

The Restorative Grace of Jesus (John 21:15-24)
That You May Believe: The Gospel of John
Southern Hills Baptist Church
February 11, 2018

WELCOME

Welcome and happy Sunday to you! Won't you join me in John 21?

The Numbers of our Study

This is our 63rd sermon from John's Gospel and the 2nd to last, as Matthew will conclude our study of John's Gospel account next week. We have been in John for over a year and a half now, 20 months to be precise.

So Bittersweet

This has been a very rich study for me, I hope you feel the same way. John does such an amazing job of giving us glimpses of the beauty, the power, the grace, the deity of Jesus, that coming to the end of a book like this is incredibly bittersweet. There is so much to rejoice over, Jesus is the Messiah, He is all that we need, yet we don't want these powerful glimpses of Jesus to end, we want to see more that our souls may continue to feast.

Transition

The spiritual feast of John's Gospel account is not yet finished, however, the deep well of the beauty of Jesus from John's account has more for us to drink from as we get to watch Jesus restore a man broken by his own sin.

INTRODUCTION

I think we can all relate to where Peter is at some level. While none of us have faced the extremes that he faced, I think **we have all tasted of the spiritual turmoil that he was wrestling through**. Peter thought himself to be something, but then revealed himself to be nothing and was left broken by this realization.

Bold Words – Though They All Fall Away

You remember Peter before the arrest and trial of Jesus, right? This was a man of bold words and bold actions. When Jesus told Peter and the other Disciples that they would soon scatter when the going got tough, Peter replied by saying,

Matthew 26:33-35

“Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” [34] Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” [35] Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

Peter was pretty confident that he knew who he was. He was pretty self-assured in his faith in Jesus, wasn't he? So much so, that he proclaimed though everyone else fall away from Jesus, he wouldn't.

Bold Actions – Fighting for Jesus

His boldness went further than this though. When in the garden and approached by the guards sent by the religious leaders Peter determined in his heart he wasn't about to let Jesus be captured by those who would do Him harm. When a soldier approached Jesus, Peter drew his sword and took a swipe at one of them, lopping off the man's ear.

Peter was confident. He was bold. **Peter very much believed he knew exactly who he was. He thought he was willing to follow Jesus anywhere, even if it required his life.**

Became the Man He Swore He Wouldn't

Then, in a moment and just as Jesus has foretold, Peter became the very man he said he would never be. As Peter watched things go from bad to worse when Jesus was being put through a rigged trial set up to veil the murder of Jesus as an act of justice, he, Peter, was confronted by others standing near by, "*Hey, aren't you one of the men who walked with Jesus?*" **Then, the man who swore loyalty to death, the man who was willing to fight just hours ago, the very same man lied and denied that he even knew Jesus. Not once, not twice, but three times.**

Identity Crisis

Peter fell and he fell hard. We are told that after Peter denied Jesus 3 times he ran out of the courtyard he was in and wept bitterly. **This wasn't just a slip up for Peter, the fact that he denied Jesus caused him to have an identity crisis. He questioned who he was. He thought he was "all in" with Jesus,** but when pressure was applied, when he clearly didn't have Jesus figured out the way he thought he did, he buckled under the weight of the moment and he bailed on Jesus.

How Did He Feel? Spiritual Turmoil

For someone who prided himself on being so loyal, on being so decidedly committed to Jesus, how do you think Peter felt after all this? This wasn't a small matter. And frankly I would have to guess **it was only compounded by the fact that Jesus didn't remain dead after being killed on that wretched cross,** but rather He rose from the dead. This had to make all of the feelings of guilt and shame even worse. Peter didn't deny some random man, He denied the perfect Son of God, the Messiah, the One who had authority over life and death. **Jesus' resurrection only revealed Jesus to be bigger and more wonderful than Peter ever imagined, making Peter's sin bigger and more grotesque than first imagined.**

What Peter Said to Himself

Do you think Peter was overcome by **a feeling of unworthiness when he saw Jesus?** I am sure Peter told himself things like, "*Jesus won't have any interest in me anymore. I failed Him on the biggest stage in His moment of need. How could I spread the message of His Kingdom?*"

Can You Relate?

I wonder if all of us can't relate to Peter and what Peter felt here. I know I can. **Have you ever fallen into sin before and questioned why God would have any interest in you at all?**

- Maybe, like Peter you found yourself denying Jesus and following an easier path in life.
- Maybe, you have found yourself back in the same old patterns of sin, over and over again.

