

Westside Fellowship Sermon Transcript

Title: Do you Love Me more than These?

Text: John 21:15-25

Series: 50 Days that Changed the World, pt 4

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I want to tell you about a man named Jim Elliot. All right? Jim Elliot, he lived from 1927 to 1956.

He was an American missionary and he was sent out to minister to, to evangelize the people of Ecuador. His mission in Ecuador was not very long-lived because very shortly after encountering the H- Huorani people of Ecuador they wound up coming against him with intense force, and wound up killing him and several people who were there on the mission with him.

Later his wife would continue the mission and would continue evangelizing the people in Ecuador. But it was found in his journal Jim's journal that he wrote, so- an entry that he wrote in 1949. He wrote this: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep in order to gain that which he cannot lose."

And the reason I wanted to share that with you is because this wonderful legacy of a man who truly learned what it means to follow Jesus, no matter the cost th- this is a legacy that, that I want each of us to learn to look into, to, to learn to look toward. That, that it is he who is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain that which he cannot lose.

This serves as an example of what it truly looks like to follow Jesus. And as we turn to John 21 and continue our sermon series of 50 Days That Changed The World- We're gonna see another example, such example of the life and ministry of an individual that we know as the Apostle Peter, but Simon Peter, who would learn what it means to follow Jesus.

Who would learn what it means to really share with the exact sentiment of Jim Elliot that it is wiser to give up that which you cannot keep in order to gain that which you cannot lose. All right, if you recall from last week, John 21, it functions as an epilogue of sorts. And we're not ready to jump into the text quite yet, so we

can hold back on that if you will.

Thank you so much. John 21 functions as an epilogue of sorts, all right, whereby we are looking at the events that John has recorded for us, roughly around AD 8, 80. Right? AD 80. You follow me? The mid-80s, late 80s, early 90s. W- this chapter functions specifically like a cut scene in a movie, right?

That kinda plays after the credits have rolled. And it allows us to see a little bit more into perhaps some questions that were left lingering in our minds. Questions that were left lingering that, that may not have been answered by the time we got to the end of John chapter 20, where we see the purpose of the book, right?

The purpose of the book was written so that we might see the eyewitness evidence that Jesus is the Christ, and believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing, we may have life in His name. And so now we move into John 21, and one of those lingering questions that's gonna be answered right here in our passage today is this question of what about Peter?

All right, what about Peter? Now why is that a question? Why would that be a question in the mind of someone reading this gospel? It's because the last time that we saw Peter, all right, the last time that we interacted with Peter, he was at the residence of the high priest, standing out in the courtyard.

Jesus was on trial. He was standing around a campfire. He denied Jesus. Jesus turned and looked at him, and Peter ran away and wept bitterly. Now, by the time someone arrives at the time in history that John is writing this gospel, which like I said, would be the late 80s, early 90s AD, there would be people who would've been familiar with the ministry of Peter.

In fact, by the time of this writing, Peter has likely already been martyred in Rome at the hands of Nero. So people would've been well familiar with this man, Peter. They would've been well familiar with his ministry, with his calling. And I think a question may have lingered in the minds of people what about Peter?

The last time we really saw anything about him, he was denying Christ. How is it that he was restored into fellowship and recommissioned to be this leader amongst the people of Christ that, that he became? And see, John 21 helps us

answer that question. See, Peter's denial of Jesus was public, and therefore it was important for him to be restored publicly.

See, oftentimes the Bible gives us insight into those moments whereby our sin should be confessed and dealt with in the manner in which it was committed. All right, what do I mean by that? If someone commits private sins, that is to be dealt with privately between you and the Lord. But if someone commits public sins, guys, that is to be dealt with publicly.

There is to be public confession and forgiveness extended. And so we're seeing this play out here in Peter's life. Without such, listen to me, without such a public restoration of Peter- The other disciples a- and Peter may have gone the rest of their lives wondering if Peter was somehow unworthy of the office of ministry that he held.

Wondering if he was somehow i- if he w- had somehow presumably been put in this position even though he already squandered the opportunity once. Why should they let him hold that office again? But what we're gonna learn in John 21 this morning is that this incredible truth that that we see constantly throughout the Bible is that in Christ, listen to me, in Christ, there is true forgiveness for sin.

