

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge

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- [0 : 00] If you have your Bibles with you, you might like to turn to John chapter 21. John 21, and we'll read from verse 15 to the end of the chapter.
- Let's then read together and hear God's Word.
- When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you truly 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 truly 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?
- [1 : 31] 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. I tell you the truth. 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.
- Then he said to him, follow me. Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them.
- This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, Lord, who is going to betray you?
- [2 : 42] When Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him? Jesus answered, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?
- You must follow me. Because of this, the rumor spread among his brothers that this disciple would not die.
- But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?
- This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.
- Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.
- [3 : 46] And God will bless the reading and the hearing of his word to us this morning. I'm sure we all have favorite characters in Scripture.
- From the Old Testament through to the New Testament. And you'll be able to identify with them in your lives. We are drawn to them from time to time for various reasons.
- And rightly so. Because we can find strength and courage from them. We can find correction and rebuke from them.

And learn from their mistakes. And those situations can help us develop our own character. In following the path which Christ wants us to travel with him.

There's something I think about Peter. With which undoubtedly we can all identify. Peter had an enthusiastic and positive character.

[5 : 02] And quickly became one of Jesus' three closest friends. On the Mount of Transfiguration, for example. In the home where the daughter of Jairus was brought back to life.

His confession of faith. That Christ was the Son of God. And was the one Jesus sent. To take the coin.

From the mouth of the fish. Important part to play. In the ministry of Christ.

However, we also get a glimpse of his. Human qualities. He tried to talk Jesus. Out of going to Jerusalem. When Jesus stated that he was going there to die.

He promised Jesus he would always be faithful. Never let him down. When he went with James and John.

[6 : 11] Along with Jesus. Into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. They promptly fell asleep. And when fear got the better of him.

He denied. That he ever knew his Lord. Can you identify with some of those things. In Peter's life. I'm sure you can.

Peter was impulsive. He was inquisitive. He was inflammable. But he was also inspired. He was also inspired.

And yet in spite of all these. Certain qualities. Which endear us to him. And help us to.

Live closer to Christ. Because we can see sometimes. That character being displayed.

[7 : 18] In our own lives. The question which Jesus asks us all. The question which he asked Peter.

On that day. Do you. Do you. Love me. Jesus had.

Revealed himself to the disciples. To Mary. He speaks her name. And in that name.

There was recognition. And in that exciting encounter. With Thomas. He resurrected his faith.

But in the reading we had this morning. We see him coming again to. Those same disciples. At least some of them.

[8 : 19] Seven of them we're told. And if you need to bring it. Of chapter 21. You'll see that there. This time. Not within the confines.

Of the upper room. But on an ordinary. Working day. Verses 1 to 3.

Of that chapter. Simon Peter. Thomas called. Dynas. Nathaniel from Cana of Galilee. The two sons of Zebedee.

James and John. And two other disciples. Someone has suggested. That perhaps. The vacancy of names.

The vacancy of those two names. Was left. In order that we could. Sign the record. Interesting concept.

[9 : 17] And two other disciples. Could there have been us. However.

This is a meeting with a difference. In the upper room. He brought comfort. Peace. Assurance. And hope.

And here by the lakeside. He gives correction. And instruction. Picture this scene for a moment.

From tolling all night. And catching nothing. To recognition. And finally. Breakfast on the beach.

Peter had stated. To the other disciples. With him. I'm going fishing. And the others.

[10 : 23] Following alongside him. But they caught nothing. And probably thinking. That this person. On the. The lakeside.

On the. The shore. Was one of the fish merchants. Who would come. Early in the morning. To. Get some fish.

They followed. His instruction. Because. My understanding. That someone. On the shore. Can see. Where the fish are. Better than the. The fishermen can. And he says.

To them. Throw your nets. On the right side of the boat. And you will. Find some. And on obeying that instruction.

They were unable. To haul the net. Because. Of the large. Number of fish. Then the disciple. Whom Jesus.

[11 : 21] Love said to Peter. It's the Lord. Can you.

Imagine. The excitement. That must have been. In Peter's life. At that point. Because. On hearing. Those words.

It is the Lord. Peter. Instinctively. Jumped. Into the water. With the others. Falling. In the boat. Peter.

Climbed down. Climbed. Aboard. And dragged. The net. Ashore. What. Six men. Have been. Unable. To do.

On their own. One. Man. Did. When he. Went. To work. From the feet. Of Christ. Christ. And so.

[12 : 21] Jesus. Again. Brings. Peter. To the center. Of attention. And he. Says. To him. Do you love me.

More. Than these. Three times. The question. Is asked. And three times. Peter. Gave the same. Response.

Lord. You know. I love you. You know. All things. And that.

Happened. Around. An open. Fire. Where. Jesus. Had been. Cooking. Some fish. A fire.

That Peter. Had previously. Denied. His Lord. Became. His place. Of victory. And.

[13 : 18] Surely. That's a question. Jesus. Asks. Us. All. Do you love me. More than these. More than these. However.

In being. Restored. He still. Had some. Other lessons. To learn. Peter. Peter. Peter. Turned. And saw. That the disciple. Whom Jesus. Loved. Was following them.