You see yourself there and you hate it. You know what it means, but just can't give up the sin that grips you.

- Why would this God of purity love a rebel like you who runs to his sin so quickly?
- How could God ever use you to advance His Kingdom?
- What value do you bring when you are so often enslaved to sin?
- You have done too much damage to be used of God.

I've Been There

Have you ever had thoughts like this? I believe Peter did. I have certainly had these dark moments in my spiritual life. Maybe you have as well.

Hope in Jesus!

Thankfully, there is hope. There is hope for the person **who has felt the weight of their sin**. There is hope for the person **who has been confronted with the expansive chasm that exists between God's perfect holiness and our utter sinfulness**. Hope can be found in the fact that our Savior, Jesus, is full of grace that forgives and restores.

Roadmap

This morning we have the joy of watching Jesus demonstrate this restorative grace towards Peter. There is much in this passage that offers sinners like us hope. As we walk through our text we will have a chance to see...

- Jesus Graciously Restores
- Jesus Graciously Recommissions
- Jesus Prophetically Foretells of Peter's Perseverance
- Jesus' Final Call: Follow Me

OPENING PRAYER

Let's prepare to hear from God's Word this morning by opening in prayer together.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Who am I that I should approach you? Who am I that I should bring my requests to you? I am nothing. More than that, I am a rebel, I am a sinner, I have betrayed my Maker. God would you forgive me of my sin? Would you forgive all of us for the times when we have walked away from you, looking for lasting pleasure in the gifts you have given, rather than in you? God would you use your Word this morning to convince our heads and our hearts that you are a God full of grace that loves to restore, to mend, to rebuild. Cause us to rejoice over your great and glorious grace this morning. Show us your beauty that we might turn from our sin and have hearts that are fully satisfied in you. Do your work through your Word this morning.

We pray this in Jesus' name,

Amen

OUR TEXT

Let's read our passage this morning. John 21:15-24. Hear the Word of God.

John 21:15-19

[15] 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, "Feed my lambs." [16] He said to him 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, "Tend my sheep." [17] 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 everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. [18] Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." [19]

(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Isaiah 40:8

[8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

JESUS GRACIOUSLY RESTORES: "Do you love me?"

"Do you love me?" This simple question from Jesus plumbed great depths within the soul of Peter.

- It was a question meant to **confront Peter with his sin**.
- It was a question meant to **humble Peter**.
- It was a question meant to **reveal change in Peter**.
- Most importantly, it was a question meant to **restore Peter**.

The Setting: Peter's Emotional/Spiritual State

Let me remind you of the setting, where this penetrating question is posed by Jesus. We have already discussed Peter's spiritual and emotional state. He denied Jesus. Now, while Peter is thrilled to have encountered Jesus alive, while Peter is thrilled to know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, Peter is also working through a bit of an identity crisis and some major self-loathing. He thought he was a man of strong faith, but his faith proved fragile instead. He hated what he had done. Could Jesus ever really forgive him? Peter wrestled with questions like this.

Gone Fishin'

In the midst of this spiritual and emotional turmoil, Peter and the other Disciples go out fishing. They toil and struggle, but come up with nothing. Jesus calls out to them from the shore to cast their net on the other side of the boat. They do and come up with a haul so great they can't load it all. Then John recognized the man on the shore was Jesus. Peter in his excitement didn't wait for the boat to make it to shore, he leapt into the water to run to his Savior.

Breakfast

When Peter and the other Disciples reached the shore, Jesus had already prepared a fire and then cooked some of the fish that they had just caught. After they had eaten Jesus moved into a more intimate conversation with Peter, which is where we pick up.

Everyone Else is Near By

The indication that we get in verse 20 is that Jesus and Peter have walked away from the group, but the other Disciples are following behind and within earshot. Now that Peter and Jesus have a little space, Jesus begins asking Peter a series of questions, all the same question, "Do you love me?"

Agape and Phileo

Before we talk about what Jesus was doing here, let me address a common interpretation of this passage that is often taught. When you look at this exchange in the Greek you quickly notice a pattern. When Jesus asks if Peter loves Him, Jesus uses the Greek word Agape for "love." When Peter replies that Jesus knows he loves Him, Peter uses the word Phileo for "love." So Peter and Jesus are using two different words for love in this exchange. Many explain that the word "Agape" is the highest expression of love in the Greek language. It is a self-sacrificial, all in kind of love. While "Phileo" is a brotherly love, a love shared between two friends. There are many commentators and teachers who see great implications from these two words.