In Christ, there is true fellowship offered. And in Christ, there is true purpose and further service in the here and now. In other words what we're gonna see is that what happens in the past stays in the past. But in Christ, we are a new creation and welcomed to walk in the newness of life. And I think that's something that we should all remember as we read this and as we think on our own lives that we should be real careful never to place more restrictions on people's service in the local church than the Bible places on them.

Amen? Let's jump into the text. Verse 15, John 21:15. "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.' And he said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He said to him a second time, Jesus said to Simon a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'

Simon said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' And Jesus said to Simon, 'Then tend my sheep.'" Jesus said to Simon 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."

And Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 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." This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.

And after saying this, he said to him, "Follow me."

See, all of this in this text is leading us to these last two words that we see in verse 19, follow me. We see in here the beauty of brokenness. We see in here the love and the gentleness of Jesus to restore broken and repentant hearts to a right fellowship with him. And then we see this invitation, this instruction for the disciples of Christ to follow Jesus.

But look, as we're going to take a closer look at the text this morning, I actually want to provide us with a few observations from the text that might help us, help each one of us as we seek to follow Jesus in our daily lives. All right, the first observation that we're going to see from the text is this.

As you set out to follow Jesus, please remain vigilant toward the dangers of your own spiritual blind spots. All right, let me say that again. An observation directly from the text. As you set out, as we set out to follow Jesus, please remain vigilant toward the dangers of your own spiritual blind spots.

Look, when we paused our study of John 21 last week, we saw Jesus and seven disciples, Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and then I think Philip and Andrew, because those were the original band of brothers there. They were sitting around a campfire. They were eating breakfast with Jesus and sharing in a time of fellowship together by the Sea of Galilee.

I love campfire conversations, and that's where these guys are. There's just something special about sitting around a fire. Typically I'm eating s'mores and chocolate, not fish and bread. But nevertheless, these guys are sitting around a fire. They're sharing conversation, and it's typically around the flickering flame

that we just kinda begin to relax a little big-- a little bit.

We begin to settle in a little bit and we really begin to share really intimate times. At least it's that way in, in my life and in my family. When we have a campfire, we enjoy these conversations. And what we see is that as they're enjoying these conversations after they had finished eating breakfast and had enjoyed a little bit of time with Jesus, Jesus leans into this conversation a little bit more, and he says to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

See, something that is fascinating that I love about this passage is that this passage is a preacher's dream. It's already organized in groups of three, and inside of each one of those groups of three, there's yet another group of three. And each one of these segments is gonna contain Jesus' question, Peter's response, and Jesus' commission.

And right out of the gate, we see this first group of three in Jesus' question, and he asks Simon, son of John, "Do you love me more than these?" What a strange question. What a strange question. Why would Jesus ask Peter such a question? He doesn't just ask Peter, "Peter, do you love me?" There's a comparative point here.

Do you love me more? Do you love me more than? Do you love me more than these? What's he talking about? See, even though it might seem like this is a pretty odd question, let's remember that Jesus is the master of asking perfect questions. God always asks perfect questions that cause people to stop in their tracks, to evaluate their actions, to confess their failures, to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, questions designed to drive people toward an awareness of their constant need of mercy and grace, questions that are designed to reveal our spiritual blindness, questions designed to point attention to our spiritual blind spots.

This question is not for Jesus' benefit. No, this question is for Peter's benefit. This question, I believe, is for the benefit of the group. Why do I say that? Because we have to ask ourselves what does Jesus mean in asking, "Do you love me more than these?" More than what? See, throughout the week I've read a lot of different commentators, scholars expositors, a- and there are quite a few different thoughts about this passage.

A- and what I have come to realize is that there are some really smart and really godly men who are not completely in agreement over what does Jesus mean by more than these. And so therefore, what I want to do to- for you this morning is to provide you with the kinda top three views from all of the sources.

But then I want to offer you the view that I'm gonna throw my hat in this morning. I'm gonna invite you to make your own decision. But then I- I'm gonna present to you why I am gonna throw my hat into one of these views. See, the first view of what, what does more than these mean, the first view is, "Peter, do you love me more than you love these other guys sitting here?"

