

John 21 • “Follow me”

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Hopefully everybody's got a Bible and you're all turned to the right place. Let's begin with the word of prayer as we get into this.

Father, as we finish out this incredible gospel account, we are just excited today to see what you're going to say to us and how you're going to minister to our hearts. And we pray that you would fill us with insight and understanding and wisdom from the Word.

So Lord, give us spiritual ears and eyes that we might hear and see what you would have us Lord to take hold of from this passage and we just really pray that you would nourish our hearts through the scriptures.

We believe God that is your desire and we ask you to do that. We thank you for the opportunity to come together as the body of Christ to worship you, to fellowship together and to dig into the Word. So be with us as we do in Jesus name, amen. Amen.

Chapter 21 of John begins by saying, “*After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, ...*” (ESV) Interestingly enough, John is the only gospel writer that refers to the Sea of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias and it went by all kinds of different names because whoever kind of happened to be in charge. Whoever conquered the area would name the cities and name the bodies of water, and that's why they changed so much over the years.

But, verse 1 ends by simply saying, “... *and he revealed himself in this way.*” And then John's going to go on to explain and I'll pause here for just a moment to remind you that Jesus revealed himself to His disciples post resurrection over a period of 40 days. And there were approximately 10 days or so between the final appearance and the falling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost for the empowering of the believers. We'll get into that as we begin our study in the Book of Acts here very soon. But Matthew tells us that this was one of a few appearances of Jesus in the area or the region of Galilee.

And it goes on to say in verse 2, that, “*Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, (and that of course would be James and John) and two others of his disciples (unnamed) were together.*” So

there were seven of them who were kind of just hanging out there in the region of Galilee near the sea.

And we're told in verse 3 that, "*Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."* (I love Peter, and) *They said to him, (okay) "We will go (too) with you."* So, you know, Peter was a fisherman, James and John were fishermen. In fact, they were partners together and so, they're going to go fishing which is kind of weird, because they're apostles.

Jesus has already appeared to them, they've received the Holy Spirit, and they're now born again, and they're just kind of hanging out and deciding to go fishing. And if you're thinking to yourself, this is a great time for God to make a point about life and ministry and stuff like that, you would be right because we are told at the end of verse 3 that, "*They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*"

In other words, they fished all night long and didn't catch anything. Now does that ring any kind of a bell in your mind of something maybe that you've read before in the gospels? And if it does, that's because it happened almost like this before and we're going to take a look at that in just a moment.

But we're told here in verse 4, that, "*Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. (and) ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, (or that Greek word means, young men, it could be translated guys, lads, or something like that. He says) do you have any fish?" (and I love their long response) They answered him, "No."*"

They've been fishing all night long and they've gotten nothing so he's like, no..., there's no fish. So, "*⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."* That's a strange thing to hear..., you got experienced fishermen in the boat here, they've been fishing all night.

You got to know, they've cast the net on both sides of the boat all night long. They've been casting it there and casting it over and bringing it in, nothing, nothing, and this stranger on the shore says, "*on the right side,*" do it on the right side. And they're probably... You got to wonder if they're looking at each other going, right side, we've been doing this all night long.

But something going on here and I think they already recognize something special is going on. "*⁶ ...So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.*" All right let's stop here for just a moment. This entire scene is reminiscent because it did happen very similar to this during

Jesus's public ministry and it's all recorded for us in the Book of Luke. I'll put it on the screen so you can see it from Luke chapter 5. It says,

Luke 5:1-11 (ESV)

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, (and that is yet another name for the Sea of Galilee) and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, (and that's Simon Peter) he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. (it kind of made a very natural amphitheater where His Word could make its way through the crowd, and it goes on and says) And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat (that's James and John) to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

It's a great passage, isn't it? And we see the power of the Lord being manifest after a night of fruitless toil, something that we're also seeing here in John, chapter 21.

But there's some significant things here in this last slide from Luke chapter 5 that we need to notice. And that is the statement that Jesus says to Peter particularly, and to the others, but to Peter specifically, He says, don't worry, you're going to be catching men from now on.