The Implications of Agape/Phileo

The thought process is that Jesus is asking Peter if Peter loves Him with all that he has, but **Peter can't bring himself to use the word "Agape" to describe his love for Jesus, as he just failed Jesus** by denying Him three times. He is too ashamed of his actions to see himself worthy of using the word Agape. So Peter answers with this lower form of love that he believes is more accurate considering his recent failings.

Problem 1 – Words Used Interchangeably

While I like some things about this explanation, **I think there are some problems with the exegesis and the interpretation.** Let me explain. The Greek words Agape and Phileo are often used interchangeably in John's Gospel. You can see this in John 11 when John writes of Jesus' love for Lazarus. In verse 5 John writes that Jesus Agape-loves Lazarus. In verse 36, Jesus Phileo-loves Lazarus. No difference is meant. You can see it again in John 3:35 and John 5:20 when John records that the Father loves the Son. In chapter 3, God the Father Agape-loves Jesus and in chapter 5 God the Father Phileo-loves Jesus. Again, no difference is intended. There are other examples we could look at, the point is that John uses these terms interchangeably, thus for us to interpret a difference in the meaning would be nothing more than a baseless assumption and we know what happens when we make assumptions, right?

Problem 2 – Vocab Variety

Additionally, we see John swap out similar words all the time. We even see it in this very passage in the phrases...

- Tend my lambs
- Tend my sheep
- Feed my sheep

Does John intend for us to think that lambs and sheep are different groups of people? They are different words, right? No, he doesn't. Tend to and Feed, are these different actions that Peter is to take towards the lambs/sheep of Jesus? No, they are both calls to shepherd.

What this illustrates is that John likes to switch up his vocabulary to keep things fresh and **thus we need to be careful to not read too much into these differences.**

"These" Options

So what is Jesus doing when he asks Peter, "Do you love me more than these?" The first thing we need to try to understand is what the "these" are Peter is speaking of.

- Jesus could have been asking of the fishing tackle that was laying around after their fishing trip.
- Jesus could have been asking in reference to the other Disciples that were following behind.
- Or Jesus could have been asking if Peter loved Him more than the Disciples loved Him.

More Love than the other Disciples

We don't know for sure b/c Jesus never clarifies this for us, however I think Jesus was asking if Peter's love was greater than the love of the other Disciples **as Peter had made grand claims like this before.** We have already read some of them, right? *"Though they all fall away, I never will."*

Question 1: Does Pride Still Rule Peter?

Peter had made these big claims about his love for Jesus that were clearly founded in pride. Jesus now asks this question to see if pride still rules in Peter's heart or if he has been humbled. How does Peter respond? Does he respond with a claim that his love is unrivaled or unmatched. Does he explain how his love will go further than anyone else's? **No. Peter has been humbled and thus he simply shares that he loves Jesus.** No more over the top declarations founded in self-confidence.

Question 2: Humbling Peter

Jesus then asks the question again, "Do you love me?" **The fact that Jesus asked this question again only further humbles Peter. Would Jesus have asked this question if Peter hadn't turned his back on Jesus?** Peter knows that this question is coming because his faith had proven to be fragile. This question is **forcing Peter to encounter his sin** and weakness all over again. This hurts, yet at the same time Peter has been grappling with this reality for weeks now. He knows his sin. He also knows the wonder of a risen Savior and thus his love causes him to walk through the pain of being confronted with his failures. He replies again, that he loves Jesus.

Question 3: Grieving Peter

Jesus then asks a third time, "Do you love me?" Peter is grieved and cannot bottle it up. His heart aches from his failures that have brought this line of questioning from Jesus. Peter then cries out in sadness, "Lord you know all things, you know what lives in my heart, you know I love you."

Restorative: Recreating the Denials

While this experience was painful for Peter, it was also restorative. Notice the similarities to what took place here from what we saw back in chapter 18 when Peter denied Jesus.

- **Fire** - In both settings Peter is standing before a charcoal fire. **Why do you think the detail of the kind of fire that was built was recorded?** John is intentionally trying to show us the similarities between the setting of Peter's denial and Peter's restorative affirmation.
- **Public** - In both settings Peter is in public. In Chapter 18 he is before a servant girl and others in the courtyard and in chapter 21 all the other Disciples are there to listen to this conversation taking place.
- **3 Questions** - In both settings Peter is essentially asked the same thing 3 times.

