

Our Challenge - Being the Church

5c's

The vision we need to keep near and dear to us. Is that we are called to be in a growing relationship with Christ, we grow best when we are in Community with other believers.

Before we get into it let's talk groups and classes

We have been examining the early church and all that changed in them and how they lived and how that might challenge us today in how we can be the Church. So this morning I want to read a passages before and explore this week, what happened and how it should set a course for us as believers and especially as we ask ourselves how are we being the Church?

Let's read it

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Peter preached a powerful message and we read that people were cut to the heart and responded to this. The Holy Spirit moved in a powerful way and peoples lives were changed drastically. If there was a ground zero of the explosion of the Gospel message this is it.

But there is one thing that makes absolutely no sense to me about this whole thing and yet it's just such a God thing to do... Peter preached this message!

This is Peter the guy that denied Jesus three times, when others fled, he was the guy that fled but stayed close enough to be recognized and then was asked if He was with Jesus and he denied it, three times... What makes it worse, this same guy, who said he loved Jesus and swore

that he would never deny Jesus, ... that same guy fell asleep that night when Jesus asked him to pray with him... While Jesus sweat like drops of blood... Peter fell asleep and then fled when Jesus was arrested... Fast forward ... What happened to Peter that he arrived at the upper room where the Holy Spirit descended on those disciples and what happened in Him that when he saw people had questions about what was happening that he felt he could speak. What gives him the right to talk about Jesus in this way...

Something powerful happened to Peter and I think it is critical for us today as we examine our mission.

Let's catch up with Jesus and Peter and the guys in John Chapter 21

John 21

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. 8 The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards^[a] off.

Jesus told them to come and have breakfast with him.. He handed them some bread and fish..

Talk about a tough job - fishing

Why did Peter go fishing? I have theory

Failure and discouragement do not mean you've lost all hope, it usually means you have gone back to your rut. You failed or felt like you failed and so you returned as peter did to something you felt you were good at.

Peter was living back in his old rut, likely because he had believed that he was done with his ability to lead others and follow Jesus. He went back to fishing

The great thing about being in a rut is you don't have to think about life so much you can just go with the flow, you don't have to care as much or put in effort.

The annoying thing about going back to those ruts, or being stuck in a rut of sin or of habits is that its the same old thing over and over. Here is Peter in His rut and comfort believing that all his worth and value and purpose was there in that boat. At that they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. SO THEY HAD NO WORTH outside of following Jesus... which I think is interesting the imagery here is this moment.

So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

Sounds familiar right? Jesus reminded them of when He first called them, He told them ***"Children throw your nets on the other side of the boat"***

The Disciple John got it first and Peter was putting his clothes back on and swimming to shore as fast as he could. Peter getting out of that boat after hearing this was Jesus and moving towards Jesus took Peter out of the rut and put him back in place where he belonged. Listening to Jesus.

- The secret to success is not trying harder, but this is where some people are right now, you are trying really hard and you are not getting anywhere and you find yourself falling into the same rut.

But think about this with me for a moment. Jesus getting them out of their rut required one thing, Obedience. Some of us are stuck in our rut today. There is a way out but you have ignored Jesus. Many times, you have maybe missed His voice many times because of all the noise.

The problem is not where I am, but who I'm listening to

Please hear me, whatever has your ear has control

Freedom from the rut happens when we permit Jesus to be in charge

But that wasn't enough to change Peter, I mean this is not the first time he is interacting with the risen savior, so what could be different this time. The story continues and gets better.

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." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 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." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him 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." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, 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." 19 (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."

Jesus targeted Peter in this conversation apparently and had something specific to say. John records this incredible moment.

First we can't escape the symmetry of this - Peter Denied Jesus 3 times, Here Jesus asks Peter three times "DO YOU LOVE ME" Peter gets to the point where he is so annoyed in that third time I have to wonder if Jesus ever thought to Himself it would be funny to like make the sound of a rooster crowing?.. Ya know just for a laugh.. But seriously in this moment as Jesus said this Peter has to have an incredible amount of guilt and shame on his shoulders and you can almost hear it in his answers. "Lord you know" almost like he was pleading for him to stop. And He does because the point was made.

Peter was forgiven, he denied Jesus three times and here he had affirmed His love for Jesus three times. But it really was not that simple.

I would say this part of this passage had more to do with Peter's calling than it had to do with forgiveness. It was about getting Peter to understand he was forgiven so he could walk in his calling

The first - Do you love me more than these? V:15

Jesus was super blunt with this, obviously Peter can't throw his guys under the bus because maybe to this point Only Jesus and him know about Peter denying him and Peter and Jesus know that Peter can not lie, and yet in the past Peter was always the one putting his foot in his mouth and stating that he was the best,

The foot washing - Jesus I could never allow you to wash my feet

Last supper - I would never deny you Jesus

Jesus was breaking Peter down and calling out His pride

Then Jesus responds with this Phrase

1) Feed my Sheep

Get them what they need - This is a statement like, they have a need and I want you to go and provide and direct them so they get what they need.

Then Jesus asks Peter again, Do you love me, but now he is not comparing to the other disciples he is just asking about his love for Him.

2) Care for my Sheep

Shepherd them

When Jesus says the word love it's interesting that Jesus uses the sacrificial, unconditional love word which is used often to describe God's love Agape in the first two instances and then in the last one Jesus changes to another word describing a friendship.

And when Peter answers with His frustration Jesus repeats this Phrase

3) Feed My Sheep

But it shifts now in its connotation because it almost feels Commanding and as a directive, you could say this is that moment of the handing off of the role of Shepherding from Jesus to Peter. A leadership mantle is given to Peter to bring to the table what is needed for the Church.

It's not enough for Jesus to just call Peter out of his rut and old life. NO

Jesus Intended to set Peter on track for his New Life in Christ - A Shepherd who would care and lead and direct them after Jesus was Gone.

I'm sure this is where that this is where Peter is reminded of the conversation that he had with Jesus on the Hill called golgotha many months before where Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church. As many have said that Jesus is speaking of Peter and I don't deny that its a great idea, but I would say that in this moment that the rock the Peter remembers standing on becomes more relevant. That was the Rock where Jesus would die, and His blood be spilled and the same rock that now Peter would remember because Peter recognized I believe in that moment that His leadership and calling and very little to do with His ability to do anything and it have everything to do with Jesus being able to use a humble and willing vessel

It was on that Rock Jesus built His Church, One that redeems, that resurrect lives that seem hopeless and unlovable, broken and unredeemable.. That is where Jesus would build His Church.. Using broken weak vessels that are willing and ready to do His will.

This is being the Church - Ready willing and able to do His will because we have been rescued and redeemed.

As we head into this year if we are to see His mission fulfilled here in our Church we must come out of our Ruts, We must Embrace His call on our lives.

"Follow Me" - John 21:18-22

The Challenge that faced Peter is the Challenge that faces us.

- 1. Make loving Christ our greatest priority.**
- 2. Take to heart God's forgiveness for our greatest sins.**

3. Believe that you can and that you must make partner with the Holy Spirit everyday to make a difference in the lives of others.

Nurturing growing relationships with Christ will result in Multiplication.

Yes we are called to evangelize, what are you inviting others to if you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus?

Changed lives, Change Lives.

Would you know how to share with others what you have with God?

Would you want to share with them what you have? Or do you think what you have with God is worth sharing with others?