

## Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives, Event #20f: “Do you love Me? Feed My Lambs and Shepherd My Sheep”—The Triple Commission- (John 21:15-17)

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Review of the resurrection *events* up to this point (I have narrowed down the *approximate* hour of the events based on sunset of Saturday, April 4, 33 and the sunrise of Sunday, April 5, 33; MM is Mary Magdalene):

- Event #1: Saturday, 5:45 p.m., April 4, 33: Two Marys go to “look” at tomb, Matt. 28:1.
- Event #2: Sunday, 3:00 a.m., April 5, 33: Earthquake and angel from heaven, Matt. 28:2-4.
- Event #3: Sunday, 4:00 a.m., April 5, 33: MM visits the tomb before daybreak, Jn. 20:1.
- Event #4: Sunday, 4:15 a.m.: MM reports empty tomb to John & Peter, Jn. 20:2.
- Event #5: Sunday, 4:30 a.m.: Peter and John run to the tomb, Jn. 20:3-9.
- Event #6: Sunday, 4:40 a.m.: MM returns to tomb & sees 2 angels, Jn. 20:10-13.
- Event #7: Sunday, 4:50 a.m.: MM sees the Risen Lord, Jn. 20:14-17.
- Event #8: Sunday, 5:00 a.m.: MM tells disciples who do not believe her, Jn. 20:18; Mk. 16:9-11.
- Event #9: Sunday, 6:00 a.m.: MM & other women go to tomb of Jesus, Mk. 16:1-3; Lk. 24:1-2.
- Event #10: Sunday, 6:30 a.m.: Women enter tomb; 3 angels, Mt. 28:5-7; Mk 16:4-7; Lk. 24:3-8.
- Event #11: Sunday, 7:00 a.m.: Women run in fear; Jesus meets them, Mt. 28:8-10; Mk. 16:8.
- Event #12: Sunday, 8:00 a.m.: Women went to tell disciples; soldiers report, Mat 28:11-15.
- Event #13: Sunday, 8:10 a.m.: Once again, the disciples do not believe the women, Lk. 24:9-11
- Event #14: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.: However, Peter runs to the tomb a second time, Lk. 24:12.
- Event #15: Sunday, 8:45 a.m.: Private meeting between Jesus and Peter, 1 Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:34.
- Event #16: Sunday, 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Jesus & 2 travelers to Emmaus, Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-32.
- Event #17: Sunday, 5:00 p.m. The 2 travelers tell the 11 Disciples, Mk. 16:13; Lk. 24:33-35.
- Event #18: Sunday, 5:20 p.m. Thomas leaves; Jesus appears, Lk. 24:36-49; Jn. 20:19-25.
- Event #19: 8 days after the resurrection. Jesus appears to Thomas, Mk. 16:14-18; Jn 20:26-31.
- Event #20: 2 weeks after the resurrection. Jesus appears on shore of Sea of Galilee, Jn 21:1-25.

For the purpose of public/open reinstatement, Peter’s three denials were to be displaced by his threefold acknowledge of love for Christ—a love which was to be expressed through a threefold commission to feed and to tend both the sheep and the lambs:

**John 21:15** So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Tend My lambs.**" <sup>16</sup> He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "**Shepherd My sheep.**" <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "**Tend My sheep.**"

This threefold charge to feed and to tend both the lambs and the sheep is how Peter as a reinstated apostle was to express his love for Jesus Christ. It is also the mandate for every pastor-teacher: the pastor teacher must shepherd the flock allotted to him, and he must do it eagerly, not for sordid gain, and he is to be example, not a bully:

**1 Peter 5:1** Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup> **shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;** <sup>3</sup> **nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.**

The pastor is to be living in the realities of the great truths he teaches. Like with Peter, the pastor's love for the Lord is to be reflected in feeding the lambs and shepherding the flock, remembering all the while that he is but an undershepherd and only Christ is the True Shepherd. It is not like the pastor has to work himself up for this "eagerness." As the pastor lives out the spiritual life, the Holy Spirit creates this eagerness in him to study and teach the Word of God "voluntarily."

The Lord depicts the flock from two different aspects. First, they are called "lambs/*arnion*" (John 21:15), which refers to little lambs. This emphasizes believers as weak and immature; hence, in need of the strengthening food of the Word. Second, they are called "sheep/*probation*," (vss. 16, 17) which emphasizes the proneness of adult sheep to wander mindlessly about the world. The pastor-teacher is to feed the sheep the Word of God as well as shepherd them through that Word. The job of the pastor-teacher is not to cater to the world's goals and needs with the hope of bringing more people into the church. He is to teach and shepherd—teach and preach—the Word of God to the sheep so that they might enjoy a robust spiritual life and be protected from the wiles of the wolves—Satan, his hordes, and their kosmos diabolicus.

