

WK 21

26May2024

Call to Worship

Doctrine. Ezekiel 36:26. A New Breed.

Offering

Sermon Text: John 21:15-25 | A Different Breed Pt. 2

Intro.

Over the past couple of weeks I have spoken about the Apostle Peter's calling into Christian ministry. We've looked at that in a pretty broad scope and I get the impression that you all grasp those points pretty strongly. That's good.

As we consider this passage today, I want us to place our attention on two words Jesus says to Peter twice here; "**Follow Me.**"

We are each called to Christian service and in doing that it is important in our Christian service to Follow Christ.

I know you would all agree with me about the importance to Love Christ and the Importance to Follow Christ. So that leads me to a Doctrine that I really have not taught here before that I believe is very important for us.

The Doctrine of Divine Assurance.

You see that Peter is called to Follow Christ. You know that you and I are being called to Follow Christ. But how can we be sure? How can we have assurance that we are doing that?

Q: Have you ever considered the proposition; Am I really saved? Am I really following Christ? Have I really dropped the nets and left the boat and followed Him?

Is it all subjective? Is it emotive and based off my feelings?

What if I don't feel like I am saved? I'm told I should have joy but I actually feel sad. Is that a bad thing?

How do I know that I am following Jesus Christ? And in the age of false Christ's, and false hopes, and false doctrines, we can be sure there is also false assurance.

It is possible to have confidence in a guarantee that is no guarantee at all. That's called False Assurance.

All that to say, as a Pastor, I want you to have complete assurance. I want you to know Christ truly, have hope in Him certainly, have a more confidence of prayer to Christ, and have complete comfort and assurance of your Eternal Salvation in Jesus Christ.

To do otherwise, is a waste of time!

I do not want anyone here to doubt their salvation. However, I do want them to have a true hope, a true confidence, a true assurance, that is leaning on a true view of Jesus Christ and salvation.

To build up your self-esteem, but neglect the assurance of your soul is folly.

I remember when I was in 9th grade, I was waiting for the introduction of our High School football coaches. I attended a Christian high school. One that is known nationally for its football program but also for its disciplined Christian values. Well, I didn't exactly know what I was in for when the season started.

When the Head Football coach walked into the room with a hundred some High School Football players; you could have heard a pin drop. He was a fairly intimidating figure, at least to some people.

He looked at all of us players and said, 'I want you all to know right now, I do not care about your self-esteem. I do not care how you feel about your-self.' And Coach made it really clear that he didn't care about our feelings and about us discovering ourselves and having some type of existential emotional experience in our teenage years.

He was a tough coach and it was a tough team.

Four years later when I was a senior, we had that same introductory meeting. But this time I was the captain of the team and it just so happened to play out that I was the only remaining player that had stayed and endured from Freshman to Senior.

Well the first game of the season, I had a bad leg injury. It was Coach that took me to the hospital. It was Coach that was waiting in the ER with me until my dad got there. It was Coach, who didn't care about my self-esteem.

What do I make of this, Coach who doesn't care about my self esteem, drove me to the hospital at midnight. When he could have delegated the task. Coach who doesn't care about my self-esteem, waiting in the waiting room, when I was on morphine drip.

What do we make of things like this; it's this - There is a big difference from pandering to a person's emotions and self-esteem, to actually loving who that person is.

Fast forward, almost 30 years, I was at a major celebration for Coach's career. He came up to me, in front of all the other players. Players from decades of coaching. And said to me, "David, I want you to know that I'm very proud of you for what you are doing now. Keep it up."

My point is you have to stick it out. You have to keep going when everyone else is going to quit. You have to stick it out when everyone is doubting the process. You have to stick it out when the times are tough.

Sticking it out, which in **Christian Theology** is called **The Perseverance of the Saints**, is a matter of continuing despite circumstances.

Peter has become an expert in this lifestyle. Endurance, Fortitude, Stick-to-it-ive-ness.

