

Peter and Jesus

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[0 : 00] Well, please take your Bibles and turn to John chapter 21. John chapter 21. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is how the New Testament begins with the four Gospels.

John chapter 21 is the last chapter. Jesus has died. He's been buried.

And he's risen again and began appearing to his disciples. And this is where John chapter 21 begins. Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.

It happened this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

I'm going out to fish, Simon Peter told them. And they said, we'll go with you. And so they went out and got into the boat. But that night they caught nothing.

[1 : 15] Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, friends, haven't you any fish?

No, they answered. He said, throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciples whom Jesus loved said to Peter, it is the Lord. And as soon as Simon Peter heard him say, it is the Lord, he wrapped his outer garment around him, for he had taken it off, and jumped into the water.

The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it and some bread.

And Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish you have caught. You've just caught. And Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153.

[2 : 18] But even with so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. Now the disciples asked him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When 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. Again, 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. The third time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me?

[3 : 24] 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.

I tell the truth. When you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And then he said to him, follow me. Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them.

This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, Lord, who is going to betray you? And when Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him?

Jesus answered, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.

[4 : 29] Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well.

If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. Let's hear the preaching of God's word.

And aren't we thankful for the things that are written down? Well, the Christian life, it's a relationship with a real live person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not just believing a set of teachings that he has left us with as important as they are. It's not just doing certain religious things as important as they are.

[5 : 38] But you see, you can have all of that and still not have an authentic Christian life. The Christian life is a living relationship with the risen and reigning Christ.

It's doing all of life with him, walking with him, talking to him, listening to him as he speaks to us in his word.

It's loving him. It's receiving and valuing his love. It's trusting him. It's obeying him. It's worshiping and serving him.

It's living and dying for him. What's the reoccurring word in that description of the Christian life? It's him. It's him.

The Christian life is the great adventure of daily living with him and upon him and for him. Now we're doing all that we do in life in union with him.

[6 : 44] And we're drawing our strength and resources from him. And we're doing all of it for him.

The Christian life is life lived with Jesus, who is present with us by his spirit, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And so the whole of the Christian life is from him. It's through him. And it's unto him. And to him be the praise. You see, the danger, as strange as it might sound, is that we can be busy about many things, many good things, many religious things, necessary things, and yet be missing the personal aspect of walking with Christ through life.

Trying to live the Christian life, but without this vital relationship with the person of Jesus. And I think this is where the four Gospels especially help us.

Because in the four Gospels, what do we have? Well, we get to see men and women living with Jesus Christ. Rubbing shoulders with him.

Talking to him. Listening to him. Eating with him. Relating to him. In a very personal way. And seeing this personal aspect of a relationship with Christ is good for us.

[8 : 12] And so today I want to consider with you the personal relationship of Jesus and Peter. Now that's a big subject, and so I'm limiting myself to just five events.

Post-resurrection events. After the resurrection. Five events between Jesus and Peter. And I trust that as we look at their relationship, something of the glory of Christ will be seen.

That will attract us to him. To his person. Not just things that are true about him, but that will really draw our hearts and win our hearts all over again. For the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, let me set the stage by reminding ourselves then, if we're looking at the five events on that side of the resurrection.

Well, what happened before then? Let me just set the stage with what happened on the night of Jesus' arrest between Jesus and Peter. Matthew 26 tells us, Jesus told the disciples as they were gathered there alone.

[9 : 18] 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. But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Now here's where we see the relationship with Peter. Peter replied, even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.

Even if the rest fall away, I never will. I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, this very night before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.

But Peter declared, even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you. And all the other disciples said the same.

And then they're off to Gethsemane. And instead of watching and praying as Jesus asked, they're sleeping. And then the arrest of Peter or the arrest of Jesus. And Peter's sword play.

[10 : 23] And then all of them departed and fled. But Peter followed Jesus at a distance, we're told. And right into the courtyard of the high priest where Jesus is being tried.

And while Jesus was making a good confession inside, Peter was outside denying that he even knew him. And upon his third denial was calling down curses from heaven upon himself if he did know him.