In other words, your days of hauling in stinky fish are over and now you're going to be casting your nets as it were and bringing in men. And this speaks of evangelism and bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and that sort of thing. So this is kind of a commission, if you will, that's being given to Peter at this time.

And you'll notice Peter's response at the end of that passage along with James and John. It says they brought their boats, they landed their boats onto the shore and they followed Him. They left, it says, they left everything and they followed Him. And so they've been following Him throughout the course of His public ministry.

And it came to this violent crescendo where He was arrested and put on trial and crucified. And now..., but they've seen Him alive and yet, they're kind of going back to what they knew before. Let's go fishing, you want to go fishing? I'm going to go fishing, okay, let's go fishing. And of course, all night long they're fishing in the boat and nothing. Didn't pull up anything until Jesus appeared on the scene rather and told them what to do.

So isn't it interesting in both situations they labored all night without success and then suddenly at the command of God, there's great fruitfulness. And you have to wonder what's going through their minds when Jesus calls out from shore and says, hey, put your net on the other side of the boat, as if He knows, you know. This guy, is He even a fisherman?

So He tells them to cast their nets on the other side and they bring in so many fish that they can't even begin to hardly haul them all in. And you got to wonder what they're thinking right now, what's going through their minds. The similarity to this, to the earlier situation and I'm sure it's not lost on them that they've been laboring all night long with nothing. And now at the command of God, everything and perhaps a statement is going through their minds, similar to what we studied back in chapter 15. Let me show you on the screen. John 15, where Jesus said,

John 15:4-5 (ESV)

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, (and He said) unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, (and then this is the important part too) for apart from me you can do nothing.

And I think this was the perfect time to reinforce that reality. He had told them, now, He's going to show them that, apart from Him, they can do nothing. And if you're going to go back to your old ways, if you're going to go back to what you knew before, just understand this, it's not going to work, it's not going to be fruitful.

I don't know how many of you in this room here can relate to that whole idea of getting saved, coming to Christ, and then just kind of being at loose ends at some point and not really knowing what to do with your life. And so you kind of, you just tend to naturally go back to what you knew before and this is what I used to do. And I remember doing that sort of a thing.

Before I came to Christ, I lived for very simple things. You know, life was very simple before I knew Jesus, really. It was like, work, make money, buy fun things, have fun with fun things, give myself pleasure, be happy, that was it. It was pretty simple, it was a pretty simple way to live, but it was all about living for me.

And then, of course, I met Jesus as my Savior and He began to rearrange my thinking to a degree and I began to realize my life is not my own, but it rather belongs to Him and it is for His purpose. And the rest of my life needs to be lived for Him and the only real joy that I'm really going to ever get out of life from this point forward, is when I live for Him and serve Him and do for Him. But then we forget and then we kind of get at loose ends and we're..., I don't know, things just kind of get weird and it's I'm going to go back and do what I used to do. And we realize that it's an utter exercise of futility to go back and try to live the old life.

Because now you realize you've been born for something else or, should I say, you've been born again for something else, than just being happy. And see,

that's all the world has. Back before I knew Jesus, that was it, that was the only goal there was, to be happy, to please myself.

But then I met the Savior, who gave His life for me and I realized that the only joy I'm ever going to have now going forward is to live my life to please Him. And that's where real joy is going to come from, real happiness that doesn't go away. And every time I have tried to fall back into what I knew before, it was a night of fruitless fishing.

And you can do that, we can all do that. We can all go back fishing in the world, see if we can catch something fun or catch something enjoyable. And maybe things are going to be good, but we've been ruined because our lives now belong to Him and our joy and our purpose is to serve Him, to live for Him.

So verse 7 goes on and it tells us that, *“That disciple whom Jesus loved (and again, John's referring to himself here) therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” (and) When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, ...”* And that doesn't mean he was naked, it just means that as a typical fisherman, they would take off their outer garment so that they had more freedom of movement while they were working with the nets and so forth, and that's what Peter had done.