Q: How do you know if a person is saved? Well, they don't fall away. That's a good sign. But that can take a long time to evaluate.

Today, I want to give some metrics of Assurance, in Following Jesus Christ, that I think can bear immediate results in your life.

My hope is to build your strength in your **Assurance of Following Christ**.

But I want to give you this up front. Divine Assurance comes down to a few spiritual traits; Boldness. Discipline. Peace. Joy.

Of course all of the other fruits of the spirit become evident. But it seems these 4 become immediately evident in all people at Christian conversion.

Boldness.

Not Brashness. Not Bravado. Boldness.

Follow Christ with Boldness. It is a matter of Discipline; 'you will not be able to go where you want', your "Will" will Change.

Today we have people who follow Christ with Brashness and they are a bother.
Today we have people who follow Christ with Bravado and they badger.

But to follow Christ with Boldness, is a quiet, peaceable confidence that is grounded, calm, secure and at rest in Almighty God.

Boldness has confidence not based on self-esteem but off of God's nature and Christ's work.

Proverbs 28:1 'The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as lions.'

In the jungle, Lions don't have to roam around the terrain telling everyone that they are a lion. The rest of the kingdom is well aware. Brashness, Bravado, has to always go around convincing other people of something they are not.

Boldness can simply rest in who they are as a person.

My pastor when I was a little boy used to always say, ***You are never more a man than when you choose to Follow Jesus Christ.*** You are never more a beautiful lady than when you choose to follow Jesus Christ.

There is something of strength, confidence, and grace that comes with conversion.

Salvation gives an Assurance that is follow of Boldness. Not Brashness and Bravado. But genuine spiritual strength.

Boldness in the Book of Acts.

Acts 4:13 'when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.'

Acts 4:29 'And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word'

Acts 4:31 'And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.'

Acts 9:27 Paul 'preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus' – boldness in preaching was evidence of being called to the task.

Acts 9:29 'he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death.'

They are called Grecians in the ESV, Hellenistic Jews in the NASB. Either way, they are the same grouping of people that opposed the Deacon, Stephen. Here's Paul not shying away from an argument with them. Instead, telling them the same thing.

Cowardice is not the way of Christ. If I sink into cowardice this is NOT following Jesus Christ.

Cowardice is not the product of Following Christ.

Boldness, strength, Supernatural Power that comes from the Holy Spirit, this is the way of Following Christ.

Cowardice and compromise and conformity are not signs of Following Christ.

Cowardice, compromise, and conformity are symptoms of a sickness in religion today.

Boldness is the opposite of living in fear.

Timothy 'God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind/discipline' 2 Tim. 1:7 Paul reminds Timothy that timidity is not coming from Christ's spirit; it is either the flesh or the devil but not the Holy Spirit.

God has given His servants the Spirit to follow Him. And God has given all of its traits required to accomplish the task at hand.

Now God must give His servants this boldness in their spirit otherwise nothing gets interrupted in the lives of those who have been taken captive by Satan.

Without boldness there is no **Spiritual Awakening**.

In Acts 13:46 'Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly' – when they preached on the Sabbath to the whole city that assembled.

One of the ways by which you know that you are following Christ is that you continue to do the things Christ commanded His disciples to do.

Boldness is a matter of Assurance and Assurance is a matter of proximity to Jesus Christ.

In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas received great acceptance and great opposition and it was preaching Jesus Christ in the spirit of boldness that brought about both responses.

Acts 14:3 'they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord'

The boldness of Paul's preaching was so profound that it divided the entire city.

Friends Jesus Christ is 'the Truth' and the Truth divides.

People who are struggling with low levels of timidity, persistent conformity. These are signs of having fallen away from the Truth and not following Jesus Christ.

Timidity, conformity, cowardice, compromise, this is the Continuity of the False Convert.

Confidence, Strength, Assurance, Boldness. These are the things the Followers of Christ are made of.