Lord. What about him? Peter. Had to learn this. That the greatest mistake. Was often.

Looking. And thinking. Of other people. And allowing them. To influence. His life. Rather than. Let Jesus. Influence. His life.

And if. We are honest. That. Can be a mistake. That we often. Make too. I like.

[14 : 19] What he's doing. So I'll just. Follow suit. Rather than. Letting the. Holy Spirit. Infiltrate. Our lives. Our minds. And give us.

The words. That he wants. Us to take forward. Lord. We often. Look at others. Seeking. To emulate them. And ending up.

With some of their. Faults. And fears. And feelings. We sometimes. Look at other people's. Faith. And then.

End up. With some of their. We can. Some of their. Some of their. Temptations. We can. Sometimes. Look at. Other people's. Views. And sometimes.

End up. With their. Distorted views. And opinions. Rather than. Focusing. Our attention. On the most.

[15 : 15] Important. Person. Jesus. We can. Look at. Other. Positions. In the church.

And never. Get. Where God. Wants. Us to be. Rather. Rather than. Keeping. Our eyes. Fixed. On Jesus. As. The writer.

To Hebrews. Says. In. Chapter. 12. In verse 2. We must. Keep. Your eyes. Fixed. On Christ. We can.

Often. Be deviated. By. Others. Sometimes. We must. We must. We must. We must. We must. Sometimes. It's. The easy way out. But.

Let's. Always. Keep. Our eyes. Our minds. Fixed. In Christ. That he. May. Give us. Our opinions. We may. Know. His ways.

[16 : 12] We. Have. Clarity. Of. Thought. We. May. Not. Be. Received. Following.

Peter's. Response. Lord. You know. Everything. You know. I love. You. Jesus. Said. Follow. Me. Who.

Who. Have. Brought. Back. Many. Memories. To. His. Life. Here. They. Were. In. The. Very. Place. Jesus.

Had. First. Called. Them. And. Peter. Would. No doubt. Reflect. On. The. Past. Years. Retracing.

All. He. Had. With. Christ. Even. Amongst. His. Faults. And. His. Failures. And.

[17 : 09] That. Would. Have. Thought. Him. Would. Have. Caused. Him. To. To. Think. Again. And. Stimulated. His. Thoughts. About.

The. Claims. And. Promises. Which. Christ. Made. Once. Again. It. Would. Have. Stirred. And. Rekindled. His. Zeal.

And. His. Enthusiasm. He. We. We. We. We. Too. Are. Called. To. To. Follow. Christ. With. That. Same. Zeal. And. That. Same.

Enthusiasm. To. Follow. Him. As. Light. Especially. In. The. Darkness. Of. Today's. Society. And.

In. Life. Where. It. Can. Often. Be. Full. Of. Difficulties. And. Traumas. He. Guides. And.

[18 : 04] He. Leads. Us. And. Let's. Never. Forget. That. That. He. Is. Light. And. He. Is. The. One. Who. Guides.

By. That. Light. Peter. Was. Asked. The. Question. In. Verse. Fifteen. Not.

Just. If. He. Loved. Jesus. But. He. If. He. Loved. Him. More. Than. These. What. Or.

Who. Were. These. Have. You. Ever. Asked. That. Question. When. Jesus. Stood. With. The. Disciples. And. He. Said. To. Peter. Peter. You. Love. Me. But.

You. Love. Me. More. Than. These. What. Was. He. Asking. Peter. Was. It. The. Disciples. Who.

[18 : 58] Were. With. Him. On. That. Occasion. Was. It. The. Other. Disciples. In. The. Group. Some. Of. Who. Weren't. There. Was.

It. Going. Back. To. His. Old. Workplace. It. It. It. Has. Been. It. It. Thought.

That. The. Number. Of. Fish. That. Mentioned. This. Passage. Relates. To. The. Different. Number. Of. Fish. That. Were. About.

At. That. Time. That. People. You. At. Time. And. Therefore. It. Relates. To. The. Whole. World. Do. Love. Me. Better. Than. This. World.

In. Which. We. Live. Do. Love. Me. Peter. More. Than. These. In. Other. Words.

[19 : 53] Is. There. One. Person. You. Love. More. Than. Me. Is. There. Love. One. Situation. You. Love.

More. Than. Me. Is. There. Something. You. Drawn. To. That. You. Want. To. Hold. On. To. More. Than. Me. And.

Sadly. At. Times. We. Make. Something. Or. Someone. More. Important. Than. Christ. If. We. Are. Honest. With. Ourselves. We. Sometimes. Do. That. We. Let. Our. Minds. Wander. Away. From. Jesus. To.

Something. We. Involved. With. Christ. And. That. Thing. Or. Person. Can. Become. More. Important. Than. Christ.

[20 : 49] In. Her. Book. A Map. To. God. Dr. Susie. Anthony. Relates. Her. Own. Experience. Of. Being. Caught. Up. In.

Dependence. Her. Father. Her. Father. Was. A. Gambler. And. Squandered. Everything. Leaving.