This is where the differences end however. Peter had denied Jesus 3 times in chapter 18, now he is confessing his love for Jesus.

Obliterating the Denial

Alexander Maclaren writes,

"The threefold denial needed to be obliterated by this threefold confession;... every black mark that had been scored deep on the page by that denial needed to be covered over with the gilding or bright coloring of the triple acknowledgement. And so Peter thrice having said "I know him not!" Jesus with a gracious violence forced him to say thrice, "Thou knowest that I love thee."

I believe that this was a moment in Peter's life that he probably didn't understand fully when it took place. But later, he probably saw what Jesus was doing and cherished it.

The Beauty of Jesus' Questions

What is so beautiful about this exchange is that we see a man who was broken by his sin. He very likely doubted how Jesus could love him still after what he had done. And here is Jesus, the all-powerful, risen Savior who needs nothing from anyone, and He graciously chooses to restore broken Peter. Could Jesus have just moved on to someone who was more "worthy," to someone who had not denied Him in front of others? Sure.

Jesus Loves Restoring the Broken

But Jesus loves restoring broken people.

Isaiah 42:3

[3] a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;

- Rather than forgetting those who are limping along, Jesus comes along side them to help them walk.
- He reassures the downtrodden of His faithful love.
- He encourages the discouraged with reminders of His grace.
- He patiently mends the broken with eternal promises.
- He tenderly heals those who've been hurt with His abundant mercy.

Jesus, Jesus, the sweetest name I know! Is there anyone else in all of human history as wonderful as He? None. **His grace exceeds every expectation we put upon it. His love is more perfect than we could have ever dreamt.** Take a moment and just bask in the beauty and greatness of this image of Jesus who has lovingly restored Peter, a man broken by his own sin.

Transition

The wonder and grace of Jesus doesn't stop here, however. There is more to see. Jesus doesn't only restore, He recommissions.

JESUS GRACIOUSLY RECOMMISSIONS: "Feed my sheep!"

In the midst of the questions Jesus asks Peter, Jesus also gives instruction and direction to Peter.

- Feed my lambs
- Tend my sheep
- Feed my sheep

Sheep = People of God

Sheep or lambs are common references to the people of God. **The calling that Jesus is giving Peter is to go and care for the people of God, to shepherd the people of God.** The word "Pastor" actually comes from the Latin word for "Shepherd."

Descriptive of Pastoral Call: Feed the Sheep

Thus this calling for Peter is more than just his personal calling, **it is descriptive of the work of a Pastor. And what we see in this description is that the primary calling of the Pastor is to feed the people of God with the Word of God, both in preaching and in example.** Pastors ought to feed the people of God with the same spiritual food that Jesus Himself ate of. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 4 when being tempted in the wilderness.

Matthew 4:3-4

[3] And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." [4] But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

In this moment Jesus knew what He needed was not physical strength, but spiritual strength to withstand the temptation of Satan and no bread could bring this. Where did Jesus look? What did He feast upon? The Word of God. It is only the Word of God that can strengthen us to be God's kind of people.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

It is the Word of God alone that can teach us what is right, what is wrong, how we can get right with God and how we can stay right with God. It is the Word of God that equips us to be complete people, ready for God-glorifying good works.

Look for a Pastor Who Preaches the Word

Thus, as you look for a pastor to shepherd your soul, you ought to look for a man who is striving to feed you from God's Word. **Accept no substitutes.** Look closely, **don't settle for Pastors who merely sprinkle in the Word of God** throughout their teaching, but look for men who **make the Word of God the main course.**

Preaching Through Books of the Bible

This is one of the reasons why we preach through books of the Bible verse-by-verse here at Southern Hills. We are not interested in messages that we can come up with and that we can find supporting Scripture for, **we want the Word of God to dominate our preaching.**

So this is the call that Jesus gives Peter. Guide and shepherd my sheep. Feed them. Give them my Word. Point them to me. Equip them to live for me. Give them the words that lead unto eternal life.

Great Beauty: Recommissioning

Again, one of the great beauties of what is taking place here is that Jesus is calling Peter, broken Peter, **a man who publicly denied Jesus, Jesus is calling this man to go and lead and feed His people.** I am sure Peter wondered if Jesus would ever be able to forgive him for his failure and yet we see even more than that. Jesus is recommissioning Peter and sending Peter out as one of His messengers and undershepherds.

