

# Life Serving Christ

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     he feared the moment they next spoke he had betrayed their relationship broken promises that he had spoken that he would always be at their side but he had lied betrayed and fled there was love and trust and trust and a close relationship and all of that was broken but now he stands before them with the pain of his betrayal and fear before his eyes what was going to happen what will they say it might sound like a husband and wife relationship one potentially confronted with adultery but it's not i'm referring to peter the disciple who had promised jesus that he would stand beside him no matter what and yet peter betrayed him he said he didn't know who he was three times before he fled back to his old life to his old job of fishing and yet now as we come to this final chapter of john's gospel peter is standing before jesus is reconciliation possible can one like peter who has hurt jesus so much come back and what does jesus have in store for one like him this is a fear that some of us may have felt you know i fled from jesus i've done things which bring shame to me before god am i out of his good books is there forgiveness is my relationship with god damaged forever today we're going to see how peter is treated by jesus and what can happen to those who feel far from him because of their actions or decisions so let's pray as we jump into john 21 dear heavenly father we thank you for your word to us today we thank you that you are a god who reconciles and heals broken relationships lord and we thank you that you reconcile our relationship with you father give us ears and hearts to hear and be changed today lord amen please have your bibles open john 21 we're going to be starting in verse 15 uh have your app open on your phone take notes or follow along on the screen john chapter 21 from verse 15 when they had finished eating jesus said to simon peter simon son of john do you love me more than these yes lord he said you know that i love you jesus said feed my lambs again jesus said simon son of john do you love me he answered yes lord you know that i love you jesus said take care of my sheep the third time he said to him simon son of john do you love me peter was hurt because jesus asked him the third time do you love me he said lord you know all things you know that i love you jesus said feed my sheep back in chapter 18 peter had denied jesus three times during jesus's trial and before his crucifixion and interestingly jesus doesn't refer to him as the name that jesus gave peter jesus gave him the name peter which means rock but now jesus is calling him simon son of john it's a it's a subtle reminder that peter has fled jesus he's fled as a follower of jesus but here with this threefold questioning of his love jesus is reconciling peter's relationship his threefold profession of love is undoing his betrayal in a very symbolic way and jesus questions his love do you do you love me more than these now we don't know what these are

the these could be these other disciples do you love me more than these others love me or it could be a reference to the fishing gear that lay right next to him do you love me more than the career that you went so quickly back to and the third time peter is asked about his love he is hurt really jesus i've just i've just answered you twice didn't you hear me and all that peter can do on that third request is just to appeal to jesus's knowledge you know jesus you know that i love you you know my heart and while peter is hurt here at jesus's insistence there is actually something really wonderful here much like when the apostle paul is saved in the book of acts it's a wonderful reminder that even those who have hurt jesus can be reconciled even the worst who've tried to run and those who have betrayed jesus are still loved by him it's really wonderful because it shows that it's nothing to do with peter and it's all to do with jesus he is the hero of this story he is the one who lived the perfect life who died a brutal death who has been raised and now he has come to fix this relationship with peter this interaction between peter and jesus reminds us that we have a god who is in the business of reconciling of bringing people back together of healing ripped and torn relationships it holds out a hope that a damaged relationship with god himself can be redeemed confrontation isn't always easy but jesus directly confronts peter confess do you love me and for peter here there is no hiding he can't get around this question for him to get rid of his sin and his shame he needs to confess so that he can move from shame to joy and this is that that moment of joy when a sinner comes to jesus and realizes what his amazing love looks like and re-orientes their whole life to love jesus more the joy that there is reconciliation for one who has betrayed and hurt god himself now a bunch of you will be going up to katoomba next weekend and uh what's one of the highlights of going to to kick anybody maccas good any other highlights of the weekend the weather hopefully it might be cold anything else any night in particular saturday night james case and tell me what happens on saturday night there's this wonderful opportunity where the gospel is preached and many people respond and it is joyful this is a joyful moment our hearts should leap for joy when we see one such as peter one such as me be reconciled we should be standing up and cheering and weeping and shouting for joy because one who was dead has been made alive this gives hope to the one who has drifted away who is questioning jesus the one of us who who acts like jesus doesn't even care because there is reconciliation we do run the risk of making jesus just one of the things we like instead of the one we love above anyone else to realize that there is more to life than the pursuit of pleasure or things or experiences and there is one unique individual who has made this life worth it who says