So he put his outer garment back on and he dove into the water. It says, he *“...and threw himself into the sea.”* This is so Peter, the Peter we've come to know. The impulsive, spontaneous, even reckless Peter. You know, he just dives into the water and starts making his way for the shore. And, *“⁸The other disciples, (who had half a brain, just) came (stayed) in the boat, (I'm just kidding, poor Peter) dragging the net full of fish, ...”*

And you know, there's part of me that's like, I love that about Peter. It's like, it's the Lord, boom! I got to have Him and He's just got to get there. But it says, they were, *“dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.”* So they're about the distance of a football field.

And, *“⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. (and) ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them...”* Aren't you glad we were told there were 153. Why do I need to know that? What difference would it have made if there were 152? I know you're not catching here, what's interesting about this. I was reading, I thought, well, that's significant, there's a hundred...

Why would John tell us there's 153 fish? So I kind of looked into it and I started reading some commentaries and stuff like that. It was just, you'd probably be shocked to hear how many explanations people have that they have advanced over the years to explain why there were 153 fish. And all of them are the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard in my life, they're absolutely stupid. And I have to confess, I don't know what entices people to try to throw a dart at a target they can't see and is too far away to hit and to think I'm going to get a bullseye.

And yet we just keep trying to make explanations for things that we don't know. Like, why were there 153 fish? It's crazy, I won't bore you by sharing some of the answers to why there were... I think, you know why I think there were 153 fish? Because that's how many they caught. That's the kind of brilliance you hear here at Calvary Chapel, Ontario, right now, right here, so there you go.

Anyway, John adds at the end of verse 11, *“And although there were so many, the net was not torn.”* Now that is significant because John was a fisherman and he knew how many fish a particular net could hold without beginning to rip? And it was a fairly common thing, if they were having a good catch that afterwards they would have to go and mend their nets.

But John is saying to you from the experience of a fisherman that this was a miracle and that further underscores this whole idea that Jesus is not just giving a display of power for the sake of showing off. He's making a point here about fruitfulness in the kingdom when we follow His directives, when we follow the command of the Lord. When we don't just go off and do our own thing, go our own way, and I'm going to, I'm going to go fishing. No, when we follow the Lord, there is going to be a supernatural work of grace that attends that work and that's the important thing to remember.

Now, as we get to verse 15 and following, we get to what I believe is the primary reason for this particular appearance of our Lord. And I'm going to read these verses completely from 15 to 19, so follow along with me here.

It says, *“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.”*

I want you to stop with me there for a moment. This is commonly referred to as the restoration of Peter and you can recognize what's kind of going on here and the reason that this is necessary. It's all because Peter denied the Lord 3 times on the night that Jesus was arrested and of course, Jesus foretold that denial. And it's important that Peter now, after that denial, be restored so that he's able to move on.

We'll talk about that in just a moment and the reason it's so important is because of an earlier statement that Jesus had made about denying Him and I want to put it on the screen for you. It's from Matthew 10, verse 33, and it goes like this.

Matthew 10:33 (ESV)

“...whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Now that's a very sobering statement, Jesus is the one who made it, that's why it's in quotations there. But the question that we need to ask this morning as it relates to this statement and what Peter did is this. Is Jesus saying here in Matthew, one denial and it's over. Well, obviously not because we know that Peter denied the Lord not once, but 3 times, and then went on to become a very important person in the establishing of the church in the first century.

And yet I find there are a good many believers today who operate on this very principle of one sin and you're done, really, truly. Now that may sound crazy to you and for some of you, it may sound very familiar. And I have to say, I was a little surprised when I heard it.

But I have learned that it is not a small amount of Christians who operate on this very idea, who take verses like this, that we just read from Matthew chapter 10. If anyone denies me before men, I will deny Him before the Father. They read that and they interpret it as, you say one thing that could vaguely be interpreted as a denial of the Lord, one thing, that's all it takes, you're done. There's no chance for you, there's no hope for you, you are unsavable, you are on your way to hell and there is no possibility of anything else. What a horrible way to live. Well what those Christians fail to understand is that sort of an interpretation has nothing to do with what is revealed to us in the Bible.