Ever Felt Too Broken to be Used of God

Have you ever felt too broken to be used by God? I have no doubt that Peter did. I know I have at times.

- How and why would God ever want to use me after the messes I had created?
- After the selfishness I had demonstrated?
- After the lack of judgment I had shown?
- With the idolatry that has run rampant at times in my heart?
- Why would He want to use me when I have proven so unfaithful?
- Why would he trust me when I have shown ineffective so many times?
- Look at all the baggage I have.

Can you relate? Have you ever asked yourself questions like these? Again, I am quite sure Peter did, **and yet, here is Peter being recommissioned for the work of the Kingdom of God.**

Jesus Would Restore and Recommission You!

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus would do the same with you. He wants to restore you and recommission you to the Kingdom Work you have been called to. I don't know the sin you are struggling with, I don't know all of your histories, but what I do know is that our Savior is faithful to forgive and He desires to change you.

What History Haunts You? Confront It in Christ!

So what is it? What history haunts you, telling you that you are unfit for service to God? I want to encourage you to confront that sinful history this morning. Don't confront it in your own power or your own strength, but confront it in the power of Jesus. Remind yourself that, yes, you are unworthy, but your fitness to serve God isn't based on your worthiness, it is based on Jesus' worthiness.

The Story of the Gospel

The story of the Gospel isn't about wayward sinners who finally get their act together so they can serve God. The story of the Gospel is about wayward sinners who can't get it together no matter what they do and despite that Jesus loves them enough to do for them what they can't. **The relationship we have with God is one-sided.** He has done all the work. He has carried the load we couldn't. He forgives us our sin, He has none.

- It is Jesus' righteousness that makes us whole before God.
- It is Jesus' perfection that allows us to be fit for God's service.
- It is Jesus' forgiveness that purifies us.

The Grace of Peter's Fall

In many ways I believe Peter's failing in chapter 18 when He denied Jesus was a grace in his life. You see, Peter was largely controlled by pride.

- He needed to be humbled.
- He needed to see that he wasn't worthy of Jesus.
- He needed to see that his faith on his own was fragile.
- He needed to see his desperate state for Jesus.

I believe in chapter 21, **Peter is a new man.** He no longer looks to his own strength to follow Jesus. He is now so much more dependent upon Jesus for his moment-by-moment sustaining and perseverance.

Open Eyes

May the same be true of us. **May the sin that has weighed us down in the past open our eyes to our unworthiness, to how unqualified we are, to our utter and desperate need of Jesus,** that we would stop looking to ourselves and our actions to qualify us and start looking to Jesus for all we need.

- Jesus is the Gospel.
- Jesus is our hope.
- Jesus is our righteousness.
- Jesus is our worthiness.
- Jesus is our everything!

Peter has learned this and as he did, Jesus restored and recommissioned him to his Kingdom calling.

Transition

Now Jesus has more to say to Peter. Let me read it to you once more, picking back up in verse 18.

John 21:18-19

[18] Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." [19] (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

JESUS PROPHETICALLY FORETELLS OF PETER'S PERSEVERENCE

We may have no idea of what Jesus was speaking of here in these verses had John not recorded that, "This he said to show by what kind of death Peter was going to glorify God." So Jesus is telling Peter how he was going to die. Wow, that is tough news to hear, but it is also wonderful in some senses. The implication here is that Peter would die for his faith in Jesus. **So this prophetic foretelling of Peter's death is also a promise of perseverance. That is a grace.**

Peter's Death: Crucifixion

So what was Jesus communicating about Peter's death here? Well the phrase, "stretch out your hands" was a common expression that referred to crucifixion. The image that is painted here is that one day Peter would have his arms stretched out as his arms were tied to the horizontal beam of the cross that he might carry it to the crucifixion site, being led to where he didn't want to go, where he would be crucified.

History

History records for us that Peter was indeed crucified in Rome. Some oral tradition states that Peter saw himself unworthy to die in the same manner that Jesus did and thus he requested to be crucified upside down. We don't have any real historical evidence of this and many scholars doubt it, but it is an interesting account.

2 Takeaways

I think the big takeaways from these prophetic words from Jesus are that...

- **Peter Persevered.** The man who's faith was fragile and failed when the stakes rose would never deny Jesus again although the stakes for Peter, the danger he faced, would only rise. In fact, Peter would be faithful to Jesus all the way unto death. What caused such a change in Peter to go from denier to martyr? Peter had encountered the risen Lord!
- **Jesus is Omniscient.** Jesus holds all knowledge and while time is a barrier for us, it isn't for Jesus. He knows everything that has happened in human history, as well as everything that has yet to happen. He knows it all because He has written history. It is His and the way He prophetically spoke to Peter's future death only further proves this.