Right? "Do you love me more than you love these other disciples?" And that's a great question. That's a question that we all need to wrestle with. I inserted my name in this question this week. Jacob, do you love me more than you love your friends? Jacob, do you love me more than you love your family?

Jacob, do you love me more than you love the other people in your life? That is a question that we need to wrestle with. That's a question that demands a positive response of, "Yes, Lord." But I don't think that's the question that Jesus is asking here. It's a question that's asked other places, but I don't think it's the question asked here There's another view whereby perhaps Jesus is asking Peter, "Peter do you love me more than you love these fishing boats and this fishing gear and all of these trappings from your former manner of life?

Do you love me more than these?" See, because we remember the last time we picked up in John 21, Peter said, guys, I don't really know what I'm supposed to do right now, therefore, I'm going back to fishing." And he sees Jesus on the shore, and he jumps out of the boat, and he swims in as hard as he can.

Jesus makes them breakfast and invites them to come and just share a time of intimate fellowship, and now Jesus is asking Peter this question, "Do you love me more than these?" Perhaps he is asking, "Do you love me more than the fish and the nets and the boats and the former manner of life? Do you love me more than these, Peter?

Put yourself there, Jacob. Do you love me more than blank? Do you love me more than music? Do you love me more than guitars? Do you love me more than fame and success? Do you love me more than money and wealth? Do you love me

more..." Fill in the blank. "Do you love me more than these?" This is a phenomenal question.

It's a question we all must answer in the positive. "Yes, Lord, I love you more than these," but I don't think this is the question that Jesus is asking. It's a great question. It's a question that is asked elsewhere, but it's not the question that's being asked here. The third view, the view that I honestly will throw my hat in the ring with, that I believe what Jesus is asking, is this.

Jesus is a- I believe Jesus is asking Peter Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these other disciples love me?"

Huh. That's an odd question. "Simon, do you love me more than these other disciples love me?"

Why would I put my hat in that ring? The other two options seemed great, didn't they? 'Cause I believe what Jesus is doing here is he is exposing Peter's blind spots. I believe that he's exposing Peter's blindness. I believe that what Jesus is doing is he's bringing to light something that happened the night before the crucifixion that's just kinda been floating around awkwardly for the last little bit, and that needs to be dealt with publicly. Make no mistake, this feels like a pretty awkward question.

For Peter, imagine how he's feeling in this moment. Jesus has just asked him, "Do you love me more than these guys love me?" Guys, this is a classic rock and a hard place scenario. If Peter answers, "Yes, Lord, I do," well now he's just made it seem as if he loves Jesus more than his friends who are sitting here.

But if he says, "No, Lord, I don't," well now he's just admitted that he doesn't love Jesus as much as other people do. Guys, this is a rock and a hard place. This is the same, this is the same kinda place I find myself in when every once in a while my wife walks in the bedroom and says, "Does this dress look pretty?"

'Cause that's a rock and a hard place question. Why? 'Cause there are times the dress does look pretty, and there are other times when I just go outside and get on the tractor. See, I've learned from experience, to the young men who are listening to me here, who this is the only thing you've heard me say all day, so I'll

just kinda lean into this.

I've learned from experience that when she says, "I want your honest opinion, does this dress look pretty?" She does not want your honest opinion. And it's not a real question. So therefore, here's what I've learned. Answer with what is true. "Babe, you're beautiful." Go outside and get on a tractor as fast as you can.

And just start doing something babe, you're beautiful Let's move on. Look, o- once again I believe that what's happening here is Jesus is pouring in, pulling in this blindness of Peter, the spiritual blindness. What am I talking about, right? In order to understand this, we've got to go back to the night before Jesus is crucified, right?

As they're in the upper room, Jesus has been talking about what it means to love others as a disciple of Christ. He says this in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

But instead of this challenge humbling Peter, instead of this challenge driving Peter to a place of brokenness, driving Peter to a place of dependence on Jesus whereby he recognizes the call that Jesus has just given him, instead Peter's mind seems to be preoccupied with his own self-confidence, seems to be preoccupied with his own ability, his own self-assuredness, his own willingness to love Jesus more than anyone else could love Jesus.

And he says this in verse 36 of John 13. They're still in the upper room, all right. Judas has already left to go do what he's gonna do, and here we have this conversation. "Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where are You going?'" See, Jesus had just, had been talking about He's gonna have to go somewhere. He's going to a- another place, right?

