

## **RCC in the Word** **A Meditation on** **John 21:20-22**

John 21 has long been one of my favorite chapters from the four Gospels. John alone gives us an account of this particular post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. The setting is the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, another name for the Sea of Galilee. A specific group of Jesus' closest followers were present at this post-resurrection encounter. They were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John (sons of Zebedee), and two unnamed disciples--seven in all. Peter had decided to go fishing and the others decided to join him. It was a very mundane and unassuming setting for the wonderfully healing conversation that was about to take place between Jesus and Peter. It was just like our Lord to appear to His friends in this way--no fanfare, no bling, no pomp and circumstance. Just simple. Jesus always met people right where they were, and this encounter was to be no exception.

Peter would have been understandably discouraged at this point in his life. Despite his best intentions of loyalty to his Lord, even to the point of dying for or with Him, he had blown it royally. And not just once, but three times, just like Jesus had predicted. Would we have done any better in the situation? It's one thing to say that we would die for Christ when it's in the realm of the hypothetical, but are we ready to do it right this minute? I'm guessing that Peter did about like any of us would have at least been tempted to do when suddenly thrust into this situation. It's not hard to notice that Jesus' repetitive question to Peter (do you love me...?) corresponds to, and forgives Peter's denials of Him perhaps just a couple of weeks before.

But what I would like for us to focus on is what came a little later in the conversation. Jesus had indicated (sort of in code language--vv 18&19) that Peter would die a martyr's death. At this point, Peter noticed "the disciple whom Jesus loved," whom we know to be John, following them. Peter wanted to know what Jesus' plans were for his friend John. How often have we wondered, surmised, conjectured, or speculated on what God might be doing in the life of a fellow believer? I don't mean in a good way, but more in a manner of comparing or envying God's plans for that other person.

It is all too tempting (albeit part of our human nature) for us to grow weary of our situation or set of circumstances and to envy the story that God appears to be writing in the life of another person. Jesus deals with Peter in such a sweet and tender way that is so typical of Himself. "If it is My will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? **You follow Me!**" Jesus was talking to Peter here, but there is a rich lesson in this for us all, and let's not miss it in our hurry to get to the end of the book. This temptation to look longingly and with envy into the life story of another can be very real. We can observe the life of another individual or family and what might we see? More well-behaved children? A more godly spouse? Christian parents who also happen to be excellent grandparents? A higher standard of living? More giftedness or usefulness in the kingdom of God? Extravagant vacations? More fulfilling careers? Better opportunities for children?

This list could continue on for a very long time. The point is that Jesus was calling Peter to trust Him with his life story. I believe that He also means for us to trust Him in this same way. Let's seek to trust Him more deeply to write our own story, to be content to

let Him do this, and to encourage others to do the same. Even if our story is a hard one and one that we would never ever have chosen, let's seek to trust. There's a song that was written quite a few years ago entitled "All our wounds cry 'Alleluia.'" One line of the song goes like this-- "and the tears we wept before You when we did not understand are now diamonds of redemption sparkling in the Master's hand." May the Lord graciously help us all to trust His ordering of our circumstances. "Farther along, we'll know all about it. Farther along, we'll understand why." Possibly not in this lifetime, but certainly in the glorious one to come as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:12. Grace and peace to all of you. May Jesus be praised.

-Written by Eddie Lyrene