Transition

We have not touched on verses 20-24 yet and I want to do that before we close so let me read those to you now...

John 21:20-24

[20] Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" [21] When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" [22] Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" [23] So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" [24] This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

JESUS' FINAL CALL: FOLLOW ME

After Peter is told how he will die, Peter looks back to see John not too far behind and asks Jesus what will become of his friend John. Perhaps Peter wondered if they would all die following Jesus. Jesus replied saying, *"What if I choose to keep John alive until my return? What difference does that make to you? Your job remains unchanged. Follow me!"*

2 Observations

There are two things we need to have our eye on here...

1. Focus on God's Calling For You

First, Jesus doesn't want Peter to get caught up in the specific plans He has for each of His followers. He wants each of them to **focus on the calling they have been given**. They are to follow Jesus where ever that may lead.

Stop Wishing for what God Gave to Others

There is a good lesson here for us. **It is easy to look at what God blesses others with and wish that God's plan took our lives down similar paths.** We wish God had called us to lives of greater wealth or greater power or greater influence or fill in the blank. Jesus' message to you is, *"Stop worrying about what others have, that isn't the calling I have for you and you know what, that is fine, that is good, you have what you need, you have been given exactly what you need to be who I have called you to be. Set your eyes on following me where I have placed you."*

A Needed Reminder in a Social Media Age

We all need this message occasionally, don't we? Do you need to be reminded of that when you are scrolling through the curated images people post of their lives on FaceBook and Instagram?

- You see perfect families.
- You see disposable income.
- You see free time you don't have.
- You see vacations you haven't taken.
- You see romance expressed in ways you long for.
- You see someone with the physique that your taco intake won't allow for.

Jealousy grows so easily, but you are where you are by God's good and gracious design.

- The family you have is by God's design
- The budget you operate within is by God's design
- The job you go to each day is a gift from God to you
- The husband or wife you are married to is by God's design

Stop yearning for what others have and follow Jesus where He has placed you!

Integrity of the Gospel

The second thing I believe we are meant to see pertains to the integrity of the Gospel. After Jesus made this statement rumors started circulating that John wouldn't die until Jesus' return. That isn't what Jesus said, but it didn't stop the speculation and rumors. So John now writes to clear this rumor up. John understands the Gospel to be absolute truth and he doesn't want to see the truth of the Gospel tarnished by the silliness of this rumor.

CONCLUSION

Let me close with an encouragement from the heart of our passage.

Confronted with our Sin Daily

We are confronted daily with our sin. Some of them bigger, some of them smaller, some of old habits that won't die, some of them public for all to see, some of them hidden secrets we try to keep from the world. Like Peter, some of our sins still haunt us, they still embarrass us, they still bring us shame and they cause us to question how God could love someone who has failed so much.

- Maybe it is your temper. Your fuse is short and you find yourself exploding on people far too often.
- Maybe it is your jealous heart. You are never satisfied in life. You are always looking to what others have and what you don't.
- Perhaps it is lustful desires. You see others who are not your husband or wife and allow your imagination to carry you to places it shouldn't.
- Maybe it is bitterness you carry with you towards someone else who has let you down in some way. Rather than living in reconciliation with them you have constant anger and hold a grudge.
- Maybe you have a trail of broken relationships that you have failed in.

Whatever it is, it is baggage you carry with you that causes you to doubt why God would forgive you again or question how God could ever use you when you are so broken.

Our Hope

The hope of our passage today is that **Jesus' restorative grace is so much bigger than we could ever hope to know or understand.** We have a Savior who loves to restore the broken and recommission them to His Kingdom work. Look, we're all broken, some of us just realize it more than others. Understanding our brokenness is the starting point of the Gospel's work in us. Yet, **our sin and brokenness doesn't have the final word over us, Jesus does. Our sin doesn't get to dictate our identity when we know Jesus, Jesus is the One who defines us.**

- In Him, we can find restoration.
- In Him, we can find forgiveness.
- In Him, we can find the righteousness we couldn't produce.
- In Him, we find the acceptance of God the Father.

His call to you today is the same as it was to Peter... Follow Me. Would you follow Jesus today? Would you find your hope in Him? Would you allow His Gospel to bring restoration.

Let's Pray