Often we get to a place in our adult lives where we look at the younger generation and hope more for them. And that's good.

We will hope something for them

Now let me say this. Christians don't need to go looking for a fight. Don't worry, the fight will come to you.

This will be the intersection of Following Christ. Will you cowardly fall away or will you courageously continue.

Boldness does not mean brashness. Boldness does not mean bravado. Boldness is not shooting guns and shooting off at the mouth.

Boldness simply speaks what is true is **Plainly and Clearly**.

Boldness. Discipline. Peace. Joy. Calling out in prayer/Abba Father (Rom. 8/Gal.4). Continuing in God's Word(John 8).

Something that will hinder your boldness in following Christ is;

1. On-going sin.
2. A lack of faith in the work of Christ in your life.

You must know that it is the Lord Jesus that loves you. You must know that He died for you. You must know that He is calling you to Follow Him.

You must know this. **'anything not done in faith is sin' Rom. 14:23**

First, sin is resolved by the work of Christ on the cross. Trust in your righteousness not in your own work but in Christ's.

Second, turn from on-going patterns of sin and your will begin to build m

Discipline.

Discipline does not mean harshness. Maybe that's how it is perceived by the carnal mind. But that's not what is meant by it in the Scriptures.

Discipline, Godly discipline, is applied to each Christian by the Holy Spirit to discipline that person to follow Christ.

Discipline simply means doing what is right when you do not want to do it.

Discipline is required to live the Christian life because Christian still have a sin nature that wages war against the spirit of God that lives in them.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit disciplines Christians in order to save them.

If you looked at every major figure in the Bible you would see that God disciplines every person that He saves. And God does not discipline the people that He does not save.

That does not mean that those people God does not discipline are doing what is right before God, it simply means, God has not intervened in their life to stop them from doing the things that He damns.

Discipline is not a thing we do to ourselves, at least not in the Christian sense, Discipline is a thing God does to us.

God disciplines us because He loves us.

God can discipline us by the Holy Spirit illumine our minds to be convicted of sin or to turn away from sin.

God can discipline us by health issues.

God can discipline us by vocational issues.

God can discipline us by family issues.

You see all of these actions of God as discipline in the Scripture and God only does it to the people that He intends to save and use.

I'll put it like this, Godly discipline is a sign of Divine Assurance because it is matched with Divine Adoption.

God disciplines His children and this is a great sign that you are His. He will not let you get away with things, because you are His namesake. You are a representative of Him.

It's like your mom or dad used to say when you asked 'Can I go do such and such?' You mom says no. 'You say, well why not Johnny is doing it?' And your mom says 'Johnny isn't my son.'

Our heavenly Father exercises stricter discipline upon us because of the matters that are at stake.

I would be very concerned with a person who is confident of Assurance but lives without any of God's discipline.

I want to be very clear, I'm not talking about human discipline to do godly things. Like your own personal discipline to pray or study Scripture or come to church.

That's good but that's not what I'm referring to. I'm referring to God intervening in otherwise normal circumstances to discipline your life.

You will know this has happened because you will become aware of things you can and cannot do, not because they are rules or regulations, but instead because God's Spirit is indwelling you and does not allow you to do certain things.

Peace.

Further you will have peace about this.

In the boldness and in the discipline from God you will be at peace with it all.

What is interesting with this as well, is that it's always possible to receive opposition. But God will work peace into your circumstances as a witness of Divine Assurance.

When all Hell is breaking loose, you seem to still be at peace.

Now, I know a man, I 've watched this, all Hell can be breaking loose, and he sits at ease. But he does not sit at ease because of Divine Assurance, he sits at ease because of False Assurance.

The man is so spiritually dense, so spiritually unperceptive, that he cannot discern the difference between **the Works of God and the Ways of God.**

That's something to meditate on.

The works of God are the outcomes of His Supernatural Handiwork.
BUT, the Ways of God are the Spiritually Discerned Circumstances of His nature and character.