The Bible does not give us a principle of one and you're done. In fact, quite the opposite and that's one of the reasons why the apostle John went on in his first letter to write this. On the screen, from 1 John chapter 2.

1 John 2:1-2 (NIV84)

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense— Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins...

You'll notice I quoted that out of the NIV, I just like it better, I like the wording. It means the same thing in all the other translations, but what John is saying here is, listen, I'm writing this letter so that you would be filled with truth and wisdom and grace and power and that you would not give in to the temptations of sin. But when you do, and I know that you will, because we are fallible and we will sin, I want you to know this, I want you to know that we have an advocate with the Father and it is none other than Jesus Christ.

He is the righteous one and He will make a defense before the Father for you regarding that sin because He gave His life to pay for your sin on the cross. And that is a constant reminder and a perpetual work of forgiveness that is ours through Jesus Christ, do you get it? It is not one and done and that is not to give this information in any way to give you a freedom to sin.

It's not like, oh, no big deal, I can sin because there's forgiveness. No, this is freedom to move on, this is freedom from sin. From the ability of sin to lock you in to failure mode that you can never ever break free from. And that's why Jesus made this special appearance to Peter because there was a very real possibility that Peter would be locked in failure mode for the rest of his life and just think that all that was left for him was just to go fishing.

And Jesus needed Peter to know that we can move on. There is forgiveness, there is restoration, and there is a recommissioning that is going to take place here in these words that is going to send Peter out with a renewed sense of purpose, even in the midst of his failure.

And brothers and sisters in Jesus, I want you to know the same thing. I want you to know that for those of you who have failed, and I know that means all of you because that's life. We live in a fallen world, we have a sinful nature that still rears its ugly head and from time to time we give in to it. I want you to know there is forgiveness, there's restoration, and there is a future of ministry, fruitful ministry, as we follow the Lord.

These are such important things to remember. Now, Peter denied the Lord 3 times, and so 3 times Jesus gives Peter an opportunity to speak of his devotion and now his love for his Savior. But I have to tell you that the English translation of these verses leaves a little something out and if you look at the

original language, you realize that there's something significant going on here in this conversation between Jesus and Peter.

Because the first 2 times that Jesus asks Peter, Peter, do you love me? He uses the word, Agape, and you know what that word probably means, it's unconditional love. The actual word in the text is Agapao, but it's just a variation of the word, Agape.

And so Jesus is essentially asking Peter, do you love me unconditionally? Now that's a very tough question, coming from Jesus to Peter, in light of the fact that he failed so miserably to show that love not very many days before when he denied the Lord 3 times.

But Jesus says to him, do you love me unconditionally? And Peter's response in your English Bible is, *"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."* However, if you see it in the original language, you will see that Peter is using a word that is not Agape, it's a lesser form of love, it's the Greek word, Phileo.

And so Phileo is brotherly love, friendship love better, buddies. David and Jonathan in the Old Testament, they loved each other, that was Phileo love. So, essentially, Jesus is saying, Peter, do you love me unconditionally? And Peter said, Lord, I love you as a friend and you know that.

And a third time, Jesus poses the question to him, Peter, do you love me? And again, in the English, it's just translated love, but this time, Jesus steps down His word to Phileo. He says to Peter, Peter, do you love me as a friend? And that's why we're told that Peter was grieved.

When I think about Peter's response here, when he says, I love you as a friend, I think to myself, well, that's the new Peter talking. Because you see the old Peter, he would have just shot his mouth off and he had a way of doing that. He had a way of elevating and inflating his expressions of devotion to the Lord even on the night that Jesus was betrayed. When Jesus said, you're all going to fall away tonight on account of me.

It was Peter that said no, not me, not me Lord I will stand with you. I will go to my death with you tonight if need be, I will stand. He was always that kind of a way, it was always very inflated as it related to himself, always very elevated. Interesting, isn't it, that's not the Peter we're hearing anymore, why?

Because this is the Peter who is operating in the shadow of a great failure and he has now come to terms with himself. And this elevated, inflated sort of an ego

that went along with Peter is no longer front and center in his life. And when Jesus says to him, do you love me unconditionally? Peter is essentially saying, you know better, you know what I did, you know what I'm capable of.