do you love me do you love me more than these things in your life your job your family your career jesus is going to keep asking us do you love me do you love me more than these all throughout our lives now in the past i've i've shared my pain and my grief and my dollar my idolatry over a particular tv that i bought i bought a tv it was damaged by one of my beautiful children beyond repair uh and i still haven't gotten over it uh my my gut still drops when i walk into my garage and i see this tv i get anxious when i walk through the shops and i think about buying a new one the question for me is do i love jesus more than a tv yes but i am still in danger of idolatry and so i haven't replaced that tv yet peter who had betrayed jesus who had fled him is reconciled he is restored and it is a wonderful moment but jesus has more in store for peter than just a reconciled relationship because he has been saved to serve peter has been saved to serve three times jesus asked peter if he loved him and three times he asked him to care for those who would come after and to follow jesus jesus asked him do you love me so feed my lambs do you love me so take care of my sheep do you love me so feed my sheep jesus is not just concerned here for peter jesus is genuinely concerned for this fledgling fledgling little church and so peter is directed to a shepherding ministry because a commitment to jesus is a commitment to the wider church and we don't come to jesus on our own and follow him but we come to jesus as as the groom who has a bride the church loving jesus is going to look like loving other people and so we don't just come to church on our own we actually meet together as a group a church a gathering and it's it's up there the joy of all people we love treasuring jesus with other people and so for peter loving other people is going to look like shepherding them feeding them the word the word of jesus nourishing them defending them from attacks and seeing the sheep grow as they follow jesus peter has gone from a fisherman and now he is a shepherd now the word shepherd here is where we get the word for pastor not the food but the uh the title the role of a leader in a church they're the pastor to to walk with to guide to protect to feed the sheep years later peter would write about uh the work of a shepherd in one peter five let me read from one peter chapter five to the elders among you i appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of christ's suffering who also will share in the glory to be revealed be shepherds of god's flock that is under your care watching over them not because you must but because you are willing as god wants you to be not pursuing dishonest gain but eager to serve not lording it over to those entrusted to you but by being examples to the flock and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away so these are pastors these are shepherds who are under the chief shepherd peter was called to be a shepherd under jesus the chief shepherd the sheep weren't going to be peter's sheep as jesus said feed my sheep take care of my sheep but peter has a new responsibility for this little church now in church here there are a number of pastors

we have our brother steve he is the senior pastor under the chief shepherd and so as the senior pastor he he leads us all he sets the vision he sets the theological direction and he has responsibility and accountability for all of us but there are a number of other pastors there's a number of pastors on the team people like adrian and myself and debbie people who have been employed and given a measure of responsibility who have been set aside we have our time set aside to do that but we aren't the only pastors there are many pastors there are many other pastors here there are people who are community group leaders who are pastors of their community groups there are those of us here who are leaders in kids ministry kids church in youth in boom who are pastoring their little flock of sheep there are people who are people who are pastors in a one-to-one relationship now not all of us are going to be the senior pastor of this church actually if anybody it's probably going to be someone like caleb you know because he's young and so he's got time to kind of grow up what do you reckon caleb no thanks no thanks no you've got time for god to change your heart it's okay we don't we're not all going to be the senior pastor we don't need to be but that doesn't mean we don't get to pastor and care for people and you might be reading the bible in a one-to-one with somebody else you you might be leading a community group you you might pastor the sheep at fridays on a you uh on a friday night you might be one of those sheep who are being pastored at a friday night who are also pastoring others all of these different levels of pastoring are crucially important to the health of our church peter had his relationship with jesus reconciled and now that he is saved he serves but that's not the only role that peter would have serving god have a look at verse 18 with me jesus said to peter very truly i tell you when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which peter would glorify god having his arms stretched out led where he doesn't want to go that is a first century saying for being crucified peter is going to be crucified just like his lord jesus jesus is prophesying about his future death and his death isn't going to be the only thing like jesus's but peter's death is also going to glorify god it will somehow make god look awesome whether it's by peter refusing to recant and him saying no jesus is my lord even if you crucify me peter's death would bring glory to god now we don't know for certain when peter's death was but it's reported that he was killed in the 60s of the first century under emperor nero and so peter is called by jesus to live a life of discipleship marked by the love of jesus care of the other people in the church until the end of his life now this is so i think just on its own it's an amazing privilege that god loves us and we get to be with him for eternity not only that but we get brought into his family we get to be his children but that's not where it stops jesus actually invites people like peter like you and like me to actually serve and work beside him

