TITLE: Restoration

TEXT: Is. 29:18-20; Rev. 21:1-5; Col. 2:13; Jn. 6:38-40; Mt. 26:31-34 & 69-75; Jn. 21:15-17; Ro. 5:8

INTRODUCTION: A couple weeks ago we celebrated our annual Covered Bridge Festival.

The Covered Bridges of Madison County have long been a part of our local heritage. I grew up in the eastern part of Madison County in St. Charles. Our Covered bridge was the Imes Bridge. As a child in the late 50”s and early 60’s I can remember riding my bicycle with my friends out to the Imes Covered bridge about 2 miles west of town at its original location. Like most of Madison County’s covered Bridges back then, it was not in all that good of shape. There were holes in the floor, boards were missing along the sides and roof, and as I remember it had a very weathered grey look as all the paint had long ago worn off.

It, like all the covered bridges in those days was still an active bridge. You could drive through it… farmers still drove through it going from one field to another if their machinery would fit.

Especially as farm machinery started to get larger and larger the covered bridges started to become less and less popular for most farmers… Sometimes a farmer may have to drive the long way around to get from one field to another because his combine or bailer couldn’t get through the covered bridge.

And in the mid to late 1960’s there was a lot of discussion about tearing these old bridges down and replacing them with new concrete ones. Replacing them with more functional bridges for the times we were living in.

So there arose a group of people who wanted to save the covered bridges. To restore them and encouraged the building of alternate bridges around them or move them to a new location if necessary.

And over the years all of that had been done and all of the bridges have been through a restoration.

Over the years, of the seven original Bridges, all have been bypassed with more functional bridges, A few have been moved from their original locations, two have been destroyed by arsons---one rebuilt, one not, so six bridges remain today.

Most residents of Madison County today, even those who in the beginning were for just tearing them down, are glad these bridges have been restored and are today a very important part of our county heritage.

But without the efforts of restoration probably none of these bridges would be here today…

So why talk about restoration this morning? Because restoration is a central theme, in fact, it is thee central theme of Scripture.

The message of the Bible and the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is one of restoration.

**Isaiah 29:18 - 20 (NIV)** **18In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,     and out of gloom and darkness     the eyes of the blind will see.** **19Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD;     the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.** **20The ruthless will vanish,     the mockers will disappear,     and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—**

What is being talked about here is the promise of restoration.

In speaking about the coming day of the Lord Isaiah says:

**18In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,     and out of gloom and darkness     the eyes of the blind will see.**

In other words those who had been spiritually deaf will have their spiritual hearing restored and those who have been spiritually blind will have their spiritual sight restored.

It is what the Apostle John testifies to in the vision that he has been given in the last chapters of the Last book of the bible when the fulfillment of all things has been accomplished …

**Revelation 21:1 - 5 (NIV)** **1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.** **2I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.**

**3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.** **4He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”** **5He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”**

What John has just testified to here is the reverse of the curse when earth and everything in it will be restored to what it was when God created it, what it was like in the very beginning before sin entered through the disobedience of man.

If this is a description of heaven, and it is, then heaven has been here before!

In those early days in the Garden of Eden before sin Adam and Eve enjoyed this exact kind of existence!

God literally dwelt with man! Genesis chapter 2 says that God came down and walked with man and talked with man in the garden in the cool of the day.

As created man was created immortal! Death and the things that bring death didn’t exist in Gods original design. In those early days in the garden there was no mourning or crying or suffering or pain or even death. Just perfect fellowship and relationship with God in a perfect place.

Folks what we yet hope to receive is exactly what we lost in the Garden of Eden.

If we were to read Genesis chapter 2 and skip everything in-between and read Revelation chapter 21 we would think that we were reading the same text, the same narrative.

The fact of the matter is if man had never sinned then everything in-between Genesis chapter 2 and Revelation chapter 21 would not be necessary.

What is it that everything in-between those two chapters points to? What is the rest of Scripture’s ultimate purpose? Restoration! To bring us back to God and restore what was lost through sin.

Let’s just look at the ministry of Christ for a moment…

What would be the one word that we could use to describe the earthly ministry of Jesus?

Restoration!

When Jesus was here one of the chief cornerstones of His ministry was the miracles that He performed…

Jesus healed the man blind from birth and brought restoration of sight!

Jesus healed the deaf man and brought restoration of hearing!

Jesus healed the woman with a blood flow and brought restoration of health!

Jesus cast out the man a legion of demons and brought restoration of Spirit!

Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead and brought restoration of life!

Jesus life on earth was all about restoration!

Even Jesus death on the cross was a work of restoration.

The sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary resulted in an act of restoration.

Jesus was raised into the newness of resurrection life and was restored to perfect fellowship with the Father,

AND the price was paid for our sins so that we could have our fellowship with the Father restored and one day have the promise of the same resurrection and restoration as Jesus..

**Colossians 2:13 (NIV)** **13When you were dead in your sins and in the un-circumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins….**

Jesus said in:  
**John 6:38 - 40 (NIV)** **38For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.** **39And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.** **40For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

Jesus entire life and ministry was one of restoration.

We have a beautiful illustration of Jesus ministry of restoration in the life of Peter….

Peter was probably the most outspoken of Jesus disciples.