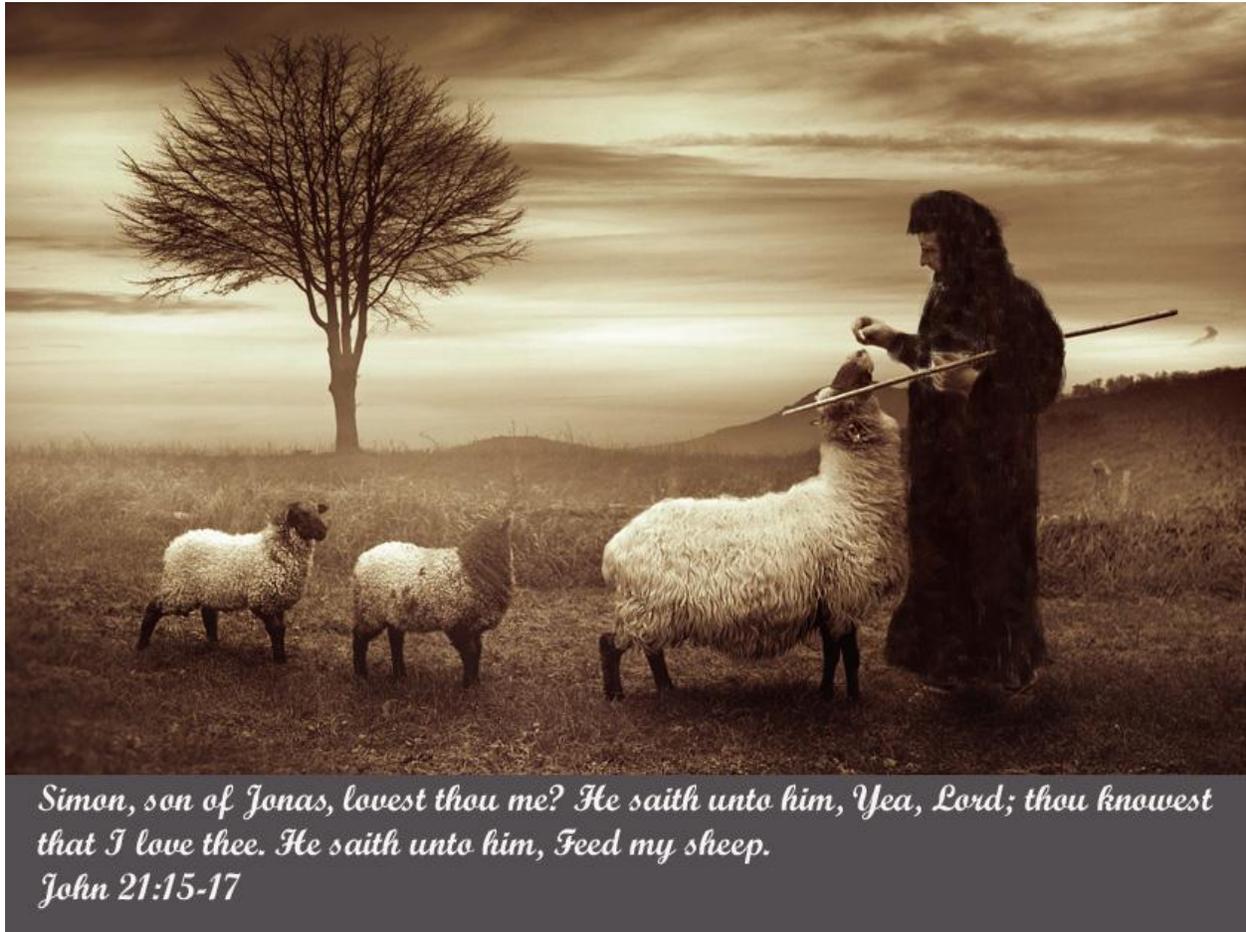
This threefold commission to Peter would have resonated with Peter on several levels. One is that Peter was a weak lamb, wandering like a sheep, but in the end protected and nourished by the Word of God from the Chief Shepherd. Now, Peter was able to profit from his own experiences and have the capacity to feed the lambs and shepherd the sheep and love them by first loving Christ. What a beautiful way to restore Peter!

"Do you love Me?" Christ must always be our first love. He is the reason we do what we do! Only when Christ is our first love can we really enjoy the love of others and of our lives. It is

when we put other loves before or above love for Christ that we end up corrupting ourselves and everything around us. Consider Adam: all it took for him to move into awful wickedness was for him to love Eve so dearly, so absolutely, so devotedly, and so above God Himself—with eyes wide open as he followed her in disobedience.

On the Glory Road,

*Pastor Don*



*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.  
John 21:15-17*