And immediately the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned. And from wherever he was, he was at a vantage point where he and Peter locked eyes for a moment.

And the last thing we read is that he received such a look of pity and wounded love that he went out brokenhearted, weeping bitterly.

So that's the backdrop, okay? Jesus dies on the cross. He rose again. Now we've got five events.

[11 : 31] And I got them to all start with an M. Number one, a special meeting with Peter. So it's three days after Jesus' death.

And early on the first day of the week, some faithful women, believers in Jesus, were on their way to the tomb wondering, who's going to roll this big stone away so that we can go in and anoint the body of Jesus?

But when they got there, they found the stone already rolled away. And so they went in. And there on the right side was an angel. And he said, don't be alarmed.

Always the first words of an angel. You're looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is risen. He's not here.

See the place where they laid him? But go tell his disciples and Peter. He's going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.

[12 : 30] Now they had all forsaken Jesus in his hour of need. When he needed a friend beside him, they forsook him. But the reassuring message from the risen Lord through this angel is to remind them that as he said, he's going to meet them in Galilee.

He had told them that before they denied him, before they forsook him. And now this angel, who is a messenger of Jesus, comes with this message and tells them through the message, the ladies are to take back to the disciples to meet them, to meet him in Galilee.

In other words, he's not done with us after we treated him in that fashion. He still wants to meet us as planned. Now I say that was reassuring for all of them, for they all had forsaken him.

But did you notice the special word to Peter? This is Mark 16, 7. And he says, but the angel says to the women, but go tell his disciples and Peter.

And Peter. He's going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you. Now Mark received much of his material for the writing of this second gospel, the gospel of Mark.

[13 : 50] He received his material from Peter, who was the eyewitness of very much of what is recorded for us there. And of the four gospel, it's only Mark's gospel that records those two words that the angel said to the women.

The others record that go tell his disciples that he wants to see them in Galilee, just as he said. But it's Mark that includes go tell his disciples and Peter.

And Peter. Did you catch that? It might not seem like much to you, but can you imagine what that was to Peter that day? So when telling Mark the story of what happened.

Peter included those two words that meant the world to him. Coming from the risen Christ, whom he had just recently denied three times that he even knew him.

Do you see the graciousness of the heart of Jesus for Peter, seen in that special message for him?

[15 : 02] Go tell his disciples. And Peter. The only disciple called out by name. Be sure to tell Peter. Yeah, they all had their chins dragging on the ground, but none lower than Peter.

He'd gone way before the others in forsaking Christ at his arrest. He'd gone on to deny any relationship to him at all. And three times, just as Jesus had said.

Even swearing he didn't know the man. So if there were questions swirling in the minds of the other disciples about their master's acceptance of them, we can be sure that there were more doubts and fears in Peter's mind.

And all he could remember was the rooster crowing and the look of his Lord as they locked eyes across the way. How could he ever face him again? Would he even want to hear from me again? But here in this word, sent from Christ, through the angel, through the women, go tell the disciples and Peter. I'm alive and our meeting in Galilee is on.

[16 : 15] I want to see you. Now Luke records that when the ladies came back from the tomb, having seen the empty tomb, the angel, and heard these words, they then ran off to tell the disciples.

And when they came and told these things to the 11 apostles and the others, Scripture says they did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. And bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves. And he went away wondering to himself what had happened.

So that's something. There was a special word for Peter. Make sure you tell his disciples and Peter. And they all said, oh, these are nonsense words.

However, Peter left the table, left the room, and ran to the tomb. Don't you think that there was something in that special message for Peter that might have quickened a bit of hope, a spark of hope in his heart, that maybe he really does want to see me.

[17 : 27] Maybe he's really not done with me yet. And so he runs off to the tomb. A special message for Peter draws his heart to the Savior.

Well, that's the special message for Peter. It was soon followed in the second place by a private meeting with Peter. Later on, that same day that Christ arose from the dead, he revealed himself, you remember, to the two disciples who were walking the seven miles from Jerusalem down to Emmaus.

