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John 21

1After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

Just to decipher the King's English in this first verse, it says that Jesus showed himself again to the disciples and he showed himself in this way.

Remember anytime we see the term "after these things", "Meta Tauta in Greek" we should ask ourselves, after what things. This is used to draw our attention back to a significant event. This particular event was the most astounding thing the earth had ever enjoyed since its creation. It was the raising of our Living Lord from the grave. It was the giving of power from Jesus to each of the Apostles. Thomas had seen the risen Lord and believed. It was a new day with unlimited potential.

2There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a

**fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.
They went forth, and entered into a ship
immediately; and that night they caught nothing.**

If my math is right there were seven of the disciples together at this moment; Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two others. The sense is that fishing was not what they wanted to do but it was what they knew best. They were lost without their leader Jesus Christ.

One can sense that after they had encountered the Breathed Power of Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit, their lives were changed. But what were they to do with their lives now?

Jesus breathed the power of the Holy Spirit on them in John 20:

**John 20:[22](#)And when he had said this, he
breathed on *them*, and saith unto them,
Receive ye the Holy Ghost:**

They decided to go back to their lives before this all happened, fishing. They went back to the way it was before they met Jesus, they went fishing and they caught nothing.

It says that there were seven there and we know who five of them are. Many Bible scholars believe the other two were

Andrew and Philip. They came to this conclusion by referencing another verse in John 1:44 when Andrew and Philip are first introduced to Christ. Andrew, Philip and Peter were all from Bethsaida and were undoubtedly close friends and so the scholars believe they would stay close together.

These are the 12 disciples:

1. *The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and*
2. *Andrew his brother; and*
3. *James the son of Zebedee, and*
4. *John his brother;*
5. *Philip and*
6. *Bartholomew (Nathanael);*
7. *Thomas and*

The four not present fishing:

8. **Matthew** *the tax collector;*
9. **James** *the son of Alphaeus (James the Less), and*
10. **Thaddaeus** *(Judas, son of James);*

11. ***Simon the Zealot, and***
12. ***Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed***
Him. ([Matthew 10:2-4](#))

The four that were not there are **Matthew, James**, Judas (not Iscariot), sir named **Thaddeus and Simon**.

4But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus stand on solid ground and the disciples are drifting in the sea of Tiberius. In prophetic scripture, the earth or land is can be a type and shadow of humanity “earthy”, while the water may be a type and shadow of the Holy Spirit. In a spiritual picture, Jesus is standing where He wanted His Apostles to be and that is with humanity carrying out the task He had given them, to be fishers of men. Instead, they were caught up in the presence of Holy Spirit not operating in the Power of the Holy Spirit being in the sea, fishing for fish and not men. They were unsuccessful in their endeavor because they were not doing what Jesus asked of them and they were simply wasting time even though in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

While Jesus has firmly proven His Kingship the disciples; those chosen to start the Church or body of Christ on earth are laboring away in the menial task of fishing, but with no success. They had gone back to what they knew before them met Christ.

Even though they are surrounded in a spiritual sense by the presence of the Holy Spirit they are not doing what Jesus really wants them to do. Involved in this very familiar effort of fishing, their eyes are on their fleshly work not on the Lord.

Even when they see the master they do not recognize Him. He is far off but in reality, it was the disciples who chose to move far off. Jesus never told them to go fishing, or did He?

Matthew 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

5Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?

According to Strong's Concordance, the Greek term here for meat is prosfageeon:

“Phonetic Spelling: (pros-fag'-ee-on)

Short Definition: anything eaten with bread

Definition: anything eaten with bread, especially fish or meat.”

Let's continue to think in spiritual terms; Jesus asks if they have any meat, meaning (sustenance) or spiritual food. This definition means something or anything eaten with "bread".

Jesus had already described to the disciples in a spiritual sense that His Body was "bread". So now He is asking them if they have any sustenance to go along with the Bread.

They had been given the Holy Spirit. They would be empowered to speak in other languages that many different cultures could understand at one time and place. The Bread was to give life, the meat or power of the Holy Spirit was to enable man to use that life he had been given to share the gospel or word of Truth about Jesus Christ.

John 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

The Lord was talking about having the spiritual meat for Spiritual nourishment in combination with the Bread of Life. To be eaten to be taken in to grow in the Lord, to be made alive.

They answered him, No.

Their response was that they had no meat or food to join with the bread. They were speaking in earthly terms; Jesus

is still speaking in Spiritual terms.