And where He's going they cannot follow, right? And I believe this text is on the board if you guys wanna throw that up there and we can follow along with it. He says, "Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow afterward.' All right, Peter said to Him, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now?"

I will lay down my life for You!' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied Me three times.'" All right, here you go. Now you're getting into the heart of the situation, all right. Jesus has been talking about how the disciples are called to go and love others, and that they're gonna be known as Jesus' disciples by the way they do love others.

A- and Peter doesn't understand why he can't go with Jesus where He's going, right? He wants to be there with Him. He wants to constantly be with Jesus. This is a great thing. And Peter says, "Why can't I follow You? I will lay down my life for You." And Jesus says, "Will you? Will you lay down your life for Me?"

Truly I say to you, before morning comes, you're gonna deny Me three times." And in that moment, guys, I personally think that Peter was shell-shocked.

Think about it Have you ever been in a conversation with someone and they share a piece of information, maybe their thoughts about you and it doesn't just flatter you like you're looking to be flattered, and all that you can think about in that moment is why would they think that about me?

Why would they say that about me? I've got to do something. I've got to do something to prove to them that the way that they think about me is not correct. I've got to do something to correct the way that they think about me, because the most important thing in my life is the way they think about me right now, and I'm gonna do everything that I possibly can to be sure they think great about me, because I wanna be liked."

Maybe it's just me. But I think that's where Peter is right now. Think about this. We read past this constantly, not realizing that Peter was just told but that before morning comes, he's gonna deny Jesus. Peter was just told this in front of a group of his friends. "Peter, you say you love me, you're gonna walk away before the sun comes up."

And I think Peter's mind starts racing, honestly. I think Peter's mind starts wrestling with what is he saying? Luke tells us that there in that setting that Jesus makes the comment of, Simon, Satan asked to have you so he could sift you like wheat, but I prayed for you so that your faith will remain."

And I think Peter's mind is racing. I think it's going all over the place and I think honestly, he just kinda gets stuck in this mental rut where all that he's focusing on is what Jesus just said, and he's trying to convince himself that, "You know what? No, Jesus is wrong about this one. I am going to stay with him.

I am able to love him, and I would go to the grave for him." And I think he is caught in this overconfident position. And I think he wants honestly nothing more than to clarify this issue to Jesus and to the others. And you know why I think that? It's because after they leave the upper room and they're going to the Garden of Gethsemane, we see this in Matthew 26, "Then Jesus said to them: 'You will all fall away because of me this night.

For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.'" Where are they at right now? They're in Galilee. Verse 33, look at what Peter said. Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."

You look at what he says? Let me summarize that for you. Ha. Jesus, these guys might run away, but not me. I love you more than they do. Do you see? You see the context? Peter is so blinded, he's so blinded by his own confidence, he's so blinded in his own ability to follow Jesus, that when Jesus pointed out to him in the upper room that, "Hey, man you're actually gonna deny me before morning comes up," now he's just

Now Peter's just looking for an opportunity to clarify this. And when the topic comes up again, "Hey, guys," Jesus says, "Hey, guys, listen to me. Listen to me carefully. You're all gonna be scattered tonight, because this is gonna fulfill what the prophet said that to strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter."

And Peter's not even listening to anything that Jesus is saying. He says, "No. No. No. Jesus listen. You're wrong. You're wrong about this one." I will never leave you. These guys might, but they're not me. You have to understand that, Jesus. They're not me, and they don't love you as much as I love you

See, Peter's sin was public, and therefore later needed to be dealt with publicly. Jesus said to him, verse 34 of Matthew 26, "Truly I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Look at what Peter says. Peter

said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you."

And the disciples said the same thing. Again, Peter is saying. Jesus says, "Look, I'm telling you, Peter, this is now the second, possibly even the third time," based on how we do the chronology. "This is yet again I'm telling you that before morning comes, you are going to deny me three times." And Peter tells Jesus, "No, Jesus, you're wrong."

I need you to listen to me. Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you

However, as evening rolled into the early hours of the morning, after Jesus had been taken into custody, put on trial, we find Peter standing around a fire in the courtyard of the high priest after being recognized three different times as being a follower of Jesus. Three different times Peter claimed that they were mistaken and swore that he did not know the man.