And when they realized that it was the Savior, the Lord Jesus, that they had been talking to, who drew alongside them along the way, they were so excited that they immediately turned around and ran the seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples there that we've seen the Lord.

So they hurried back to Jerusalem, and by the time they got there, they were just ready to tell their message. But before they could tell their message, the disciples told them.

It is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. That's just another word for Peter, kids. The Lord, it's true.

[18 : 45] The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. And then suddenly Christ appeared to the whole group of them there, minus Thomas. That was the first time he appeared to the whole group that evening of his resurrection.

Standing among them suddenly in the room. But what we learn from this is that sometime after Peter had heard that Jesus had a message for him and ran to the tomb and saw his gray clothes lying there and went away wondering what had happened.

Somewhere after that and before that evening, the living, risen Lord Jesus met alone with Peter before meeting with the group that evening.

In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul confirms this, saying, Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve.

So the special message for Peter was followed by this private meeting with Peter. Jesus' message was, I'm wanting to see you in Galilee.

[19 : 59] That's where he told all the disciples to go and eventually we'll see him appearing to them there. But somewhere before that, he met privately with Peter. Now that's all we know about this meeting, simply that it took place.

We're not told any more than that what exactly passed between the two of them in that meeting. Wouldn't you love to have been a fly on the wall, to have heard, to have seen what happened the first time Jesus and Peter met after all that had gone down?

I can only imagine Peter confessing his sin. He was weeping over it. And our Lord assuring him of his forgiveness and mercy.

Once again, the Bible doesn't tell us all we want to know. It tells us everything we need to know. And what do we need to know about that comes out of this idea that we know that a meeting took place?

Well, we know something of the tender heart of our Savior for his fallen disciple, Peter. That the first time these two meet is not to be in the group setting with all the rest present, but it's to be a private, personal meeting between Peter and his risen Savior alone.

[21 : 25] Do you see something of the tenderness of the heart of Jesus in that? His longing to meet with his fallen disciple. You know it's Satan's desire not only to tempt you to sin against the Lord Jesus, but then once you have sinned, to keep distance between you and Jesus.

Who are you to talk to him? You failed him. Again. It's not the first time. Peter, you did it three times. You've got to feel miserable for a week before ever showing your face to him.

You've got to do penance. You've got to make up for your sin. You've got to walk clean for a month before he wants to have anything to do with you. All the twisted views of Satan that he whispers in

our hearts.

Satan's trying to keep us from that private meeting with our Lord Jesus to maintain distance between us.

He doesn't want us entering into the peace and joy of forgiveness. Oh, but these are lies of the evil one. Lies to torment us. And we need to counter them with the truth as it is in Jesus.

[22 : 48] And when we turn to the scriptures, we find just the opposite. Let me ask you, when Adam and Eve sinned for the first time, who was it that came seeking whom? Well, it was God that came seeking them.

They didn't want a meeting. They were trying to avoid a meeting. But he sought them out and found them. And though there were consequences for their sin, God came in mercy, holding out to them the first gospel promise of a coming redeemer for them.

It was God who initiated that first meeting after their sin. Think what David, after he had fallen so far into the sin of adultery, murder, and cover-up.

What truths were they about God that drew him to make that confession in Psalm 51 that we love so well?

What would bring him with a humble confession before his Lord, just David and his Lord? The very first verse, listen what it was that drew him.

[24 : 01] Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

It was the Lord's mercy. It was the truth of his unfailing love, of his tender compassions that drew out this confession of David.

To meet with his Lord, to come, to shrink that distance that had gone on for now for at least nine months, and to come face to face with his God in humble confession.

He says later in the Psalm, a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, you will not despise. That's it. You won't brush me off in disgust.

Who are you? Why are you here? You denied me. You fell again. No, no. A broken and a contrite, and that's what Peter had, wasn't it?

[25 : 01] And that's what David is now bringing, and David knows that you will not despise me when I come with a broken and a contrite heart, but will actually delight in and take pleasure in my broken-hearted confession.

