

How will you respond?

This time of year is commencement speech season. Speeches are given at graduations ceremonies, and for the most part, all commencement speeches have the same theme. The speaker tells the students, "You've done a great thing. You've accomplished a great task. I'm proud of you. You should feel good about yourselves, but now, I challenge you to take the next step forward. Go on to greatness."

Looking at these final verses of the book, I've concluded that God had John write what he did for a reason - to challenge the readers.

GOD'S WORD CONCLUDES THIS GOSPEL WITH CHALLENGING THE READERS TO RESPOND.

How does what John wrote down challenge us to a response?

I believe this is written in such a way that it provokes us to personally consider 4 questions. Each question is a challenge to you and me. 4 challenges

Challenge #1 - Will you personally follow Jesus, leaving all comparisons aside? 21:20-22

Some have wondered, why is John 21 here? There are many reasons, but one reason I believe is this: John 21 captures the Christian experience. John 21 explains to us what life is like after you place your faith in Jesus, and Peter's experience becomes a lesson in living color for us.

So Jesus restored Peter, and He can restore us too. Jesus forgave him and called him to follow.

I don't think this is just a challenge to Peter. I think God is challenging all of us who call upon the name of Jesus: Will you personally follow Jesus leaving all comparisons aside?

What has Jesus called you to do? And will you follow after that? Will you drop all comparisons - stop looking at everyone else - and just fix your eyes on what Jesus has called you to do?

Challenge #2 - Will you personally pay careful attention to Jesus' Word? 21:23

John warns us in verse 23 that a misunderstanding and a misreading of the Word of God has been a reality since the beginning, so he emphasized in his final remarks the importance of carefully paying attention to the Word of God.

John tells us that Jesus never said John would physically live till the rapture or till the second coming. Jesus only made a statement to Peter saying, "even if that were the case, I still want you to focus on what I've called you to do."

What I gather in all this is that every word of the Word of God is important. We need to carefully pay attention to every single word of it. Faulty conclusions will come to those who do not pay careful attention to the details of the Bible.

So the challenge we ought to consider today in moving forward in our Christian walk is: will you personally pay careful attention to Jesus' Word? Will you read it? Will you live by it? Will you focus on it? Will the Word of Christ become a priority in your life moving forward? One of the fastest ways for a servant of Christ to get off track is to pay more attention to his own opinions than the Word of God.

Challenge #3 - Will you personally make your choice about Jesus? **21:24**

Now we might ask what the “we” is all about? “And we know that his testimony is true.” Is that John writing in the a plural form? Or is that someone else along with John?

There have been many suggestions made. I lean towards the opinion (with others) that it’s the elders in Ephesus. John served in the church of Ephesus in his later years and it’s probable that when John finished writing this book, the elders in his local church affirmed John as a true eye witness to everything he wrote down. They gave their stamp of approval saying, “we know this man’s character, and as a valid eye witness, we trust his words.”

But I think this verse poses a challenge for each of us personally and the challenge is: will you make your choice about Jesus? John made his choice. He personally walked with Jesus, ate with Jesus, talked with Jesus, even touched Jesus, and John made his choice. He said, "by believing in Jesus I have life eternal, and so can you."

Will you personally, like John, become a bold witness for Jesus? Will you define yourself, like John, as one loved by Jesus? Will you personally make the choice to center your life around Him?

Challenge #4 - Will you personally be a part of Jesus’ endless story? **21:25**

John had many things he could have written, but he was very selective in what he wrote. He wrote for a purpose 1) to tell us who Jesus is. 2) to tell us what He did. 3) to generate faith in Him 4) to generate a lifetime of following Him.

What if in John 4 we got to read every word of Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well? What if Lazarus wrote his story down. What if we could read it all?

All of history, I believe, is His story. What if we could read about everything Jesus has done in every single person’s life who’s ever be transformed by Him? Then I’d suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. But you know where that information is contained? Heaven.

Jesus’ story is endless. Will you personally be a part of Jesus’ story? Will you have a part in His story?

What’s God calling you to do?

What will Jesus do with you? How will you respond to this gospel of John? I believe God is challenging us: Will you follow Jesus leaving all comparisons aside? Will you carefully pay attention to His word? Will you make your choice about Jesus? Will you be a part of His endless story?