And Luke tells us this in chapter 22 verse 60, "And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed," look at this, "and the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he'd said to him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.' He went out and wept bitterly."

You know that feeling when you're caught doing something that you shouldn't be doing? I know you've been there

Maybe you're trying to cheat on a math test, you get caught. Maybe you're trying to sneak one more piece of cake, mom comes in. You're supposed to be in the bed, but instead you've slipped out and she walks in and you just stand there. If you stand there still enough, maybe she just won't see you there

Can you imagine how Peter felt? He has practically rebuked Jesus for telling him that he would deny Jesus. And yet here he stands doing the very thing that Jesus said was gonna happen, and right after it happens, Jesus on trial in front of the high priest turns and looks, and I believe catches the gaze of Peter.

And I think Peter knows that he's found out

I think Peter knows that he's seen thoroughly, and he went out and he wept bitterly, broken, shattered, guilty, ashamed, unworthy, needy of forgiveness sorrowful over sin. Peter, he fell victim to his own spiritual blindness, and his spiritual blindness caused him to lose sight of his personal gospel neediness.

Do you see?

Before we move on, the same is so true for our life, isn't it? Is it not? How often do we get stuck in the ruts of our own confidence, the ruts of our own ability to follow Jesus even? No, Jesus I would never get caught in this type of illicit relationship. No, Jesus, I wo- I would never get caught mishandling money.

No, Jesus I would never lust after other things, other people. No, Jesus, I would never cross that line. No, Jesus, look at how good I follow you. Look at how good I come to church. Look at how many Bible studies I'm in. Look at all of these things that I do. No, I would never do that. And Jesus says, "Guard your heart with vigilance because sometimes you forget how susceptible to sin you really are."

And the moment that we turn away from our own susceptibility to sin, that's the moment that the enemy prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Do you see? So as we set out to follow Jesus, remain vigilant to not allow our own spiritual blind spots to cause us to lose sight of our daily need for the grace and the gospel of J- of Jesus Christ As we move on, another observation that I want us to see Is as we set out to follow Jesus, please remember that to love Jesus means to also love the people that He died for

Here's what I mean by that. We go back to that question that Jesus asked Simon, "Son of John, do you love me more than these?" And we see Peter's response. He said to him, "Yes, Lord. Yes, you know that I love you." And Jesus responded to him, he said, "Then feed my lambs."

See, what I need us to understand here is that as Peter has now responded to Jesus, he has responded in such a way where he's saying, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." And I wanna draw out something about this response whereby Jesus has asked Peter this question. Now we see this response whereby before, before the crucifixion, Peter is telling Jesus, "I love you so much, I would never

fall away from you."

And now Peter's heart of his response is saying, "Lord Jesus, you know that I love you. The burden is not on me to prove it right now to you. The burden is for me just to throw myself upon you and say, you know all things. You know my heart. You know me through and through, my inner character, all that there is to know about me.

You know that I love you." What we see here is that Peter has clearly moved from leaning on his own ability to now leaning on Jesus's ability to know him, depending on Jesus's omniscience, depending on Jesus's wisdom as the basis even for his own love of Jesus. Guys, this is a heart. This is the evidence of a heart that is broken and contrite before the Lord.

This is a heart that is poor in spirit. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit. And I imagine that when Peter answered this way, that the other six disciples, they probably let out the breath that they had been holding ever since Jesus asked the question for the first time. Jesus says, "Peter, do you love me more than these?"

And I imagine the other disciples, their mind immediately goes back to Peter's arrogance when he burst out saying, "Look, even if these guys fall away, I'll never fall away, 'cause I love you more than these guys do." And then I think their minds went immediately to the fact that Peter was the first of them to run away.

And I think now that Jesus is asking Peter this question, "Do you love me more than these?" That it is a way for Jesus to bring to light the awkwardness that has been existing amongst these people for the last couple of weeks. And once he asked, "Peter, do you love me? Do you really love me more than these guys love me like you said that you do?"

I think that all of the other disciples went "What's he gonna say? This is great. What's he gonna do?" But I think once Peter responds this way, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you," I think that they just let out this breath that they've been holding since Jesus asked the question, said, "Ha. Whoa. Look at that.