What does Isaiah say? What is the carrot that's held out in front of the evil, wicked sinners in this world, of which we all were once ourselves, if we're not still?

What is the carrot to cause an evil man or woman or boy or girl to come and to seek forgiveness from the Lord? What's the carrot?

Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he's near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

You see the carrot? What is it that draws the sinning heart back to confess to the Lord, whether it's for the first time or the thousandth time?

[26 : 09] It's our Lord assuring the sinner that if you come sincerely seeking my forgiveness, you will have it. You'll have it freely. You don't have to earn it. You'll have it abundantly, a free pardon.

You'll find mercy with the Lord. It's all meant, you see, to encourage us to come to this meeting with our Savior here, when we've sinned.

Not to think we have to do penance to make up for sin, but just to come just as we are and to hang our sin upon his loving kindness, his mercy to us in Jesus Christ.

It's mercy. It's grace. You see, the truth that's hidden far too well and that we're far too blinded to, even as Christians, is just how gracious Jesus' heart is for his own, even in their failures, especially in their failures.

That's what we're seeing with Peter this morning. Jesus is ever so willing to meet with him. He sends the message to him, I want to meet. And then he comes and meets alone with Peter.

[27 : 28] Hebrews 4, we do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. You know that word weaknesses? It's not just our lack of strength.

It includes our sins. You look at the context as it goes on and you'll see that. It's, when he speaks of, we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with us in our sins and failures and our weakness.

You know, that's what Satan would tell us. Your high priest doesn't sympathize with you when you've got sin. No, no, he's out to get you. But to the contrary, the scripture says, no, he's able to sympathize with you in your weaknesses.

Because we have one who has been here and has felt the power of temptation, being tempted in every way like we are, yet without sin. and he knows our weakness and our sinful failings and our coming short.

The truth is that Jesus is more desirous of meeting with us than we are of meeting with him.

[28 : 45] He does not hate us in our weakness. He does not despise us in our sinful failures. He does not kick us when we're down or brush off a broken and a contrite heart, but he rather pities us, compassion for us, sympathizes with us, feels hurt for us, not out to get us, but to help us.

And because we have such a great high priest that sympathizes with us in our weaknesses and failures, we're encouraged to run to him with confidence. again, why? Because we know what we'll find if we get there.

If we run to him and this throne of grace where he now sits, what will we find? Well, verse 16, let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence. Yes, even with our sinful falls, get to Jesus, got to get to Jesus so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The truth of the matter is he's desiring to give grace and mercy. We're the ones too often with a cold shoulder. We're the ones thinking we've got to stay away and somehow work off our sin debt before him.

But if we come brokenhearted before him, we'll find him gentle and humble in heart, always willing and ready to forgive. I'm sure that's what brokenhearted Peter found from his risen Lord, aren't you?

[30 : 21] And I'm sure that's what you'll find every time you fall. That's what I find every time I fall, that Jesus is waiting for me with mercy in one hand and grace in the other to help me.

Poor, weak, failing me. He sympathizes with us. So what have we seen? We've seen our Lord and his heart in the special message sent to Peter.

We've seen his gentle, compassionate heart in his private meeting with Peter. Now all the three last events with Peter are recorded in John 21, the passage that was read for us.

And this was the third time the risen Lord met with his disciples together and this time it is in Galilee where he had told them before he died, when I rise, meet me in Galilee.

Now they're there in Galilee. And so we have the third place and we must go quicker with these three final ones. A teaching miracle, chapter 21, 1 to 14.

[31 : 32] Though not exclusively for Peter, it was for Peter and as the chapter was read, you see that Peter figures the most prominently of the disciples throughout this chapter.

And he was the one that said, I'm going fishing and the others went with him. The whole scene is reminiscent of what happened in Luke chapter 5 when Peter and a few others were first called to be disciples of the Lord Jesus and they had spent a whole night and not caught anything.

And Jesus says, go out and let down the nets for a catch. And Peter said, well, we fished all night and caught nothing but because you say so, we will. And they went out and they let down the nets and, well, the school of fish that swam into them were so many that the nets were breaking and they filled both boats so full that they were sinking.