to work beside god side by side to bring him glory to see his kingdom grow this always astounds me that god would actually want us involved often in the mornings one of our early morning rituals is the very very important task of coffee making and one of my kids micah loves to help make coffee and so i'll often pick him up put him on the bench put the coffee machine on and his favorite thing to do is tamp the coffee if you don't know what that is it's where you get the the coffee grip guy and you put the coffee in the little basket thing and then you squash it down and micah loves doing it he's always wanting to tamp the coffee um and so he he does that uh and he's helping he's feeling part of this important daily ritual to you know motivate people to kind of keep going in the morning but i always have to fix it it's always on an angle it's always done terribly it's never quite right but that doesn't bother him sometimes just even having the kids in the kitchen can be a burden just get out of the way it'll be quicker if you watch from another room but our god isn't like that he saves us to serve to get involved to welcome people to his family to care for one another to give to the work of ministry out of what he has given us to show compassion and to love others now peter was unique jesus restored him to relationship personally and told him how he was going to serve directly wouldn't it be amazing if we had the same journey that we've been saved by jesus either through reading his word or through a message just like this and then jesus makes it look really clear what we are to do you're going to follow me forever and it's going to look like this you're going to go back to china and as a missionary and you're going to plant a church are you going to go and plant a school somewhere you go you're going to be the most welcoming person in all of chatswood and you're going to be here at st paul's at 3 30 every sunday so you can make sure every single new person that comes in is welcomed and feels part of the community and the family of god here wouldn't that be wonderful if god just said this is how you're going to serve but it's not as obvious as that always maybe you've been a christian in this church for a while and you're not exactly sure what god wants you to do how should i serve i don't know i saw a basketball game uh recently the team was the milwaukee bucks uh i love their uh their mascot it's a deer and so they're saying is fear the deer because you know fears are so scary deers are so scary uh and i have this guy called janice antitunkupo and i love saying his name even though i'm pretty sure i never get it right he is their star player uh and it was great being able to cheer this guy on from the stands and whenever he got the ball everyone would cheer because this guy is the best player in the league at the moment and he does amazing stuff this guy is elite and i think church can be like this we can think that serving god is only for the elite oh you know we're gonna we're gonna cheer adrian on when he does you know he shares the gospel at esl woo yeah adrian go you good thing no cheer for adrian oh that's all right brother you know we're gonna cheer you know laura on when she's leading youth ministry yeah laura there's a little bit of cheer there you know good on you but that can be where it stops in the stands there are a multitude of ways we can serve and get involved at church from organizing to admin to