Peter's a different guy." And then Jesus commissions Peter. Peter, he said to him, "Feed my lambs." This is a pastoral commission. It's a pastoral commission for Peter to care for, to tend to feed the flock of Christ. Feed them the Word of God.

Nourish them with the bread of life. This word for lambs, this word for lambs is in the diminutive.

It should be translated little lambs. Peter, feed my little lambs And that's what brings us to that second observation that I shared just a moment ago, that as you set out to follow Jesus, please remember that to love Jesus means to also love the people that He died for

See, this question and answer time is gonna repeat two more times. In verse 16 we see this, "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.' And he said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'" Verse 17, "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'

Peter was grieved because he said it to him the third time." Why was he grieved? No doubt he was grieved because he denied Jesus three times, and now Jesus is asking him the same question three times sitting around a campfire. And I think the grief of Peter's sin is overwhelming him at this moment. He's grieved because Jesus 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." And Jesus said to him, "Then feed my sheep."

The words I wanna draw your attention to are love, feed, shepherd, sheep when Jesus commissions him to tend my sheep, that word tend is poimaine. It means shepherd, right? Shepherd my sheep, he says. Peter, if you love me, shepherd my sheep I think there's something that's really amazing for us to all take away from this commission, right?

Whereas Peter's commission with a very specific ministry, there's a broader application here, and it's the application that I've already shared with you. It's the observation that we all pour into in our lives as we set out to follow Jesus. But as you set out to follow Jesus, remember that to love Jesus means to love the people He died for Let me say this a different way.

You cannot say that you love Jesus while actively disliking the people he died for

To say I love Jesus, but I'm not gonna talk to them because they don't talk to me. Gotcha. I love Jesus, but I'm not gonna go and meet that person and extend forgiveness for the way that they've hurt me. I'm gonna wait for them to come extend forgiveness to me first. They hurt me first. I see I say I love Jesus, but then there's a, another brother, sister within the fellowship who needs accountability, who needs discipleship, who needs assistance, who needs someone just to come and walk alongside them.

No. That's not for me. That's for somebody else. Oh, okay. So I ask you the question, do you love Jesus? Yeah, I love Jesus said, "You wanna know how I know that you love me? By the way that you love those that I died for You don't love the people that I died for? Please don't say that you love me because all that you're doing is confusing people.

You're confusing an outside world looking in, saying, "Hey, those people are Christians. At least they say they are, but all they do is fuss and fight." And Jesus says, "Please don't do that. Please. I would rather you just be hot or cold, right? Not lukewarm. Stop this stuff. Stop. Eh. Makes me wanna vomit out of my mouth."

Peter, if you love me, feed my sheep. Pastor them, nourish them, care for them, protect them, dress their wounds, guide them, direct them, give them yourself to take care of them, preach the Word to them. It's a sobering reminder of what Paul tells the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 to care for the flock of God that was obtained by the blood of Christ.

Guys, this is ... Although this is a pastoral commission, th- this isn't just for pastors. This is for all of us. This is for parents, too. Parents, you say that you love me, feed my sheep. Feed my little lambs. Shepherd my sheep. Feed my sheep. To love Christ is to love the people that He died for. How can we continue to be divided from people that Christ died to reconcile to Himself?

And I think anytime that I'm in, in any type of counseling scenario over forgiveness, over extending forgiveness and receiving forgiveness the one thing that I continually tell people is I need you to remember this, write this down, right? Jesus paid for that one too I said, "What? What do you mean?"

"Jesus paid for that one too." "Yeah, but you don't know how bad it hurts."
"You're right, I don't know how bad it hurts, but Jesus does, 'cause he paid for that one too." And sometimes it's our own spiritual blindness that prevents us from looking into the Gospel mirror and realizing, praise God that he died for me, so can I not just take his blood and extend it to the person that's offended me and let his blood pay for their sin too?

I think that's what Paul says when he says to forgive one another in Christ just as God has forgiven you. I think that's what Paul means when he writes to Philemon and he says, if Onesimus has done anything wrong, if he's done anything wrong to you at all, put that on my account. I'll pay for it.

Ha, not to mention what you owe me," wink.

