

Listen, watch, or read the sermon on the website if you missed it. Turn to the back for an outline of the sermon.

This week's reading in the 2015/16 reading plan includes: Leviticus 17-23; Psalm 20-30

Ice Breaker: What is the most recent thing that you have said that you love?

1. Discuss anything that jumped out at you in your private devotions this week.
2. When we feel confronted with past failures, God and the adversary inspire two different responses. Contrast the guilt we often feel with the truth found in 1 John 1:9, Romans 8:1, and Psalm 103:11-12.
 - a. How do these passages apply to a Christ follower as compared to one who has not been washed in the blood of Christ?
3. Rather than levying a new task upon Peter to show his penitence, Jesus told him to prove his love by continuing to do what Jesus had already commanded him to do (John 21:15-17).
 - a. When others fall out of our good graces, do we take this same approach or want something additional from the perpetrator in order to forgive him or her?
4. The message pointed out that God uses our failures to break us in our rebellion. As part of the sanctification process, God uses the Holy Spirit and the word of God to convict us of our sin (John 16:8).
 - a. Though it is painful, he restores us if we allow him. Read Hosea 6:1-2. Compare the actions of God in these verses to the actions of a surgeon.
5. The decision to follow Christ is a commitment to die to self and surrender to Christ (Luke 9:23, Galatians 2:20). The more we emulate Christ, the more we can expect to be treated like Christ (Matthew 10:22).
 - a. Read John 15:18-21. Knowing this in advance, how should this impact our attitude when interacting with non-believers? Consider 1 Peter 3:13-17.
6. It is easy to state that we love Jesus, but much more difficult to live this out. What are some practical ways that we can show Jesus that we love him?
 - a. Jesus told Peter that he was to tend and feed Jesus' sheep. What does that look like for us?
 - b. Our love for God can be hindered by relationships with other people. Read 1 John 4:19-21. Is there anyone you need to forgive so that you can fully love God?

Sermon Idea: “God’s best work in us often comes out of our spiritual failures.”

I. God confronts us with our spiritual failures to restore us to Christ’s service.
(vv 15-17)

- A. Jesus spoke to Peter using his name before he trusted Christ for salvation.
- B. Jesus questioned Peter’s love for him.
- C. When we sin against God we do not believe the gospel at that moment are denying Christ.
- D. Peter responded with hard-learned humility.
 - 1. God rebukes us in our sins to break us in our rebellion.
 - 2. He exposes to us our sins by His word.
 - 3. He convicts us of sins by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- E. Jesus restored Peter by calling him to devotion and obedience.
 - 1. When we respond with confession and repentance, God restores us to Christ’s service.
 - 2. God’s restoration means to live in devotion and obedience to Christ.

II. God’s plan for us includes our devotion even in difficulty for Christ’s sake.
(vv 18-19)

- A. Peter was to glorify God by dying for Christ’s sake in a crucifixion.
- B. Peter was restored to follow Christ unto death.
- C. We should expect difficulty in a life devoted to Christ.
 - 1. Following Christ may mean we face persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - 2. Following Christ often will mean we endure trials. (Romans 5:3-5)
 - 3. Following Christ always will mean that we surrender to God’s will.
- D. We should expect joy in suffering for the sake of Jesus’ name. (James 1:2-4; Romans 12:12; 1 Peter 4:13)

III. God requires our complete focus as we follow Christ with devoted hearts.
(vv 20-23)

- A. Peter wanted to know what Jesus’ plan was for John. (vv 20-21)
- B. Jesus explained to Peter that His will for John was not Peter’s concern. (v 22)
 - 1. In hearts fully devoted to Christ there’s no time for distractions.
 - 2. In hearts fully devoted to Christ there’s no place for comparisons.
- C. Peter’s focus was to be on his own relationship with Christ and his call to follow Him. (v 22)
- D. In hearts fully devoted to Christ our relationship with Him reigns supreme.