

81. Jesus Told What Would Happen to Peter

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how Jesus restored Peter after Peter denied Jesus three times. We also want to help them learn from the example of Jesus how to restore others who have had failures in their lives. In our topic today, we will see what else Jesus said to the disciples as He appeared to them at the Sea of Galilee.

After restoring Peter and telling him to feed and shepherd the sheep of Jesus, we see that Jesus also told Peter what would happen as Peter approached death. John 21:18-19 says, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” Jesus reminded Peter of what had happened in his past and was still continuing to happen in his life. Jesus told Peter that throughout his life he had done the things that he wanted to do. Jesus said that he would still have this freedom in the years to come.

However, Jesus said that this would change when he became old. More than thirty years later, Paul looked back to this day and wrote in 2 Peter 1:13-14, “Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.” Here, we see that Peter referred to his physical body by calling it a “tent.” He said that he would continue to teach as long as he was in this physical body. However, he also said that Jesus had shown him that the day was soon coming when he would put off this physical tent. Peter wrote the book of 2 Peter while he was a prisoner in Rome waiting for the Romans to put him to death for his faith in Jesus Christ and his ministry for Him.

Jesus was looking forward to that time when Peter would be facing death for his ministry as Jesus spoke to him here in John. Then, Jesus told Peter a very interesting thing about how Peter would die. Jesus said that this was the way he would glorify God. The Bible does not tell about the death of Peter. Church tradition said that Peter was also crucified just as Jesus had been crucified. That tradition also said that he felt he did not deserve the privilege of dying in the same way that Jesus died, so the Roman emperor, Nero, ordered him to be crucified hanging upside down on the cross.

Jesus again made the statement that He had made to Peter when He first called him. Jesus just said, “Follow Me.” In addition to feeling fully forgiven for denying Jesus three times, we see that Peter was also fully restored to the ministry to which Jesus had called him. Jesus had told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’” Peter had been sifted as wheat. However, his faith had not failed. Now, Jesus knew that Peter would be able to understand when others were sifted (failed) and he would be able to encourage them because he knew how Jesus had restored him.

Peter then began to wonder what would happen in the lives of the other disciples. John 21:20-23 says, “Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had

leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, ‘But Lord, what *about* this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.’ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?’” Peter turned around and saw John standing there.

As a result, Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John in the future. Jesus wanted to make it clear to Peter and the other disciples that He was the One that would choose how each person will glorify God. Jesus explained to Peter that his main concern should be his own obedience to Jesus and not what happened to others. Jesus made it clear that He was not going to tell Peter what would happen to John by His statement, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.” Peter would only receive information about his own future. This is why Jesus said, “You follow Me.” It should also be our concern to make certain that we follow Jesus and do what he has for us to do. Jesus has a different way for each Christian to bring glory to God and we will bring glory to Him as we are obedient to what Jesus calls us and equips us to do.

Meanwhile, the other disciples had heard when Jesus said, “If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?” Jesus did not explain that statement and so John explained what Jesus meant when he wrote the book of John. Jesus did not say that John would not die. Instead, Jesus had said that it was not important for Peter and the other disciples to know what would happen in the future to the other disciples. The important thing for Peter and every disciple from that time until today is for us to follow the plan that Jesus has for each one of us. Jesus had said in John 15:7-8, “‘If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.’” Here, we see that our concern should be to abide in Jesus so that we will bring glory to the Father by bearing much fruit.

Jesus is the One who determines how each person bears that fruit. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*.” We all have the same Holy Spirit but He has given each of us different gifts. We have been given different ministries by Christ but there is only one Christ. We are involved in different activities but God is the one who works through the life of each Christian. We are also to understand that we have all been given the same Holy Spirit but what He does in and through our lives is for the benefit of the whole body so that we will bring glory to God and not seek to glorify self.

As we come to the final verses of the book of John, we see that John concluded the book by saying that he was the writer of the things in this book. John 21:24-25 says, “This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.” Here, we see that John gave personal testimony about the things that are written in the book of John.

The word translated “testimony” is the word that was used to speak of testimony before a judge. As a result, John was saying that the book of John is like an official testimony that would be given in a court of law. John said that he was giving official testimony. He was the one who had written these things down. John could also say that his testimony was true because he had been an eyewitness of nearly all of the things that are written in the entire book. We saw in John 20:31 why John gave official testimony as he wrote the things that are written in this book. That verse says, “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” First, these things were written so that we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Second, these things were written so that we could have life in His name. John 3:36 explains, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

As Moses came to the end of his life, he told Israel in Deuteronomy 30:19-20, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” In a similar way, as John came to the end of his life, he told all who would follow how to choose life. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” John made it clear that the choice he offered by writing this book was not just physical life. Instead, John encourages all to choose eternal life.

John concluded by saying that there were many other things that Jesus did during His life and ministry on this earth. In fact, John said that if every single thing that Jesus did was written down as an individual item, the world itself would not be able to contain all of the books that would need to be written. Here, we see that John wanted to make it very clear that he just wrote a few of the key things that Jesus did to show that He is the Christ, the Son of God. As John 20:30-31 said, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children know that they can share with confidence the things that are written in this book because God chose an eyewitness of these signs to be the writer of the book. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share the message of the book of John with confidence.