If we're gonna say that we love Christ, following Jesus, as we follow Jesus, to love Him means to love the people that He died for But then the conversation continues, and we get here into verse 18. Truly, I say to you, when you were young," He's continuing talking to Peter here, "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." John tells us this, "He said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God. And after saying this he said to him, 'Follow me.'" Listen, whereas before Peter so adamantly boasted, he so adamantly boasted, "Jesus, I'm willing to die for you before I will deny you," and now at this point we're gonna find out that Peter in fact is going to die for Jesus.

He is in fact going to die for the gospel of Jesus. And church history and tradition will tell us that Peter in fact followed Jesus in more than one way, that he followed Jesus even to the cross as he was crucified on behalf of the gospel. Peter, though, church history tells us, Peter, though felt as if he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord, and so he asked to be crucified upside down

In law, in all likelihood, Peter had already been crucified when John writes this. So I believe that John is bringing both authenticity and veracity. He's clarifying to people. Je- Jesus told him he was gonna die, and he told him how he was gonna

die, and that's how he died

And so it brings us to our final observation this morning, which is this. Directly from this text, as you set out to follow Jesus, please remember, listen to me, please remember that Jesus does not make mistakes

Therefore, we can trust that His plan and the ministry calling for your life is perfect You hear me? Please remember that Jesus does not make mistakes. Therefore, the plan and the ministry calling for your life is perfect

Why do I say that? As we look at verse 20 here, bringing all of this to a conclusion, Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them. That's John, okay? Peter looked, saw John following them. The one who also had leaned back against Him during the supper and said, "Lord, is-- who is it that's gonna betray you?"

Right? John's just bringing authenticity to the fact that it's him. Verse 21: When Peter saw him, when Peter saw John, when Peter saw John following them, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" And Jesus said to him, "If it's my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me."

And once again, I offer to you the same observation that I shared just a moment ago. Please remember that Jesus doesn't make mistakes

Please remember as you set out to follow Jesus that you can trust His plan and His ministry calling for your life

And the reason I say that is because look, after such a deeply impactful and intimate time with Jesus, it appears as if, it appears as if somewhere along the way there, Jesus has said, "Hey, Peter, come follow me." And perhaps Jesus has even gotten up and started walking away from the campfire and he and Peter are gonna come to a time of fellowship walking up and down the shore a little bit.

And John apparently gets up, and he's kinda following behind. And Peter has just heard, Peter's just heard that he's gonna die on behalf of the gospel. No, he's gonna be crucified on behalf of the gospel. And I can't imagine, once again, what's going through his mind, probably very similar to when he was told he was gonna

deny Jesus before morning comes.

I think his mind probably starts racing, probably starts running how in the world am I gonna make sense of all this?" And I think he turns around and he sees John, and he says, "Wait a minute, Jesus. If I'm gonna die for the gospel, what about him? What's gonna happen to him?"

And I think Jesus gets his attention. He says, "Peter" Stop worrying about other people and trust that what I have for you is perfect. Follow me

And how many of us fall into the same traps of comparison? The same distractions of comparison One pastor has a congregation of 50, another pastor has a congregation of 5,000. Don't worry about what Jesus has planned for that guy. You follow me. One Christian makes \$50,000 a year, another Christian makes \$150,000 a year, another Christian makes \$500,000 a year.

Don't worry about what God is doing with their life. You follow me Do you see where I'm going with this? And it comes down to the fact that we can remember that Jesus doesn't make mistakes. And I believe that it drives us to the realization and the understanding that, listen to me, this is very important, that one day we will stand before Jesus and be evaluated at the Bema Seat of Christ for the way that we have stewarded our life.

But listen to me. I do not believe that we will be evaluated based on the size, the success, or the popularity of our ministry. I believe that we will be evaluated based on how faithfully we stewarded what Jesus gave us to steward. And let me tell you why that matters. I talked about Jim Elliot at the very beginning of this message.

Jim Elliot was a little bit earlier in his mission work than a man named Billy Graham, but they were relatively contemporary. The Lord called Billy Graham to be a missionary to evangelize millions of people. The Lord called Jim Elliot to be a missionary to be murdered before he won the first convert to Christ.

Was Billy Graham more successful than Jim Elliot? I would say absolutely not. Why? Because Jim Elliot did exactly what Jesus had for him. He faithfully stewarded what he was given, and he went all the way, even to the point of death, in obedience to Christ. Perhaps that's what Jesus meant when he said, "Take up

your cross and follow me."

