**MIRACLE SERIES #18....."REAFFIRMING OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST".......(John 21:1-19)**

**The 3rd miracle that we covered in this study was the miracle of the big catch of fish as recorded in Luke chapter 5. Here is another miracle of a great catch of fish-153 in all!-(count your blessings!) Jesus specialized in replicating the same type of miracles (Raising the dead, healing cripples, reading minds, forgiving sins!) In these verses, Jesus is revealed as The Friend Of The Fallen. This is a side of Jesus I have become very familiar with over the last 34 years! While the focus of this chapter is on the miracle of the catch of fish by our Lord, there is also major emphasis placed on the interaction between Jesus and Peter. The REAL miracle of this chapter is the MIRACLE OF FORGIVENESS after Peter's denial!**

**(A)...PETERS FAILURE**

**(1)-The Place of Backsliding**- Peter was in the wrong place altogether. In the beginning, Peter had made his boast that he would never forsake the Lord, Luke 22:33-34. Yet, when the time came and Jesus was arrested, Peter, like all the others forsook Jesus and fled, Matt. 26:56. However verse 58 tells us that Peter decided to follow the Lord and see what happened, but that he followed Jesus "afar off." When Peter found himself surrounded by the Lord's enemies, it became hard for him to stand by his earlier boast. Now, he takes the low road and denies that he even knows the Lord! v. 69-74. **And that's the way it is with ALL backsliding! Instead of staying as close to the Lord as we should, we begin to follow Him "afar off." It may begin as simply missing a few services here and there...or you just stop praying like you should....or your bible isn't opened when you leave church!**

**(2)-** **The Pain of Backsliding** - When Peter denied the Lord that night, the Bible tells us that he went out and "wept bitterly." He knew that he had violated something very precious and sacred. He was a miserable man! So it is with every child of God who decides to walk away from the will of the Lord. You will soon realize that sin brings with it pain, suffering and misery! One has said that it destroys innocence and effectiveness. Sin has the ability to make you into a very miserable person!-(I worry about folks who DON'T feel broken about their sinful actions!!!) ***Hebrews 12:8   But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*** **The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-17. Was he happy in the pig pen when the friends and the money were gone? No! His primary thought was of how much better off he had been back in the Father's house.**

**(3)-** **The Price of Backsliding** - After Peter sinned, he felt a definite loss of fellowship, peace and joy. He knew that things were different. If you are saved, then you can expect to lose much when you walk away from the Lord. You can never lose your salvation, but you will feel like you have. (***That's why you see so many saying that they were never saved to begin with!---SIN WILL CONFUSE A SAVED PERSON into not even realizing what God has already done in their life!)*** If a believer persists in their sin and rebel against the Lord's efforts to call them home, then there is a sin unto death for the child of God, 1 John 5:16, Ill. 1 Cor. 5:5.

 (B)-**PETER'S FOOLISHNESS** (Revealed in:)

1. **His Choices** - After the resurrection, Peter must have assumed that his ministry was over. He had denied the Lord and so he decided to return to the old way of life. I am sure that he might have tried to justify it by saying, "Well, I have a family to support." **People who are out of God's will always make the wrong choices! They always base the decisions on fleshly motives rather than spiritual ones. A person's spiritual condition shows on them! It shows in the priority they place on the things of God.**

2. **His Companions** - Sin loves company!!! When Peter went back to the old life, he took others with him. These other Disciples weren't as sold out to the Lord as they should have been either! (They forsook Jesus!)

3. **The Consequences** - Peter and his followers fished all the night long and did not catch a single fish! Most of these men had been professional fishermen before they met the Lord!-but now they toil and labor all the night and produced nothing of value! ***John 15:5   I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.***

III. V. 4-17 **PETER'S FRIEND**

**Peter had wandered far away from God, but he still hadn't gone so far that the Lord had stopped loving him! Peter still had a Friend in a very high place**.

**A. V. 4-7 Jesus Affectionately Found Him** - After the sin, after the return to the old life, after a long night of failure, Jesus stepped onto the scene and in a few minutes turned everything around and made things like they ought to be. Notice three things that changed when Jesus came by:

**1. V. 5 Peter was forced to Admit his Failure to Him** - This is the first step in coming back home. There must be an acknowledgment of sin and wrong doing, 1 John 1:9. (Ill. The Prodigal recognized this also - Luke 15:18.) 2. V. 6 **Peter started to obey Jesus again** - He stopped doing things Peter's way and started doing them the Lord's way. This brought success where there had been only failure! 3. V. 7 **Peter has a renewed desire to be near the Lord** - He wasn't willing to wait for a more convenient time but went to meet the Lord immediately.

B. V. 9-14 **He Fed Him** - When Peter, and the other Disciples, reached the shore, they found that Jesus had a fire prepared with fish already cooking. They found there, with the Savior, all the things they needed after being out on that boat all night long. ***They found food, warmth and fellowship***. They found a Savior who loved them and who had all the provisions in place that they needed. Everything they lacked out on that boat, they found when they came to Jesus!

C. V. 15-17 **He Freed Him** - In these verses, we find the Lord Jesus re-commissioning Simon Peter for service. I am sure that Peter felt that his work and ministry was forever gone, but Jesus came to call him back into the fight!

IV. V. 18-19 **PETER'S FUTURE**

What would the future hold for this restored man of God? These verses tell us the answer to that question....

A. V. 18-19a **One Of Sacrifice** - **Peter would eventually give his life for the Lord who had saved him and who had restored Him. Peter's call was literally to follow Jesus unto the death. Tradition states that Peter was eventually put to death by crucifixion and that at his own request, he was crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to die like his Lord.**

B. V. 19b **One Of Service** - Peter is told that his life, from this moment forward, is to glorify the Lord! He is no longer to live for self, but in everything, he is to live for the glory of God. That is God's plan for you and me!

C. V. 19c **One Of Surrender** **- The last things Jesus does is to give Peter this command, "Follow Me!" The last call is the same as the first. When Jesus found Peter and called him the first time, this was His command. When he re-commissions Peter, He issues the same call. This tells us that the Lord hasn't changed His mind about Peter! That being said, ask yourself this question..."what does MY future hold"? We all need every day to REAFFIRM OUR LOVE FOR HIM!**