When a Man does not Know Christ, He might enjoy what he thinks are the works of Christ but He will be easily led astray by Satan because He does not know the Ways of Christ.

Satan will give a man peace, it is a false peace, but it is peace nonetheless.

The prophet Jeremiah said 'they have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying 'Peace, peace' but there is no peace'! Jer. 6:14

Friends Satan knows just how to swoon the sinner, and God knows just how to save the Saint.

Sinners have their worship services and Saints have theirs and a big distinction between the two is the discipline of God.

The good Lord Jesus said ' Peace I give unto you, not as the world gives do I give unto you'

Joy.

A genuine happiness for knowing who God is, who Jesus Christ is, and what they intend to do to you.

The Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit.

Abba Father. Rom. 8/Gal. 4 - the ability to call on God in prayer by the Holy Spirit

Body.

Q: What things are required to 'Follow' Christ? AND, What are these things that will build; Boldness, Discipline, Peace, Joy and an Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit?

Practices the build Assurance.

1. Is regular prayer and study of God's word. 2. Is regular fellowship with other Christians. 3. Is the Submission of Self-Will to God's Will.

Over the years there have been numerous proclivities of the Christian faith that have developed. Numerous denominations have emerged, boasting particular distinctives about how to Follow Christ.

Of those denominations, some over emphasize key doctrines, some underemphasize. Some miss-emphasize and some fail to emphasize essential truths all together.

Denominations of the Christian faith are merely religious models by which to follow after Christ. They are not in and of themselves wrong or bad unless their teaching about God and Christ is.

However, in our Consumer-saturated culture, the denominations that were once established by well-intended people have largely become co-opted by Politicians, and Wealthy figures that are using those organizations as a means to lobby for their own personal agendas and influence.

This is NOT how to Follow Christ.

Let me be clear about this, I am not saying Denominational Christianity is bad or poor or should be wholly avoided. What I am saying is that in an age that is highly secularized, highly anti-Church, and anti-Christian. In an age where Dollars make more sense than Doctrines.

In an age where 3 minute sound bites grab the attention of many short-sighted congregants, and Facebook evangelism serves to develop the core thoughts about Christianity. In an age where Pinterest gets more attention than the Pentateuch. In an age where Bitcoin is more of an interest than the Bible. In an age like this, it doesn't become too difficult to manipulate the perceptions of non-discerning people.

Q: How do we know with confidence that we are Following Christ? How do we know with Assurance that we are saved from our sin and growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

I. Prayer and Regular Study of God's Word. (Feed My Sheep)

God's Word and Prayer to God work as a catalyst to demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Seal of the Holy Spirit that gives Assurance of Salvation and Following Christ.

John Owen, 'Paul does not say the Holy Spirit is the sealer, but is Himself/the Holy Spirit the seal (Eph. 1:13, 4:30, 2 Cor. 1:21). God's sealing of believers is His gracious communication of the Holy Ghost unto them to enable them unto all the duties of their holy calling, evidencing them to be accepted with him and asserting their preservation unto eternal salvation'

1. It is the impression of the Holy Spirit upon the Saints mind and heart to turn to God in prayer and to study His will in His Word. It is by prayer and by regular study of God's Word that Christ has chosen to not lose any of His sheep.

This food and fence is how the Good Shepherd keeps His sheep in their pin.

The Holy Spirit works through these means to bring us to Christ, to depend on Christ, and to follow after the will of God through Christ.

II. Loving Fellowship with other Christians. (Shepherd My Sheep)

1. Health and Wellness of the Sheep Pin.

How healthy are your sheep?

Are they content, peaceful, protected? Once a herd of sheep are content, peaceful, and protected, it becomes fairly easy to identify the wolves.

2. The Equation of Loving Christian Fellowship.

Time + Truth = Trust.

When people have not spent a long amount of time together, it is reasonable to question the extent to which you can trust someone.

