

John 21 — Jesus Rebuilt the Scene

John 21:9 (with 21:15–17 · 18:15–27) · For posting on YouTube & Facebook. Use the overview for the description; add the prompt and links wherever they fit.

VIDEO OVERVIEW (post-ready)

In John 21, the risen Jesus makes his disciples breakfast on the beach — and John names the fire: **“they saw a charcoal fire in place”** (21:9). That word for charcoal fire appears exactly twice in the whole New Testament. The other time is John 18, where Peter stands warming his hands over a charcoal fire while he denies Jesus three times. Jesus built this fire on purpose. He takes Peter back to the smell and the smoke of his worst failure — and that’s where he restores him: three denials by one fire, three **“do you love me?”** questions by the other. And notice that every question comes with a commission — feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. Jesus doesn’t just forgive Peter; he puts him back to work, and the man restored at this fire becomes the preacher of Acts 2. Jesus doesn’t pretend our failures never happened. He walks us back into them, deals with them in grace, and heals us right there.

GO DEEPER — STUDY PROMPT FOR VIEWERS

Read **John 18:15–27** and **John 21:9–17** back to back in one sitting, and circle every detail the two scenes share — the charcoal fire, the people standing around, the number three. Then watch what Peter does *not* say in 21:15–17: he never points to his track record, only to what Jesus knows — “you know that I love you.” Compare that to his boast in **John 13:37**. Finally, read **1 Peter 5:1–4**, written by Peter as an old man, and count how many ideas from this beach conversation show up in his charge to the elders. Then ask yourself: what failure have I been avoiding that Jesus wants to walk me back into and heal?

KEY PASSAGES REFERENCED

Elsewhere in John: 21:9 · 21:15–17 · 18:15–27 · 13:37–38 · 10:11–15

Other Gospels: Luke 22:31–32 · Luke 22:54–62

Rest of Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1–4 · 2 Samuel 12:1–13 · Psalm 51:12–13

RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

Jesus Restores Peter

Tabletalk — Ligonier Ministries

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/jesus-restores-peter>

Short devotional on John 21:15–17 — three confessions answering three denials, and why the “feed my sheep” charge still shapes the church’s shepherds today.

Do You Love Jesus? A Grand Finale of His Greatness

David Mathis — Desiring God

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/do-you-love-jesus>

Walks through John 21:15–25, including the charcoal fire’s echo of John 18 — how Jesus meets Peter in his shame with both tenderness and toughness.

Expository Thoughts on John — Chapter 21

J.C. Ryle — GraceGems

<https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/j21.htm>

Ryle on the whole chapter — the threefold question answering the threefold denial, and why “usefulness to others is the grand test of love.”