As confident as I used to be, that I was the one who could love you above all the rest, I now see myself as I really am and if I'm going to be honest, I'm going to say, Lord, I love you as a friend. And therein lies the reality and Peter is now the more guarded and the more cautious Peter when speaking of himself.

But even in that tender place of realizing who he really is, Jesus doesn't berate him, or speak down to him, or put him down in any way. He recommissions him. Verse 15, "*Feed my lambs.*" Verse 16, "*Tend my sheep.*" Verse 17, "*Feed my sheep.*" In other words, Peter, the failure is behind you, ministry is ahead of you, I want you to put this aside now.

Yes, you failed, but that failure brought you face to face with who you really are and now I can use you because you see my power is made perfect in weakness. You saw yourself as strong, I had to show you that you're actually weak and now I can use you. So feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep, Peter, you're ready.

Even in the face of this failure, I want you to know you can move on. And you know, that's such an important thing for Christians to hear. I find Christians are not at a loss when it comes to confessing their sin, they're anxious to repent of their sin and turn away from it but the one area where they struggle deeply, is in moving on. In other words, recovering.

Realizing that even in the midst of this failure of mine, there's a future, there's ministry, there's fruitful ministry. But you see, that's what Jesus was showing Peter that day. When you go out on your own in your old way, you're going to come up empty. When you follow my command and follow the leading of the Lord, there is going to be fruit that is going to absolutely blow you away. It is going to be supernatural fruit and it's going to be fruit that will last. Yes, Peter, even you who failed so terribly, feed my sheep. It really is a beautiful thing.

And in verse 19, we end, oh, I'm sorry, I actually skipped ahead. Verse 18, this is where Jesus adds this as kind of a way of looking at the days ahead for Peter. He says, "*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.*" (and then John gives us this parenthetical explanation of what

Jesus said to Peter, he says) ¹⁹ (*This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.*)... ”

You know, the Bible doesn't talk to us about the death of Peter, but church history does. Church history tells us that Peter ended up in Rome and there he was crucified upside down and lit on fire for the cause of Christ. But Jesus told him, when you're old, you will stretch out your hands and the hands of Peter were stretched out on a cross where he too was put to death for the Lord and the Lord told him. And then after saying that, He ended by saying, look at the end of verse 19, “*Follow me.*” “*Follow me,*” guys, do you get the implications here?

He just got done telling him that following him, although there's going to be great fruit, supernatural fruit in following me, there's also going to be hardship and difficulty. And at the end of your days Peter, you're going to be led by the hand in a direction that you don't want to go, now, “*Follow me.*” Wow! Blows me away.

I am so glad that when I got saved, the Lord didn't show me all the things that I would go through as a Christian because I don't know if I would have followed Him. If I'd have gotten a preview. When I was a young believer and I'm saying young as far as walking with the Lord, I was about 24, 25 years old.

And I was going through a particularly hard time, just after coming to the Lord. And I remember saying to my pastor, I said to him, to his face, I said, if this is what being Christian is, I don't want it, that's what I told him. He laughed at me, bless his heart. But that's the way I... , and I think other Christians kind of feel that way. You get a little kind of, taste of, this isn't going to be all, you know, fun and games and so forth. But Jesus said, nevertheless, follow me.

How many of you, if Jesus gave you or had given you a preview of life to come in Christ, would have still said, yeah, I'm going for it, I'm following you, Lord. I think a lot of us would have maybe had given us a moment's pause. Huh, I wonder, if I really want to do this, is this what it means? Follow me, follow me. Boy, what powerful, powerful words, especially when you know that troublesome times may come as a result.

Now, just having heard this, verse 20 tells us, “²⁰ *Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved (and again, that's John) 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, (rather) “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?””

Well, this is an interesting kind of an interchange going on here, isn't it? So, Peter just receives this news, that in the end of his days, he's going to be taken where he doesn't want to go, and life isn't going to be very fun, but follow me. And Peter turns around, looks at John, and he goes, what about him, what about John? I don't know, is he a teacher's pet or what?