And as they came ashore, Jesus said, from now on you will catch men. You're going to fish for men. So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Well, that was Peter, Andrew, James and John and Jesus used that miracle as an object lesson to teach them that in fishing for men with the gospel they would be just as dependent upon the power of Christ to catch men as they were to catch fish.

[32 : 53] And Jesus demonstrated that before them. Without him they will catch nothing. And now here they are three and a half years later. What a fitting time for a repeat of this miracle.

Again, it was after catching nothing all night and Jesus appears on the shore unknown to them and when he learns they've caught nothing he just tells them, well throw your net out on the right side of the boat as if that's a real fisherman's tip.

What difference will that make? Just a few feet or yards. But when they did they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

It's a fitting repeat of this teaching miracle. Jesus is soon to leave them. He's soon to return to his father and before he does he's going to give them that great commission.

It could just be hours after this. To go into all the world to catch men, make disciples, baptize them into local churches and then teach them to obey everything that I've commanded and I'll be with you to the end of the age.

[33 : 58] That's the great promise. I'll be with you or you'd never catch a fish. And I by my saving power will put forth that power and bring sinners to conversion.

Well it was a little more than a week later Peter would be preaching in Jerusalem for the first time after Jesus' death and 3,000 souls would be caught in the gospel net saved.

You see this was meant to encourage him and the others. Though Jesus is gone his presence is still with us spiritually and he'll put forth his power in this great commission to which he's called us to catch men and make disciples of them.

Well that's the third event, the teaching miracle. How kind of Jesus to encourage these men on the mission he's about to give them. And then fourthly we see a reinstated ministry.

Verses 15 to 17 after such a fall by Peter with his threefold denial of Christ and after strongly promising to be faithful there may have been questions about Peter's fitness to continue as an apostle of Jesus.

[35 : 15] I say there might have been questions in Peter's mind although I think Jesus probably resolved those in their private meeting. But there would have been even questions in the rest of the apostles. Peter, he fell far.

He fell hard. He denied Jesus. Should he continue as an apostle? Well they all forsook him but Peter, he called down curses on his head if he knew him.

And so there were questions that needed to be put to rest. And so when they had finished eating breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter in front of them all now, Simon son of John do you love, do you truly love me more than these?

Remember he had claimed to have more love for Jesus than these, the rest of the apostles. Though all the rest should forsake you. Oh they might Lord but I love you more.

I would never do that. You see he was claiming more love for Jesus than these other apostles. So Jesus asks him, do you truly love me more than these?

[36 : 26] Well when Peter responds he drops the more than these doesn't he? In his reaffirmation of love for Jesus he just says yes Lord you know that I love you.

You know that I love you. And Jesus says then feed my lambs. And so it goes three times the question from Jesus to Peter, do you love me? Three times Peter affirms it.

Yes Lord you know that I love you. Three times feed my lambs, take care of my sheep, feed my sheep. So what's going on here?

What's happening? Two lessons. First of all Peter's denials were clearly failures of love for Jesus. That's how Jesus saw them. Failures of love.

Three times he had acted as if he had no love for Jesus. His actions not only said I don't know the man but they said I don't love him. And that's what Jesus felt.

[37 : 30] And so three times Jesus now asks him do you love me? He's now called to declare his love for Jesus publicly even before his fellow apostles.

even so our failures to identify with Christ are failures of love for Christ are failures to witness for Jesus are failures to identify with Jesus in the waters of baptism are failures to confess him are being ashamed of him and his word.

These are taken as failures of love to Jesus such that he would ask Peter three times do you really love me? There are failures of love to Christ that need to be repented as such.

And secondly we learn that love for Christ is the prerequisite and is the motivation for all ministry to the sheep of Jesus. love for Christ is the prerequisite and motivation for all ministry to his sheep. Don't miss this. Three times Jesus says do you love me? Then take care of them. You see that? Do you love me?