Remember, they had gone fishing not at the direction of the Lord but at their own effort. When we operate in our own effort or the flesh, we find we do not have the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us. He is there, but just not involved the way He wants to be and we need Him to be.

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.

The plan for the believer is to stay close to and abide in the Bread of Life the Vine; these men would be part of God's plan to actually write and live out the Words that God would give them. The very Words, which we enjoy as the Word of God, are then equated with Christ Himself, the Vine and we are the branches.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Bible reveals God and His Son through the Word. The Word then becomes to us the Bread that we are to consume, that brings life. Not to physically eat but to Spiritually consume, to study, to dig deeply into, to search for understanding and direction for our lives individually and collectively as the Body of Christ.

6And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Now Jesus whom they have not yet recognized gives them a simple instruction. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." We can make all kinds of comments about the "right" and "left" politically but that would be low hanging fruit and unworthy of your intellect.

The Spiritual sense here is again doing what Christ has said to do and the result is beyond anything human possible or understandable in the flesh.

7Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

It appears here again that the disciples like Mary at the tomb did not recognize Jesus as in appearance but when He had spoken John recognized His voice. John then identified the one on the shoreline as the Lord Jesus Christ, to Peter.

*John 10:27 **27**"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;*

Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. 8And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were

not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

(It is always best to just read and understand first the simple meaning of the words we read in the Bible. But then take time to consider if there are any Spiritual aspects of what you just read.)

In this verse, the commonsense understanding is that Peter puts on his cloak and jumps in the sea to swim to where Christ is. But consider a deeper truth to what is recorded. Not always but sometimes there is a deeper spiritual understanding.

Peter throws himself into the sea. The turbulent sea prophetically can be a type and shadow of humanity. A calm sea or water can be a type and shadow of the Power of the Holy Spirit. So, if we continue in the Spiritual sense of these verses, Peter jumps in with both feet into what seems to be a calm sea, into the power of the Holy Spirit where Jesus wants him.

Matthew 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

9As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Coals are not something that can happen quickly. It appears that the Lord was able to accomplish something here that would take a decent amount of time, including making coals, cooking fish and having bread available to complete the meal. He may have been there for some time preparing this meal.

10Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

As part of this event, there were apparently insufficient fish to feed all the disciples, so Jesus told them to bring some of what they had miraculously caught.

What would be the spiritual interpretation of this statement.

To start with how many fish had the disciples caught without Jesus' help. None

So, when following Jesus' direction, they caught an abundance of fish. The type and shadow of this is that the fish are an example of people. When we follow Jesus's direction "obedience" then the result is an abundance of fruit or the Spirit.

Matthew 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

This idea of men in this verse is clarified by the Greek word “Anthropos” where we get our term anthropology, which is the scientific study of the origin, development, and varieties of human beings and their societies, particularly so-called primitive societies.

According to Strong’s Concordance

“444 (anthrōpos) relates to both genders (male and female) as both are created in the image of God – each equally vested with individual personhood and destiny (cf. Gal 3:28). Accordingly, the Bible uses 444 (ánthrōpos) of a specific man, woman, or class (type, group) of people – i.e. mankind in general (inclusive of every man, woman and child; see also 1 Cor 11:7). (435 /anēr specifically refers to a male and 1135 /gynḗ to a female.)”

The whole point is that Jesus wants His followers to go into the world and bring in other human beings who are non-believers that they would be converted to believers to the Body of Christ. It is of course the basis of the Great Commission.

Mark 16: 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16" He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Does the net of God only catch good fish.

Matthew 13:48 47"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away....49So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Are all the fish in the great net of God good fish? No, there are always some bad caught with the good in the net. But the Angles of the Lord will sift them like the fishermen do and remove the bad fish and keep only the good fish at the end of this age on the earth. The distinction in Matthew 13 is that within those who claim to be Believers there are some deceivers or some that are deceived. We have seen many scriptures that point this out, perhaps Matthew 7 is one of the most forceful.

Matthew 7: 21Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy

name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23](#)And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Another spiritual point is that the net that God spreads out or casts cannot be broken, it is sufficient to do its job drawing in many.

12Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14This is now the **third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.**

The number 3 has some significance which we won't get into here, but just know 3 shows one of two numbers as a completeness of God. The other number that has Spiritual significance for God is 7.

Now Jesus is going to re-engage Peter at a level that Peter does not first understand. Count how many times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him?