Often Peter fired from the hip when he spoke. He didn’t think, he didn’t aim, he just said whatever happened to be on his mind. Sometimes this got him into trouble. Sometime he found himself pulling his own foot out of his mouth.

**Matthew 26:31 - 34 (NIV)** **31Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:     “‘I will strike the shepherd,     and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.** **32But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”** **33Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”**

**34“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”**

Later after the arrest of Jesus in the garden, and the disciples have scattered in fear, we find Peter in the courtyard of the high priest where Jesus has been taken…

It is here that his denials of Christ take place….  
**Matthew 26:69 - 75 (NIV)** **69Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.** **70But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.** **71Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”** **72He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”** **73After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.”** **74Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.** **75Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.**

I don’t know if there is any way that we can put this in any kind of perspective where we can really grasp the full impact that this had on Peter’s life… How he must have felt when he heard the rooster crow and those chilling words of Jesus came pouring into his mind…

Peter, before the rooster crows you will disown me. And not just disown me once but disown me three times…

The only example I could think of to illustrate this and even it is not sufficient…..

Say you have a child who is born with a severe amorality, whose face has a severe deformity. Now you love them deeply, with all of your heart. You would do anything that you could for them.

You wished that you could take their deformity upon yourself so that they wouldn’t have to go through the struggles in life that you know they will go through because of it..

The cruel remarks from other children and the pathetic looks from people on the street.

Then one day you go to a school program where your child is up front with the other children. All the other children appear perfect by outward appearance and the guy next to you notices the deformed face of your child and makes some rude comment about it and ask you if you know who brought that child into the world.

And in that brief moment, out of embarrassment or shame you say I don’t know who that child is…..

And then let’s say that your wife happens to be recording the event with a video recorder and when you get home and watch it with your child that comment you made comes through for your child to hear….How would that make you feel?

Would you, like Peter, be cut to the heart by your own denial and want to go out and weep bitterly having realized that you had disowned someone that you loved so dearly and they knew it?

Peter was literally cut to the heart when he realized what he had done!

It says that Peter wept bitterly!

***Wept= klah'-yo***

**to *sob*, that is, *wail* aloud):—bewail. weep.**

**(whereas  *dak-roo'-o* rather to *shed* *tears* or *cry* silently**

Peter didn’t just cry but he wept!

And he wept bitterly!

***Bitterly= pik-ros'***

**(through the idea of *piercing*); *sharp***

**(*pungent*), that is, *acrid*—bitter.**

Peter felt like his guts where literally being ripped out of him!

It is after Jesus rises from the dead and appears for the first times in that resurrected form to his disciples that we see the true ministry of Jesus, the ministry of restoration displayed in a very dynamic and dramatic way…..

**John 21:15 - 17 (NIV) 15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”** **16Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”** **17The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.**

What just happened here between Jesus and Peter?

Jesus was restoring and bringing restoration to the life of Peter.

Peter had disowned Jesus three times and now Jesus was giving Peter three opportunities to confess his love for Him!

For as many times as Peter had publicly disowned Jesus, now he had that many opportunities to publicly confess Him. And with each confession the Lord was applying His healing balm of forgiveness to Peter’s life…

**Peter do you love me more than these? Yes Lord I love you!**

**Peter, do you truly love me?” “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you!**

**Peter, do you love me? Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”**

Peter was being healed in the depths of his spirit and walked away restored in his relationship with Jesus…

Jesus exemplified to Peter why he had come to earth in the first place and that was to bring restoration. Restoration between us and God…

Probably my favorite verse of Scripture is:

**Romans 5:8 (NIV)** **8But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**While we were still sinners Christ died for us**…..

Even when we were still ugly and deformed by sin… Even when we were living lives of opposition and hostility toward God, Jesus still came and offered Himself for us, to die for our sins, to stand condemned in our place. To take our punishment upon himself so that we wouldn’t have to!

Why? So we could be restored in our relationship with God! So that we could come boldly before the throne of God, the throne of grace, and with confidence make our request unto Him..

So that we one day can have the hope of a resurrection and once again come into that which we were created for---an eternal intimate relationship and fellowship with God…

—Alexander Maclaren

*The bone that is broken is stronger, they tell us, at the point of junction, when it heals and grows again, than it ever was before. And it may well be that a faith that has made experience of falling and restoration has learned a depth of self-distrust, a firmness of confidence in Christ, a warmth of grateful love which it would never otherwise have experienced.*

Peter fell greatly when he disowned Christ…

Yet Jesus was waiting with open arms to bring restoration to Peter’s life.

And after that restoration had taken place Peter was stronger than ever in his life of faith. He went on from that place as a dynamic witness for Christ and His kingdom..

Folks, Jesus want to do the same thing in our lives this morning. He wants to bring restoration…

That no matter what we have done or how far we might have fallen Jesus want to restore us to complete and perfect relationship and fellowship with Himself.

And if we allow him to, that which was broken will once again become strong, And not just strong but stronger than it ever was before.

This morning, is there a restoration that needs to take place in your life?

Is there an area of your life where you have disowned Christ and feel like Peter did after his betrayal?

If so, just know that Jesus wants to bring restoration to your life this morning.. Restore you to complete fellowship and relationship with Himself…

He is standing knocking at the door of your heart this morning…Will you answer and allow Him in?