

“Jesus: The Friend of the Fallen”

The Vine Series... John 15:5

SCRIPTURE

John 21:15-19 (NIV)

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” ¹⁷ The 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. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, 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.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God.

Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

Subject Question: What 3 Last words of encouragement did Jesus give to Peter before Jesus left the church in His hands.

Compliment answer: Keep up the Good Witness! Keep up the Good Work! and Keep up the Good Walk!

Big Idea: The 3 last words of encouragement that Jesus gave to Peter before leaving the church in Peter’s hands were: Keep up the Good Witness; Keep up the Good Work, and Keep up the Good Walk.

Homiletical Idea: “Faithful Followers make Faithful Followers...”

Purpose: I want the congregation to hear Jesus’ last words to Peter and consider those words for themselves.

Introduction: Peter had really blown it in His relationship with Christ. He had denied him three times, had fled the cross itself, and now, was contemplating just going back to a life of fishing. His being a “fisher of men” had been short-lived... So He thought. Then the resurrected Jesus shows up. The conversation that ensues allows Peter’s to once again gain proper perspective. Still, He

knew that He had given up on Jesus... Had Jesus given up on Him? Really couldn't blame Him if He had... Thus, we find a humble Peter standing before Jesus; the betrayer facing the Betrayed, the coward before the Courageous, the one who desperately needed forgiveness, and even more, a way to make somehow, someday make amends. What could He do? Jesus would answer Peter's questioning heart with 3 words of encouragement. Words we might add, are still relevant for us today.

(Be strong, the hard part is over)

- A. Keep up the Good Witness! (Vs.15-17a) ¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The 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?"
- B. Jesus didn't dilly dally with Peter. For each of Peter's three denials, Jesus came back to the heart of the issue that Peter himself was struggling with: ... "If I really loved you Lord, I would have stood up for you instead of denying that I even knew you. I may not have acted like it... But I really, really, deep down inside love you more than anything else in life. And I am so ashamed..." Feed MY Sheep
- C. It was if Christ was saying, I know how disappointed you are in yourself Peter, but I do forgive you, I do love you, and more, I do, still believe in you. Here's my charge to you Pete—live the rest of your life proving your love for me by looking after the ones whom I choose and cherish call and change. Your denial of me will eventually give countless others who let me down in their lives the one thing that I want them to experience: hope. A way back to me: A knowing that my love for them outweighs my disappointment in them.
- D. So it is with so many of us who need a second chance to really prove we love Jesus. His charge to us: spend the rest of your lives taking care of one another; Love your brothers and sisters. Nourish one another with words that encourage and deeds that build up. For in loving each other you not only prove your love for me, but also provide the world around you with a little glimpse of myself. Keep up the Good witness.

(Be strong, the hard part is over)

- A. Keep up the Good Work! (Vs.17b-19a) He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, 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.”¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. These two verses indicate the event that happened at the end of Peter’s life when facing his own death...) He was crucified upside down because He had come to feel that He was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as His Lord.) If we’re not careful we’ll miss the insinuation that is made in these verses and that is simply this: Kingdom work in more than just loving one another. It’s a battle.
- B. Whenever peoples eternal destinies are at stake, Jesus may be the Lord who is drawing, but there is another, the Prince of the Power of the air who is always denying. When a person is “saved” their citizen ship is transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness to what the Bible calls the Kingdom of Light—and people see themselves for what they really are and they see God for who indeed He really is, and they understand what Christ is offering them. And nothing makes the enemy of our souls more enraged.
- C. There are basically three things that a Christian will ever battle with in this life: the sinful flesh, the sin filled world and the sin minded enemy. He can’t have you but He can certainly attempt to hinder you. And many times we like Peter, for Christ’s sake are put in situations that we would rather not be. But...but you see, over time our love for Christ, allows us to understand the spiritual battles that we endure... We understand that people’s destinies are shaped and influenced by not only the things that we say, not only the things that we do, but in who we reveal by who we are becoming to resemble.
- D. Jesus admonition to Peter, keep up the good work. Fight the good fight. Trust me till the end. Jesus word of encouragement for you and me? Keep on keeping on. Keep up the good fight. The life that I have called you to live is not only doable, but exceptional. And the work I intend to you do is not only beneficial but always profitable. So, Keep up the good work!

(Be strong, the hard part is over)

- A. Keep up the Good Walk! (Vs. 19b) **Then he said to him, “Follow me!”** When Jesus said this Peter it wasn't just an invitation for him to follow Him literally at that moment. After all Jesus was leaving soon.
- B. I believe it was a twofold invitation. The first invitation was for Peter to strive to live a life so intimately with Christ through prayer and fellowship that his greatest desire was to have the privilege of having Jesus leading Him throughout his life. Jesus was saying, I'll lead, you follow.
- C. In the first “follow me” Jesus gave Peter an instruction FOR life. But in the second meaning Jesus may have been giving Peter a Proper Perspective ABOUT life. Jesus came to give life to this world—a message from a heavenly Father that so loved the world that He gave His Only Son... for the world's good and His Son's glory. Jesus may have been insinuating that now it's Peter's turn to do the same. I was the first act; you follow... you do your part... Keep up the Good walk.
- D. And maybe that goes for you and me. Are we following Jesus? Do we even understand that that is what we are called and invited to do—each generation is a new act... with a glorious never changing message, for the world's good and the Son's glory...?

(Be strong, the hard part is over)