Jesus Reinstates Peter

15So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

Jesus had named Simon, Cefas in the Greek, which means

Peter or “rock”. He had told Simon that, he, Peter would be the rock on which Jesus would build His church. So, we see that Jesus does not use this term “rock” with Simon, something that was not lost on Simon or the other disciples.

Jesus uses two different terms in these verses for “love”. The first is Agapaoe from Strong’s Concordance.

“Phonetic Spelling: (ag-ap-ah'-o)

Definition: I love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem.

properly, to prefer, to love; for the believer, preferring to "live through Christ" (1 Jn 4:9,10), i.e. embracing God's will (choosing His choices) and obeying them through His power.

As opposed to 26 agápē – properly, love which centers in moral preference. So too in secular ancient Greek, 26 (agápē) focuses on preference; likewise the verb form (25 /agapáo) in antiquity meant "to prefer" (TDNT, 7). In the NT, 26 (agápē) typically refers to divine love (= what God prefers)."

So, in this first case neither use the term agape or love that God prefers or God type love.

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

Peters’ response is that Jesus should know that he loves Jesus with “phileo” love

“Phonetic Spelling: (fil-eh'-o)

Definition: I love (of friendship), regard with affection, cherish; I kiss.

5368 *philéō* (from [5384](#) /phílos, "affectionate friendship") – properly, to show warm affection in intimate friendship, characterized by tender, heartfelt consideration and kinship.”

Note that Peter did not concur or address what Jesus actually asked. Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than these, meaning the disciples. This conversation is ostensibly taking place in front of the other disciples. The others especially John knows the answer. They know that Peter denied Jesus three times just weeks ago. They know that Peter fled, and the Bible does not indicate whether Peter was at the crucifixion. So, this question will test the integrity of Peter once again.

Peter, do you love me more than these?

Peter's response was that he loved Jesus like a brother.

He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

Jesus then tells Peter in the hearing of all, to feed my lambs.

“Phonetic Spelling: (bos'-ko)

Short Definition: I feed

Definition: I feed, pasture.”

The reference here is that there will be baby lambs, new

birth that will need to be cared for. And Jesus is telling Peter in the hearing of all the disciples that they are to “take care of” those who belong to Jesus. Shepherd, oversee, protect, feed and care for the new believers.

Just as Jesus will use two different terms for love He will also use two different terms for members of His flock: Sheep and lambs.

Arnon is the Greek word for lamb a baby sheep.

The second term is Probtion, which in the Greek means little sheep.

16He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?

Jesus uses the same term for love here agapeo but leaves out the part about “more than these”. I believe the point had been made and in Jesus’s tenderness He did not chose to open this wound further.

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Jesus had asked a slightly different question, but Peter’s answer was the same.

17He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?

Here again is the term Agapao

Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?

“Phonetic Spelling: (loo-peh'-o)

Definition: I pain, grieve, vex.

Cognate: 3076 *lypéō* (from [3077](#) /lýpē, "deep grief") – to experience deep, emotional pain (sadness), i.e. severe sorrow (grief). [3076](#) (*lypéō*) is very intense and hence even used of the pain of childbirth (see Gen 3:16, LXX). [See 3077](#) (*lypē*)”.

And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Peter declares the truth. Jesus did not need to ask Peter anything, He knew the answer before He asked it. Peter is starting to understand that Christ is all-powerful, all knowing and all loving.

This term sheep reflects the older more mature Christian as opposed to the lamb the baby Christian.

So, Christ has asked Peter who had always taken a leadership role if He loved Him. He asked three times and told Peter three times to both feed the young Christians of the future and those who are saved and mature in the Faith. It grieved Peter that Jesus would ask him three times, and

the response was not what Jesus was looking for? Jesus wanted to impart Agape love; God like love is where he wanted His disciples and future Christians to have toward other Christians.

We will remember that whenever Jesus uses the term “verily, verily” it is a clue of a very important doctrine or event that is spoken of.

Here are a few of the over 146 occurrences in the Bible when the term “verily, or verily, verily” have been used.

John 16:20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while ...

... **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into **joy**.
[//biblehub.com/john/16-20.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/16-20.htm) - 18k

John 13:38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your ...

... Jesus answered him, Will you lay down your life for my sake? **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, The cock shall not crow, till you have denied me three times. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/13-38.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/13-38.htm) - 18k

John 8:58 "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham

...

Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/8-58.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/8-58.htm) - 17k

John 6:47 Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal ...