[ 20 : 27 ] leading kids uh to to youth uh and often we can get involved in areas we're passionate about music or creative things or we might just fill in in an area because there is a need jesus invited peter into a very important ministry and he invites us not to just sit on the sidelines and to watch others and cheer woo but to actually get involved to step onto the court and be on the same team as jesus and later in our service we're going to have an opportunity to get involved uh just grab grab your card out for me for a moment uh hopefully you received one of these when you came in if not our our snazzy red vested people will will get one to you we're going to have an opportunity to respond a little bit later in three areas how we uh what to think through what is getting in the way of us loving jesus how we need to commit to serving and where our heart needs work and so we're going to spend some time looking at that later just wanted to flag that for you now brothers and sisters but even when we are saved even when we are serving there can be issues there can be a cancer of comparison have a look with me at john 21 verse 19 then jesus then he said to him follow me peter turned and saw that the disciple whom jesus loved was following him this was the one who had leaned back against jesus at the supper and had said lord who is going to betray you when peter saw him he asked lord what about him peter has been reconciled he betrayed jesus he's brought back into relationship he's given an important ministry by jesus himself and he starts by getting jealous of somebody else the cancer of comparison starts to grow the disciple referred to as the one whom jesus loved is later identified as the author john himself he it seems had a special relationship with jesus he was really close and peter gets jealous okay great i've got a lifelong ministry ahead of me i'm gonna be crucified uh that's fine but what about him and i can understand the temptation here it's totally selfish though it's the it's crying out me me i don't want to miss out it's fomo what it's fear of missing out on somebody else's ministry i want something better jesus maybe you're going to give something better to them and i want that so often i think we can be like this advertising in our world certainly doesn't help us to be content with what we have always desiring for more but it's not even just things peter is not is worried he's not going to have the same ministry as someone else he's not gonna have the same influence in the church and it's easy to start thinking in terms of it's my ministry compared to his ministry but it's not it's god's that peter and we get to be part of jesus dismisses peter's concern verse 22 jesus answered if i want him to remain alive until i return what is that to you you must follow me effectively jesus is saying it's none of your business in the end john would have a very different ministry to peter peter would live until the 60s and be crucified after he'd led uh many many people he'd led the church but john would have a long life he wouldn't die until over 100 ad and he would write down the good news of the gospel so that we have it in our bibles and so what if he lived a long life one of them was going to glorify

god in their death and one of them was going to glorify god in their life in their longer life peter is almost caught with a cancerous growth in his heart i'm constantly challenged by other christians and it tempts me to sin like peter comparing myself to them you know they might know the bible so well they're a prayer warrior they're compassionate and they're a just a better christian than me now it's good to be encouraged by one another but not so that a cancer of comparison grows because it can fester it can make us think i'm not good enough i'm not loved by god as much as them i'm not as good a christian if only i were better god calls us to love jesus to love jesus more than ourselves and my ministry because it's an amazing privilege that god invites us to be on his team to work beside him i hear about the players who play with the the elites the greats like janice enter to him good boy i'm sure it would be easy for the regular good player to get jealous of the excellent player but whenever i hear these people talk they're always so excited and thankful that they're on his team that they're on the experts team because they get to play with them they get to see how they go up close and they have success they get to be with them god invites us to be on his team and it's a multi-faceted team it's a it's described as a body we're a team a church with many different parts that are all required and complement each other comparison in life can encourage but it can be a cancer that spreads and hurts us so there's three questions that we need to be asking ourselves are we loving jesus what is getting in the way of us loving him who has loved us are we serving on god's team are we still on the stands or are we actually on the field serving one another and where is our heart at are we comparing ourselves to others instead of reminding ourselves that we are loved by jesus and invited to work beside him let me pray dearest heavenly father it is an amazing joy that you reconcile people like us and like peter to you that we can be in relationship with you even though we have fled we have shamed you and we continue to do that lord father you are good and you are loving and it is such a privilege that you invite us to work alongside you father help us to check our loves so that we can love you more than we love anything else in our lives lord even the ministries that you give us the service that we do for you lord father help us to serve you if we're not serving you lord i ask that many of us would step forward and be keen to serve in some capacity and lord when we serve when we are working hard to bring you glory help us not to think it is ours but it is yours help us not to have that cancer of comparison and grow in our hearts but lord help us to love you more than anything else there is lord amen