

JESUS' LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

(John 21:1-14)

Relationship matters most in the heart of God. God has created us to enjoy a loving relationship with Him and with one another. In fact, the summary of God's law commands us to love the Lord wholeheartedly and to love others as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39; John 13:34-35). A beautiful illustration of Jesus' high regard for our love relationship with God and with others is His post-resurrection encounter with His disciples as recorded in John 21. This Gospel narrative recounts our Lord's third appearance to His disciples as the risen Christ. His interaction with them manifests two beautiful attributes of Jesus' love for His people which serves as our pattern in relating with others.

1. *Jesus' love for His people is* _____.

Instead of faithfully waiting for their risen Lord, the disciples became impatient and decided to go fishing (John 21:1-3; Matt. 26:32; 28:16; Mk. 16:7). Their decision to go fishing turned out to be a restless and fruitless endeavor for they caught nothing. Instead of reprimanding them, our Lord Jesus showed His marvelous love to His disciples by being patient with them. Instead of pouring out His frustration with His impatient disciples, Jesus asked a question to convict them and help them realize their emptiness and helplessness apart from Christ (John 21:3; 15:5). Furthermore, Jesus performed the same miracle He did when He first called His disciples to follow Him (Lk. 5:1-11). Our Lord provided a miraculous catch of fish for His weary disciples (John 21:4-8,11). What a perfect display of God's patient love! Christ's patient love is this long-suffering attitude of God which refuses to unleash His anger, but rather chooses to bless and exercise love and compassion (Psalm 103:8-11). This is the same patient love we are called to extend to others as we pursue to be like Christ (Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim. 1:16; Phil. 4:13).

2. *Jesus' love for His people is* _____.

Jesus' love for His people is not only patient. Jesus' love for us is also kind. His kindness to His disciples is manifested through His miraculous provision of fish and His preparation of breakfast for His exhausted disciples. Instead of withholding His affection and care for them, Jesus took time to serve His weary and heavy-hearted disciples (John 21:9-14). God's loving kindness, simply put, is His compassionate deeds of serving the needs of His people (Isaiah 54:8; 63:7). Moreover, Christ's invitation to His disciples to eat with Him signals His gesture of fully restoring them into a loving fellowship with Him. In the Scriptures, the sign of God's covenant kindness is a meal (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 19:9). This communion meal is a beautiful reminder of God's eternal fellowship with His people whom He has graciously forgiven in Christ and lovingly accepted to belong to His family (Titus 3:4-7). God calls us to exercise Christlike kindness to the people around us. As Jesus exhorts us in Matthew 5:16, we must "*let our light shine before men, that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven.*"