And I love how Jesus says, hey, listen, and I'm going to paraphrase now, here's what Jesus says to Peter. What's that to you? What business is that of yours what I do in John's life? In other words, there's an important principle here that we need to lay hold of and that is, don't compare yourself with somebody else's life. But yeah, we do it all the time.

The Bible tells us that, he who compares himself with others is not wise and yet we do. (2 Corinthians 10:12) We think, oh Lord, if my life was just like theirs, then I'd be happy. I'd just like..., if I could just be like them and we don't even know what's going on in their lives behind the scenes.

Some people can put on a very, very positive façade and there can be great heartache and pain under the surface, but be that as it may, it's just dumb to compare yourself with other people. And that's what Jesus is telling Peter. He said, what business is it of yours if I say, if I want him to stay alive until I come again?

And so John tells us that people ran with that comment and they started going, did you hear that? Jesus said, John's never going to die, He told him that. And so John even..., and I love, I'm so glad that John debunked it, and he goes, you know, that's not what Jesus said, He didn't say I wasn't going to die. He just said if, if I want him to stay alive until I come, what's that to you? If I do anything in his life, what is that to you, right? Again, we have this freedom, you know, I've been talking about this here. This freedom to interject our ideas, I think this is what Jesus meant when He said that.

I made somebody mad this last week, somebody wrote me a note and said, oh, I forget what it was even all about. It was, pastor Paul, do you think in Revelation that this could be in such and such and such and such and such? And I wrote him back and I just said, you know, I don't know, that would be all conjecture

and so I'm not even going to go there. And he wrote me back and said, that's really disappointing.

I was like, yeah, I guess, but you know what? I'm just..., I don't believe in interjecting or taking a statement and just going, what do you think it means because it's just going to get weird and that's exactly what's going on here.

Okay, John ends this gospel account in the last two verses by saying. He kind of comes out of the closet. He says, *“²⁴ This is the disciple (he's saying, it's me) who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.”*

And then he says, *“²⁵ Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”*

You might think to yourself, well, now, wait a minute here. We've got a digital world now, we can hold all kinds..., we can hold teraquads of information today, so.

I don't know, I kind of tend to agree with John, you know why? Because Jesus is still working, He's still doing, He's still changing lives, He's still transforming hearts, He's still saving marriages, He's still healing bodies. He's still doing and if all of those doings were written down, yeah, I agree. I don't think the world could contain all the books.

Let me end with a statement Jesus made way back in John chapter 5 on the screen it says,

John 5:17 (ESV)

“My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Jesus is still working and He's working in your life too and He wants you to know that. We tend to kind of sometimes think about, you know, the good old days in the Bible. Boy, wouldn't it have been great to live back in those good old days back when God did things. You know, we're living in this day and age now where God doesn't do anything anymore, we're just sitting around waiting for the trumpet, come Lord Jesus. Boy, wouldn't it have been great to live in those days when He was doing things. No, He's still doing things. Jesus is..., my Father is still working to this day and I am working and I'm working in your life and in your heart and in your family, amen.

Let's stand together, we're going to close in prayer. If you need some prayer for whatever's going on in your life right now or maybe you're praying for somebody else, we'd love to pray with you. We'll have some folks up here to pray with you, so.

Father, we thank you so much, your Word. You're so faithful to speak to us through your Word. You're so faithful Lord to speak and to minister to us through your Holy Spirit, to nourish our hearts and to encourage us.

And Lord, I thank you for the perpetual forgiveness that is ours in Jesus Christ. And even though we have failed, there's a future and a hope and a ministry that is ours as we walk in obedience to the Spirit.

Lord, we want to see that, we want to see fruitful ministry in the days ahead. We want to see the nets full to the point of almost breaking. We want to see that kind of fruitfulness. Lord, bring it about in our day, let our eyes see it and we will give glory to your name.

We thank you, we praise you, we worship you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ and all God's people said together, amen.

God bless you, have a good rest of your Sunday.