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/6-47.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/6-47.htm) - 17k

John 16:23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very ...
... And in that day you shall ask me nothing. **Verily, verily**, I say unto you whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/16-23.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/16-23.htm) - 18k

John 13:21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit ...
... When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/13-21.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/13-21.htm) - 18k

John 6:32 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not ...
... Then Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Moses gave you that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.
[//biblehub.com/john/6-32.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/6-32.htm) - 18k

John 5:24 "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and ...
... **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is **passed from death unto life**.
[//biblehub.com/john/5-24.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/5-24.htm) - 19k

John 5:25 Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come
... **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. ...
[//biblehub.com/john/5-25.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/5-25.htm) - 18k

...

John 3:3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the

...

... Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/3-3.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/3-3.htm) - 17k

John 12:24 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls ...

... **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/12-24.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/12-24.htm) - 18k

John 6:53 Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you ...

... Then Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/6-53.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/6-53.htm) - 18k

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter

...

... Jesus answered, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/3-5.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/3-5.htm) - 18k

John 13:20 Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send ...

... **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, He that receives whomsoever I send receives me; and he that receives me receives him that sent me. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/13-20.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/13-20.htm) - 18k

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins

...

... Jesus answered them, **Verily, verily**, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin. ...

[//biblehub.com/john/8-34.htm](http://biblehub.com/john/8-34.htm) - 17k

Would you consider those examples all from the book of John very important principals to your Christian life? The same is true here.

18Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.
19This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

According to Bible scholars, Peter and his family were the kings of the fishing industry on the Sea of Galilee. Peter oversaw the business that he had started. Peter had a wife and children, and Andrew, James, and John were his partners in Capernaum fishing fleet.

Three years prior to this moment Jesus had told Peter and Andrew to “follow me” and I will make you “fishers of men” in other words able to catch men instead of fish.

Luke 5:9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11And when they had brought

their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

The wording in verses 18 and 19 are a little confusing. Jesus was reminding Peter of his life before he meets Him, Jesus. Peter was the master of his life; he could do as he pleased before he met Christ.

“When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst:”

Jesus then focuses Peter’s attention on what had transpired since their meeting and Peter’s future would not be pleasant in the flesh.

but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

Before he could come and go as he pleased but from now on, he would serve the Risen Lord and that service would bring Peter a day when he too would be capture, bound, carried to a place his flesh would not want to go and be crucified.

Peter is following behind Jesus and notices behind him, John. John in writing this book never uses his own name but references an event that will inform the reader of who this trailing disciple is.

20Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

Jesus had called out to Peter and spoke the words that had so injured Peter about whether or not he loved the Lord. John a humble and contrite servant had simply gotten up and followed along as a dutiful servant without saying a word. Peter notices John after being told what his end would be and asks Jesus what will happen to John.

21Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?

Jesus responds in this way.

22Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

Bluntly said in the English vernacular, “Mind your own business Peter”. If I chose to leave John here until I come again, what concern is that of yours?

23Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

The disciples never seem to far from controversy, so either John or Peter must have told the other disciples their

interpretation of what Jesus said of John. The one who spoke of it later to the other disciples interpreted that Jesus had said the John would not die. We can see how they might have come to that conclusion even though a stretch from what Jesus said but non the less; the rumor of John's eternal state was spread.

24This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

John declares that he is telling the truth as an eyewitness to the events that he has described in this book.

25And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

John if anyone would probably know more about Jesus' walk on earth than anyone. He was never far from His side all the way to and through the trial, beating, crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through God's wisdom, John was able to write those things that God wanted written and no more, at least not in this Gospel. John would have much more to write, and he was chosen to be the revealer of much prophecy that is yet to come.

John was the only disciple to die of old age. But he was beaten, burned with oil and left on a prison island to die, but God preserved him to bring several letters of encouragement, and the book of Revelation. John was the Pastor of the church in Ephesus.

"There is a church tradition, which says, that when John was evidently an old man in Ephesus, he had to be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples. At these meetings, he was accustomed to say no more than, "Little children, love one another!" After a time, the disciples wearied at always hearing the same words, asked, "Master, why do you always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply. "And if this alone be done, it is enough!"

The information above is compiled from the book "The Search for the Twelve Apostles" by William Steuart McBirnie Ph.D, Copyright 1973

As you know John was given the Book of Revelation to write. In that book in Chapter 2 John gives a message to Ephesus the Church that he would ultimately become the Pastor. And this was the message God gave him about Ephesus.

Revelation 2: 1Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3And hast borne,

and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

It seems quite plausible the church tradition that focuses on John's intent that they never leave their first love. Loving Christ through loving one another.

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