

Restoring Love (What Happens When You Fail at Love)

(John 21:1-19)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Goes...”*

Series Title: *Love Goes the Distance*

January 27th, 2019

Something to think about:

Today we look at the patient, regenerating, restorative power of God’s “agape” love for us. Even when we fail him, even when we fail at love, God’s love never fails, but is able to restore the beauty in us: His creation.

One of the best examples of this is found in the Gospel of John in the New Testament, in the very last chapter of that book.

Let’s take a look:

John 21:1-19 (NLT)

¹ Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. ² Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

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

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

⁴ At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. ⁵ He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

⁶ Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

⁷ Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. ⁸ The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. ⁹ When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

¹⁰ “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

¹² “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. ¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.”

“Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

¹⁶ Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

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

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.

¹⁸ “I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

This passage of scripture cannot be looked at without considering what happened just days before when Jesus was arrested and crucified. In order to do that, we need to take a look at Luke’s Gospel:

Luke 22:31-34 (NLT)

³¹ “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. ³² But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

³³ Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you."

³⁴ But Jesus said, "Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me."

And, just a little further in that same chapter...

Luke 22:54-62 (NLT)

⁵⁴ So they arrested [Jesus] and led him to the high priest's home. And Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ The guards lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter joined them there. ⁵⁶ A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she said, "This man was one of Jesus' followers!" ⁵⁷ But Peter denied it. "Woman," he said, "I don't even know him!" ⁵⁸ After a while someone else looked at him and said, "You must be one of them!" "No, man, I'm not!" Peter retorted. ⁵⁹ About an hour later someone else insisted, "This must be one of them, because he is a Galilean, too." ⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crows. ⁶¹ At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered that the Lord had said, "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me." ⁶² And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

Peter failed to love Jesus the way Jesus loved him, but what was Jesus' response at Peter's failure? He gave him the opportunity for restoration. And that's the point today...

Key Point: "God's love is restorative and regenerative."

There are two things to consider in this passage that will go a long way in our understanding of how God's love restores and regenerates?

1. Agape love vs. Phileo love.

Have you ever failed to *agape* God the way He *agape(s)* you? What is your response when He pursues you and desires to restore you? Are you willing? Are you willing to allow Him to lead you out of your failures and into the calling He has for you?

2. Intellectual knowledge vs. Intimate knowledge.

Psalm 139:1-6 (NLT), ¹ O LORD, you have examined my heart and YADA everything about me. ² You YADA when I sit down or stand up. You YADA my thoughts even when I'm far away. ³ You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You YADA everything I do. ⁴ You YADA what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. ⁵ You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

Something to take home:

"Several years ago, an angry man rushed through the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam until he reached Rembrandt's famous painting 'Nightwatch.' Then he took out a knife and slashed it repeatedly before he could be stopped. A short time later, a distraught, hostile man slipped into St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome with a hammer and began to smash Michelangelo's beautiful sculpture 'The Pieta.' Two cherished works of art were severely damaged. But, what did officials do? Throw them out and forget about them? Absolutely not! Using the best experts, who worked with the utmost care and precision, they made every effort to restore the treasures.

"By His sovereign grace, God can bring good out of our failures, and even out of our sins. J. Stuart Holden tells of an old Scottish mansion close to where he had his little summer home. The walls of one room were filled with sketches made by distinguished artists. The practice began after a pitcher of soda water was accidentally spilled on a freshly decorated wall and left an unsightly stain. At the time, a noted artist, Lord Landseer, was a guest in the house. One day when the family went out to the moors, he stayed behind. With a few masterful strokes of a piece of charcoal, that ugly spot became the outline of a beautiful waterfall, bordered by trees and wildlife. He turned that disfigured wall into one of his most successful depictions of Highland life."¹

Remember...

Key Point: "God's love is restorative and regenerative."

¹ Charles Swindoll, *The Quest for Character*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1993), 49.

NOTES:

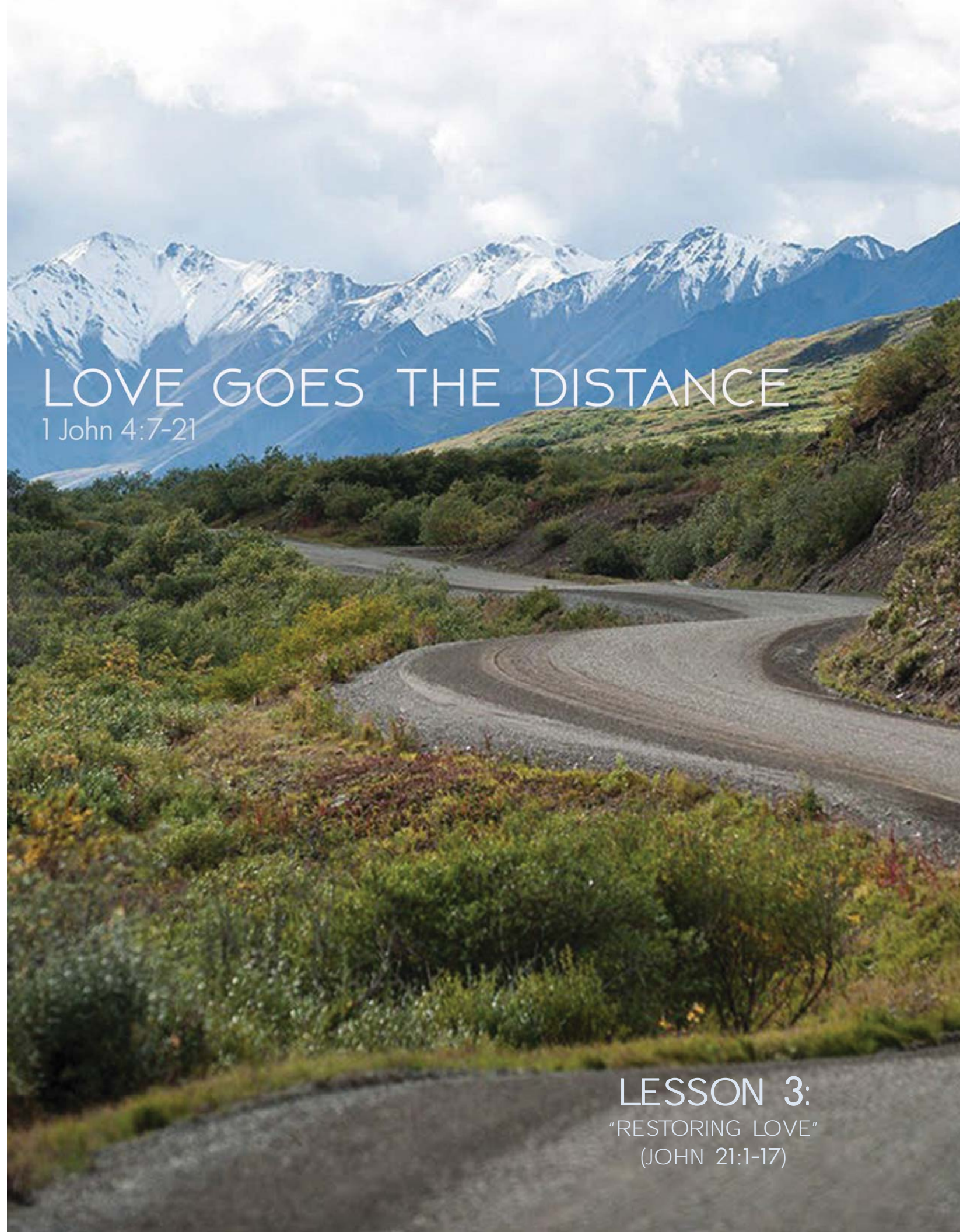


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"Develop completely committed followers of Christ who:

- Know** Christ intimately,*
- Grow** in Christ continually, and,*
- Go** for Christ daily;*

Through:
Core Families,
Community Partnerships, and
Global Connections.



LOVE GOES THE DISTANCE

1 John 4:7-21

LESSON 3:
"RESTORING LOVE"
(JOHN 21:1-17)

Restoring Love

(John 21:1-17)

Series: *Love Goes the Distance*

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What does it mean to “restore” something?
- ⇒ Have you ever had anything restored? What was the process like, and what was the end result?

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

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Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.”

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Describe what is going on in this passage of Scripture. (You will also need to reference Luke 22:31-34, 54-62).

2. *One last time, consider the following:* There are four words for love in the ancient Greek language that the New Testament is written in: 1) *Eros*—Romantic love, 2) *Phileo*—Brotherly/Friendship love, 3) *Storge*—Family love, and 4) *Agape*—Selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. How many words does the English language have for love? How does the English speaking person differentiate between the different types of love with only one word?

3. This passage is unique in the fact that between vv. 15-17, the dialogue between Jesus and Peter cannot have its full effect without understanding the original Greek language in which it was written. Read through the following with the Greek words for love and describe what is happening:

¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you **AGAPEO** me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I **PHILEO** you.”

“Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

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“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I **PHILEO** you.”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

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Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I **PHILEO** you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.”

4. Peter had a hard time admitting that he loved Jesus with an AGAPEO type of love because he knew how he had failed Jesus by denying him (Luke 22:54-62). What does Jesus ask Peter the third time? What changes?

5. When we struggle to rise to the level of love that Jesus desires, He is willing to meet us where we are. How did Jesus do this with Peter?

6. Again, Jesus is willing to meet us where we are, but He’s not willing to leave us there. Jesus desires to deliver us from our failures and restore us to His great purposes for us. Has this ever happened to you?

7. Is there anything holding you back from seeing the value God has placed within your life?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHAT DO YOU FEAR? HOW DO YOU PLAN TO OVERCOME YOUR FEARS?**
- ⇒ **SOMETIMES JESUS IS WILLING** to meet us where we are when we cannot meet Him where He is, but He does this to help us out of where we are and come to the place where He desires for us to be. This is just more evidence of God’s *agape* love for us. Have you, like Peter, been stuck in your failures? Do you believe Jesus desires to restore you and give you hope? Take some time this week to allow Jesus to speak life and love into you, and be willing to receive it and rise to the occasion.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSE:** John 21:17 and John 3:16-17.