'do not cast your pearls before swine' Matt. 7:6

Swine are dirty creatures that do not take one material more seriously than another.

To follow Christ we must take the Truth seriously and take it seriously over an extended period of time.

This establishes a pattern of trust in following Christ.

Trust without the Truth is not Trust. It's a disaster.

III. Submission of Self-Will to God's Will.

1. Selfishness or Selflessness.

Selfishness is caused by Self-Pride. Pride is the root of all sin.

All sin comes from self-pride. In the inverse, it only stands to reason that all Christian virtue comes from the absence of Self-pride; Humility.

Self-lessness is the focus of Following Christ.

2. Self-focus or Christ-focus. (An assessment of my obedience)

How does this effect me or How does this effect the body of Christ?

The decisions that I am making today, how do they have an impact and influence on Christ's people.

If I don't show up today will it matter? If I do show up today what does it matter?

Exposition.

v. 18 'Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.'

You realize two things happen as you live longer? You lose physical freedom and gain spiritual freedom.

The longer you live the more you experience two things; Pain and Providence.

The longer you live the more you see of the pains of this broken world.

The longer you live the more you see of God's good Providence to you in this broken world.

wished.

ηθελες/eltheses; Wanted, Desired, willed, determined.

There is going to come a time in your life where you no longer call the shots.
This is the intersection of true discipleship.

This is the intersection of the Saints and the Ain'ts.
It all comes down to this; Who is in Charge?!

All religion comes down to one word; **Authority.**

Look at every religion in the world, Who is calling the shots? Who is in charge? Who is determining the outcomes?

If it is God's religion, then God is in control.
If it is anything else, man is in control.

And let me tell you, there are a lot of religions in the name of God where they put a god-face on but it's a godless heart behind it.

What is at the heart of your religion?

Who is the Authority? If that question is answered then everything else can fall into place.

Life really gets simplified when we can determine who is in charge.

Do you want freedom? Freedom comes from knowing you're not in control!

If you are in control, then you are slave to your own capabilities and you and I already are keenly aware of how incapable we each are.

If God is in control, and we are sincerely submitted to Him, then friends, there is an endless stream of goodness that we can ride along.

There's something I love that Rick says all the time 'I'm going behind enemy lines and I'm going to jump out of the plane...but this time I'm doing it with no parachute!!!!'

Friends in the physical world...that's not smart!

In the Spiritual world, that's the smartest decision you've ever made!!!!

v. 19 'Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

Glorifying God in our death.

The only way to bring God glory in our death is by submitting our life to His providence over our life.

Living our life in submission to God's providence will bring Him glory when we eventually entrust ourselves to a faithful Creator.

Follow Me.

Jesus states this as a **Present Active Imperative**. – What that means is that it is a command to obey right here and right now.

Jesus called Peter to Leadership, but the only way to lead is to follow. All good leaders are also good followers!

In order to be a good follower you must be obedient.

This is a CRITICAL point to grasp. In order to Lead Well, a Person MUST follow well!

Even Aristotle once said, 'He who cannot follow well, cannot be a good leader'

Following Christ is not a delayed decision. It is a decision that must be made today. It is an immediate choice to follow Christ.

And in order to lead in your life you must follow in your spiritual life.

To lead others in your physical circumstances you must follow Christ in your spiritual circumstances.

Last week. A Different Breed. Pt. 3

v. 20

v. 21

v. 22

v. 23

v. 24

v. 25

Application.

Our times are in God's hands. – (Providence)

Assurance: Boldness, Discipline, Peace, Joy. The Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit as Children of God.

Conclusion.

Benediction.

Small Group Questions.

1. Have you ever wrestled with the topic of Assurance?
2. Can you see how these categories of Assurance have been expressed in your life since coming to faith in Christ?
3. How can we express a bold faith that is not full of brashness or bravado?
4. Have you ever been disciplined by God to make changes in your life?
5. Do you experience the peace of God's Spirit even in the midst of trying times?