[38 : 53] Then you feed them. The me them. Do you get that? That's what we need to see here. If you love me serve them. If you love me feed them. If you love me take care of them.

And that's not just true of Peter. And just true for the apostles and just true for your pastors. No. This is the principle that belongs to all the people of God and applies to all kinds of ministries that you have for one another in the flock as Christ's sheep.

Two texts. Hebrews 6. Two supporting texts. Hebrews 6. 10. God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help

them.

You show your love for him by helping his people. Again I say it's not written to ministers alone but to all the people of God as the next verse goes on to say we want each one of you to show this same diligence to the very end you see.

God is going to love to Christ. You see he wasn't going to be with them any longer.

[40 : 11] They would not be able to wash his feet. So he says if you love me then take care of them and show your love for me by helping his people.

So I ask you what sheep of Christ are being helped by you as an evidence of your love to Jesus. How is your love for Jesus moving you to help his people?

That was the challenge to Peter and the others that day. And that principle of the kingdom of God will be plainly evident in the final judgment. You remember Matthew 25 and King Jesus is separating all the nations into two groups.

One on the right and on the left. And two destinies for eternity are being assigned to each, one to each, eternal destruction, eternal life.

And then he says to those on his right, come you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For when I was hungry, you fed me.

[41 : 15] And when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. And when I was a stranger, you took me in. And when I was naked, you gave me something to wear. And when I was sick or in prison, you came and visited me.

And then they will say, Lord, when did we see you hungry? When did we see you thirsty? When did we see you a stranger or sick and so on? And he will say, this is what you will hear one day righteous, you who have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus.

The king will reply in that day, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you have done for me. You see, if you love me, feed them, give them the drink, minister to them, and I'll not forget it, Jesus promises.

I'll reward it. I'll reward the love you have shown me as you've helped them. So here's this reinstated ministry to the apostle Peter, a ministry to others motivated by his love for Jesus.

And then lastly, we see the Lord speaking of a coming martyrdom, verses 18 to the end. So the Lord says to Peter, follow me, follow me.

[42 : 36] And for Peter, following Jesus will mean the death of martyrdom for Christ. Verse 18, I tell you the truth, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and you went where you wanted, but when you're old, you'll stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Now that's a bit cryptic and unclear. I don't know how many of us would figure out what that meant on our own and John knows that and so he helps his readers by telling us in verse 19, Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.

In the upper room, you remember when Jesus told Peter he would disown him three times before the rooster crowed, Peter had strongly objected saying, even if I have to die with you, even if I had to die with you, I will never disown you.

And here is Jesus saying to Peter, you will have that opportunity to glorify God by dying for me. We're to glorify God in life and in death, Romans 14, 8. If we live, we live to him. If we die, we die to him.

[43 : 55] So whether we live or whether we die, we're the Lord's. So life lived to him, and then it's to be a death died to him. And if so, he will be glorified.

If it's death to cancer, or if it's death of martyrdom, Peter was assigned. Now this was no easy assignment to Peter.

And having given it, the Lord Jesus repeated, now follow me. Follow me. Put your neck in the yoke with me. Learn from me.

Stick with me, Peter. Don't turn to the right or to the left. Just follow me. And off they went then, literally, started walking. Jesus with his Lord.

And Peter looked back over his shoulder and he saw John back there, following them. And when he saw John, he said to the Lord, Lord, what about him? Isn't that just like us?

[44 : 55] When we've been given a hard assignment and we see somebody, well, what about them, Lord? And I love the Lord's answer. Well, what is that to you?

what is that to you, Peter? If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.

You've already got your eyes off of the goal. You're to follow me. And now you're saying, well, what about him? And what about here? And what about this? And that? Follow me, Peter. And that's just the answer I need when I start comparing my assignment to others.

And I might think, well, their assignment's not as hard as mine. What about him? What about her? And the Lord comes and says, well, what is that to you, John?

What business of that is that of yours? You mind your own business. I've called you to this assignment. You focus and concentrate on being faithful to me.

[46 : 04] Remember the call, Peter. You must, if you would be my disciple, you must deny yourself. That has nothing to do with John. It's yourself that must be denied.