Amen. What we find out here is between Peter and John, one of them is gonna live a long life. He's gonna be exiled to Patmos. He's gonna write a gospel that's printed on more Billy Graham tracts than anything And the other one? The other one's gonna be crucified upside down and die as a martyr.

But look at the note that John gives us, right? In, in the previous verse, I'm sorry. "This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God." Either way, Peter's life glorified God. Do you see?

And so the question that we have as we conclude, as we bring all of this to a closing as the musicians are coming forward

Each of us who are here this morning, each of us who are here are called to follow Jesus

And as we follow Jesus, three observations that I wanna leave you with that we've already looked at this morning are these: as you set out to follow Jesus, please remain vigilant toward the dangers of your own spiritual blind spots Whether you're willing to admit it right now or not, we have spiritual blind spots in our life.

Areas that we feel very comfortable in, areas that we look in the mirror and we just look right past 'cause we're so used to seeing it over and over again. Perhaps you're here this morning and your spiritual blind spot is the fact that- You just can't get over how someone would ever trust that Jesus would die on a cross in payment of sin.

Maybe you can't get over the blindness that you have toward the gospel

I pray that you begin to see the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I pray that you begin to see the reality that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He died on a cross in your place, that He rose from the dead, that He's offering you the gift of eternal life by grace through faith alone in His name. Amen and amen.

But maybe you're here this morning, you have trusted in Christ and you're just simply suffering from spiritual blindness in your own life, spiritual blindness in

your own heart

Would you be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart and show to you the ways that you simply need to confess this to Jesus? Give it to Him Second observation we're going to leave here with is as we set out to follow Jesus, please remember that to love Jesus means also to love the people he died for.

Maybe the spiritual blind spot in your heart this morning is that you struggle to love the people that Jesus died for. As a pastor, it is, I've already said this, but it is the most sobering of commissions to realize that I am tending to people that Jesus spilled his own blood to obtain. You're not my people.

You're Jesus'.

And I think the quicker that we remember that, the quicker that we're able to get on with doing real ministry together But maybe someone comes to your mind this morning, someone who also professes to love Jesus, and you and that person are just kinda in an argument, and you're just kinda dogging it out, and you're just not gonna speak to them for a little bit till they solve something first.

Let me ask you this. Who died for their sin?

And if we're gonna come to church this morning and we're gonna say, "Hey, I love Jesus," then guys, you need to say, you need to understand that Jesus says, "Okay, you say you love me, then you need to go love the person that I died for, 'cause it was my blood that was spilt on their behalf."

Who's that person and what are you gonna do about it today? Lastly, as you set out to follow Jesus, remember that Jesus does not make mistakes. He does not make mistakes. Therefore, you can trust that His plan and His ministry calling for your life is perfect. Where in your life, where in your life are you overcome by the temptation to compare yourself to somebody else?

Where in your life are you more focused on what God is doing in someone else's life rather than focusing on obeying what He has for your life?

Would you be willing to confess that to Him? Would you be willing to surrender that to Him? Would you be willing to be content and walk humbly and faithfully

and obediently in the ministry calling that He has for you? Whether you're a pastor, whether you're a teacher, whether you're a business owner, whether you're a mom, whether you're a dad, whether you're a grandparent Fill in the blank Do you trust that Jesus does not make mistakes?

And will you walk faithfully before Him today, this week? Let's follow Him together. Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, God, thank you Lord, thanks for your graciousness. Thanks for your loving kindness. Thanks for the constant reminder that you are good. God, thanks for the constant reminder that you love us with an unwavering love, with a faithful love, with a selfless love, that you would give yourself for us.

God, would you help us remember this morning... God, would you help us remember this morning that to love you means to love others? God, would you help us remember this morning that we are to guard our heart with all vigilance. God, would you help us remember this morning that you don't make mistakes

God, would you allow us to worship you in the way that we live our life, and would you help us to follow you faithfully? Because what you are desiring more than anything else from our lives is that we walk humbly and faithfully before you.

Oh, Lord God, we trust

That the plan that you have for each of us is absolutely perfect, and we seek to walk obediently as we follow you Lord, help us to do that. We love you. We praise you, in Jesus' name. Amen