The. Family. Destitute. Later. In. Life. She. Vowed. Not. To. Let. Herself. Get. Into. That. Position.

And. Became. A. High. Flyer. Amassing. Beautiful. Homes. Cars. Jewelry. And.

Jet. Became. Increasingly. Insecure. Friends. Directed. Her. To. Harley Street.

[21 : 48] And. When. The. Pills. Prescribed. Didn't. Have. Any. Effect. Moved. On. To. Non. Prescription. Drugs. Spending.

A. Thousand. Dollars. A. Day. And. Was. Fond. Of. Saying. She. Worshipped.

At. The. Altar. Of. Gucci. Prada. And. Chanel. That. Was. Her. God. That. Was. Where. She.

Put. Her. Focus. In. 1992. Susie. Had. A. Conversion. Experience. Found.

God. And. Went. In. A. New. Direction. With. Him. And. Quotes. In. Her. Story. Proverbs.

[22 : 43] Chapter. One. In. Verse. Seven. The. Fear. Of. The. Lord. Is. The. Beginning. Of. Knowledge. But. Fools. Despise. Wisdom.

And. Discipline. The. Fear. Of. The. Lord. Is. Beginning. Of. Knowledge. You. See. Gucci. Prada. And. Chanel. Couldn't. Bring. This. Lady. Any. Happiness. Any. Satisfaction. Any. Comfort. Any. Direction. In. Life. That. Was. Lasting. Only. Jesus. Could. And.

We. Are. Called. This. Morning. As. Peter. Was. Called. Was. Called. To. Follow. Him. In. Endeavor. In.

[23 : 40] An. Attempt. To. Achieve. A. Goal. Her. Goal. That. Dr. Susie's. Goal. Was.

To. Find. Achievement. In. All. Of. Those. Earthly. Things. But. We. Are. Called. To. Follow. Him. In.

A. Way. That. Would. Glorify. Him. To. Put. Aside. Anything. Would. Distract. Us. And. Cause. Us. To. Fail. And. To. Fall.

To. Follow. Him. In. Endurance. The. Ability. To. Keep. On. Doing. Doing. Something. And.

Not. Giving. Up. To. Doing. Something. Which. God. Is. Pleasing. To. God. Is. God. Is. God. Centred. And. Is. God. Honoring. And.

- [24 : 40] To. Follow. Him. In. Enterprise. To. Engage. In.
 Difficult. Actions. Sometimes. We're put off. With things.
 That can cause us. Difficulty. And. We don't want to go through. The whole situation.
 Because.
 It. Is. Too difficult. For us. But. Perseverance. Helps. To get through.
 Those situations. Perseverance. In. God. In. His. Way. And. Listening. To the Holy Spirit.
 You know. At the beginning.
- [25 : 33] Of John's Gospel. He reveals. The power of God. In. Creation. And. At. Its. Conclusion.
 He.
 Tells us. Of the grace of God. In. Redemption. And. For each. And. Every. One. Of us. He.
 Creates. In us. Or. Wants. To create. In us. New life. Through. Redeeming. Love. Of.
 Christ. Christ. And. Then. Like. Peter. Calls us. To follow him. Follow me. How.
 Are you. Following. This morning. What. Are you. Following. This morning. Who. Are you.
 Following. This morning. Who. Is. Most. Important. Or. What.
- [26 : 29] Is. Most. Important. In. Your. Life. Or. In. My. Life. It. Has. To be. Jesus. Because. Only.
 Jesus. Has. Won. The. Victory.
 Only. Jesus. Has. Conquered. Sin. Death. And. The. Grave. Only. Jesus. Promises.
 Eternal. Life. Do you.
 Believe it. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Yes. Thank you.
 Only. Jesus. Promises. Eternal. Life. Nothing. Else. To. Follow. Him. And.
 To. Follow. Him. In. The. Right. Direction. Is. To. Know. His. Forgiveness. So. His.
 Healing. And. To. Know. His. Power. And. We.
- [27 : 27] Can. Go. Out. Of. This. Place. This. Morning. Knowing. That. Forgiveness. That. Healing.
 And. That. Power. In. Our. Lives. In. Our. Step. Because.
 Nothing. Else. Can. Bring. The. Same. Result. As. Jesus. Can. Let's.
 Pray. Together. Father. God. Thank you. We. We. We. We. Hear. We. Hear. Those.
 Words. Again. And. Again. And. Sometimes. We. We. Just. Slip.
 Over. Them. Come. And. Follow. Me. Do you. Love. Me. More. Than. These. And.
 We. Can. All. Fall. Into. The. Trap. Of. Following. Something. Or. Someone. Because. It.
 Appears.
- [28 : 24] More. Appealing. Lord. Help. Us. To. Realize. That. Jesus. Offers. Offers. Forgiveness.
 Healing. And.
 Power. To. All. Of. Us. And. He. Is. The. Only. One. Who. Can. Lead. Us. To. Eternal. Life.
 Help. Us. To. Trust. You. To. Believe. In. You. And. To. Follow. You. And. To. Love. You.
 More. Than. Anything. Else.
 May. That. Be. True. In. Our. Lives. This. Morning. Amen.