three times Jesus restores Peter and says: You've got work to do: tend my lambs, feed my sheep; and now, we are coming to the very, very end of it.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, at the end of many of these episodes, Scott, you know this, that we come to this so-what moment, where we are kind of tying these into our everyday lives, what we learned. So, let's think about this as we finish the chapter with the rest of these verses and find some practical applications in light of this. So, let's look at John 21, beginning at verse 20: Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, there it is. Interesting passage; verse 23 says a rumor spread that John would not die, but Jesus didn't say that. Interestingly, Frederick Dale Bruner...I mentioned him in the previous segment...has written a great commentary on the book of John, and he notes that throughout a lot of John there is this...so, the disciple whom Jesus loved...the beloved disciple...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Most people think that is John. The person writing this gospel, that is kind of his signature. He does never directly say: Hey, that's me...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But pretty sure; but throughout the gospel there is this subtle, little competition between Peter and John; and it is kind of tongue-in-cheek, I think, for John to write about it because he loved Peter and Peter loved him; but even in the previous chapter they have this footrace to the tomb, but John makes sure to say that: I got there first—I beat him—I got there first. And now, Jesus has just restored Peter. Peter sees John trailing behind them: What about him? It is like, Peter, what are you thinking? You know; you've got one duty, and it was just spoken [by] Jesus to you: Follow me. Don't worry about him. You follow me.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is interesting how sometimes we can get caught up in what other people are doing or not doing in their walk with Christ. I mean, I believe that even though this is an individualistic faith, Scott, I still think that we need to mind our own business and actually obey the call that has been given to us as disciples. I think Peter was told that, yes, you need to focus...focus on what I have told you; you follow me; I will deal with whether he lives or not; I want you to do what I have called you to do. Let us be clear about our walk with Jesus and follow him as well. Another thing, Scott, is that the message that we have is one of a resurrected Jesus, and we need to figure out how we can get that word out and share it with a world that has very little hope at this time. I think that is really what we need to be focused on.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The main thing has to stay the main thing, and that is the message of Jesus raised from the dead, who is our very hope. You know, you had mentioned earlier in the program, Darrell, that the fact that in the first part of John 21 they are fishing and they catch a lot of fish, that flashes back to when Jesus first called them; but twice in this chapter we flash back also to the first thing Jesus said to Peter: Follow me...

DARRELL DELANEY

Follow me.

SCOTT HOEZEE

When he was still known as Simon; he hadn't been renamed Peter—the Rock—yet, right? Rocky. Follow me. So, as it was in the beginning, so is now and ever shall be: Follow me. That is the main message that we have to get; and if you follow me, then you know the story you need to tell; and as you just said, Darrell, in this world which certainly in recent years and right up to this moment, is so filled with war and rumors of war and a pandemic and partisan tensions in the United States, but also abroad that are tearing people apart, we need Jesus and his resurrection more than ever. We have a message to tell and the main thing is the main thing, and that is to tell people that; and Darrell, I think it is significant that we do it together.

DARRELL DELANEY

And that is the third thing, Scott. When you see the women who went to the tomb, they went together, and they went back to tell the disciples together that Jesus was alive. In the book of Acts, you see the disciples working together to share the gospel with the known world at the time; and I think we are all called to a communal faith. Now, we need to be the body of Christ together, because you might be strong at something that I am weak at and vice versa. We actually can help each other; and I believe that if we could do that, then the fulfilment of John 17, where Jesus prayed that all would know who he is through the unity that he calls us to, if we live in that unity...if we practice that unity by forgiving one another, by giving grace and mercy to one another...I believe that the world will begin to know that that testimony is true.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We are not called to be spiritual lone rangers, right? We are not supposed to be celebrity preachers or, you know, big guns in the church. We cannot do this without each other—without the body of Christ, Paul's beautiful image from Corinthians, you know, that the whole body has to work together, just like our physical bodies do. If you want to bend down and scratch your knee, do you know how much has to happen in your body for you to make that simple movement? A whole lot of stuff has to work together. If the Church is going to be the Church...if we are going to witness to Jesus...if we are going to, again, follow me—follow Jesus—then we need each other in the power of the Holy Spirit to get that done; and I think that is an important lesson here, too; and once again, similar to the end of John 20, John 21 concludes by saying now again: Jesus did a lot that I haven't written down; and then he has this great exaggeration: You know, if you did write down everything Jesus did, the world couldn't hold the books. There would be no room for all the books. Well, I think, actually, if you wrote down everything Jesus said and did, there would be room; but what John is saying is Jesus is bigger than the whole world. The gospel message is bigger than the whole world because it is the whole world and the whole universe that Jesus saves. So, we follow this risen Savior,

thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee. We hope you will join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit reframeministries.org for more information and to find more resources to encourage your faith. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney.

***Correction:** The audio of this program misstates the reference for this passage as Matthew. The correct reference is Luke 22:31-32.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/follow-jesus-on-the-shore>

Printed on June 3, 2026