And you must carry your cross. It has nothing to do with John's cross. And you must follow me. Doesn't matter what John's doing.

Peter, remember the call, the call to follow me. Peter, and our Lord's words were not lost upon his apostle Peter.

He did mind his own business in this regard. He learned his lesson from the Lord. Lord. The rest of his life, we find him busy fishing for men.

The rest of his life, we find him taking care of the sheep of Jesus Christ, feeding them, nurturing them with his preaching, his words, giving them Jesus' words, showing his love for Christ by ministering to his people, a ministry motivated by his love for Jesus.

[47 : 19] He'd been so gracious and patient with him, and now he gives himself to his blood-bought sheep. And after a life of following his Lord, he did follow him all the way into this death, this assigned death of martyrdom.

We have nothing in the Bible that confirms that, other than that we have here the call that Jesus tells him is coming, but church history does record that Peter did die a martyr's death, and that when he was crucified for Christ, he actually requested that he would be crucified upside down because he did not deserve to die like his Lord.

And so God was glorified in his death for Christ's sake, even as he had been in his life for Christ's sake. And Peter's spirit went at once to be in the presence of Jesus forever and his body is awaiting the final resurrection with so many other believers to go body and soul, to be with the Lord forever. The Lord gave him grace. The Lord was so compassionate with his servant Peter. So we've seen a bit this morning the personal side of this relationship between Peter and Jesus.

And I want you to be thinking about the personal side. The personal part of that walk that you have with Jesus. We've seen our Lord's great grace and mercy and patience with Peter.

[48 : 50] And we've seen Peter's lifelong session in the school of Christ. And I find it encouraging that when Peter takes his pen and writes his first letter, in chapter one and verse eight, you know what he says to the Lord's people?

To you and me who are his followers? He says, you don't have to see Christ physically in order to have this personal relationship with him. You see, we can say, well, yeah, of course Peter talked and listened to Jesus.

He was right there physically with him. But Peter says, you don't have to have seen him physically to have this personal relationship. Though you've not seen him, you love him.

That's a personal, relational word. Your heart runs out in affection to Jesus. You've never seen him. And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him.

You trust in him. You take him at his word. That's a relational aspect to your walk with Christ. You love him and you trust him.

[50 : 00] And you are being filled with a joy inexpressible and full of glory. Even now, without seeing him. Even now, not in heaven, right here and now.

Such a joy that you can't put it into words. Full of glory. Because you are receiving the goal of your faith. Which is the salvation of your soul.

You're on the way and you're receiving it. One day you'll be at the end and receive the full blessing, the whole redemption. And that fills you right now. And your relationship with Christ.

Christ. And who he is for you. And what he does for you. And what he's promised. It fills you with this joy. So, love for him. Trust in him.

Joy in him. That's part of the personal relationship that we're privileged to have with the Savior. So, let's step in. Step into this daily adventure more fully of living upon Christ.

[51 : 03] Living for Christ. And living with Christ. Knowing that he will be for us what he was to Peter. Because Jesus Christ is the same.

Yesterday, today, and forever. Hallelujah. What a Savior. Do you know Christ? Do you know the person of Jesus? Do you know him well enough to enjoy him?

Well, that's our Savior. Let's take our hymnal and sing 549. If you don't know Jesus, cry out for him to have mercy on you, to forgive your sins, and you'll find he's ready to meet you with mercy this morning.

And as we sing 549, we're singing of a Jesus who is the joy of loving hearts. We haven't seen him, but we love him, and we trust him, and we're filled with joy unspeakable.

Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts. It's 549. Let's stand together and sing this to him. Very personal address to him, 549.

[52 : 19] Pray. Father, thank you for not sparing your own son, but giving him up to the death of the cross in our place. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for living and dying for us, rising again and still living for us, even living with us.

We want to know you better. We want to see you more clearly and love you more dearly and follow you more nearly day by day.

Holy Spirit, make it so to our greater joy and peace and to Jesus' greater glory. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.