

Our Times Are In His Hand (John 21:18-25)

Scripture Text:

18. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. "
19. Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, "Follow Me!"
20. Peter, turning around, *saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"
21. So Peter seeing him *said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?"
22. Jesus *said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!"
23. Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"
24. This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.
25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they *were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself *would not contain the books that *would be written. (John 21:18-25 NASB)

Outline:

- I. Jesus Foretells How Peter Will Glorify Jesus in His Own Death (vv.18-19)
- II. Peter Inquires of Jesus About What Will Become of John (vv.20-21)
- III. Jesus Answers Peter Regarding John and A Saying Goes Forth (vv.22-23)
- IV. John Testifies Regarding the Gospel Bearing His Name (vv.24-25)

Worksheet:

- I. Jesus Foretells How Peter Will Glorify Jesus in His Own Death (vv.18-19)
 - a. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. " (v.18)

- i. “truly, truly...” The disciples had heard Jesus use this expression many times during His earthly ministry. When they heard it they knew that what was heard afterwards was something that was very _____ and needed to be listened to and heeded to without question.
- ii. Jesus showed Peter an illustration about life in general and related it to a future event in his own life that foretells his own _____ in martyrdom for the sake of Christ and glory of God.
- iii. Jesus had just finished telling Peter to “_____ My lambs” (spiritually speaking, newborns/babes in Christ), He then had instructed him to “_____ My Sheep” (spiritually, those who were more spiritually mature who needed guidance and instruction from a pastor), and finally Jesus commanded him to “_____ My Sheep” (take care of the spiritually mature in their old age and beyond because they will not only need one to shepherd them, but also one to tend to them as well). As Jesus states the needs of people as they progress through the stages of life (physical/mental/spiritual), He transitions into a reference to Peter’s own life.
- iv. Peter, when he was younger was able to “gird” himself and go and come as he pleased, but Jesus was letting him know that a time was going to come when he was old that he would “stretch out” his hands and “someone else will gird” him, and bring him where he “[did] not wish to go.” What did Jesus mean when He said that Peter’s hands would be “stretched out”? *[discussion]* _____

- v. What was meant by “someone else will gird” you? *[discussion]* _____

- vi. **Gird; (zonnyimi) to bind about (especially with a belt)**
- vii. What was meant by, “and bring you where you do not wish to go”? *[discussion]* _____

- b. Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He *said to him, “Follow Me!” (v.19)
 - i. Jesus was prophesying to Peter of what kind of _____ that Peter would die, that would ultimately _____ God.
 - ii. What did Jesus mean by, “Follow Me”, if He was about to ascend into the heavens to sit at the right hand of the Father? Was Jesus telling Peter to follow Him as they walked on the beach? *[discussion]* _____

- iii. Jesus had been and was being the “_____ Shepherd” to Peter and the rest of the disciples. Jesus had been crucified and put to death for “righteousness sake” and to “glorify God” the Father. Now He was telling Peter to “Follow [Him]”. Follow the _____ of Christ, the _____ of Christ and finally, the _____ of Christ.
- II. Peter Inquires of Jesus About What Will Become of John (vv.20-21)
 - a. Peter, turning around, *saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” (v.20)
 - i. Peter hearing from Jesus about what his fate would be, turned around and “saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them”. Who was this disciple? _____
 - ii. We see from this verse that Jesus and Peter were actually in motion as they _____ together along the beach.
 - iii. John, out of all the things identifying himself as that disciple, mentions that this disciple was the one who had “also leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays you?’” What may have been the reason why John included this information at this time?
[discussion] _____

 - b. So Peter seeing him *said to Jesus, “Lord, and what about this man?” (v.21)
 - i. Peter and John were very close friends and members of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples. Peter, hearing what his fate would be, had _____ for his spiritual brother in Christ and asked, “what about this man?”
 - ii. Others have suggested that maybe his inquiry was not so honorable and that in his heart He wanted to know how and when John would eventually die and the circumstances surrounding his death. Jesus knew what was in Peter’s heart when he asked, and whatever it was it prompted Jesus to answer Peter in the manner in which He did.
- III. Jesus Answers Peter Regarding John and A Saying Goes Forth (vv.22-23)
 - a. Jesus *said to him, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!” (v.22)
 - i. Jesus, having better insight into what was going on in Peter’s heart, answered the question in a hypothetical way, that spoke to the heart of the matter and addressed whatever was going on in Peter’s heart. What was Jesus saying when He said, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?” [discussion] _____

- ii. Was Jesus, once again asking Peter to “follow” Him along the beach, or was there a deeper meaning that was being emphasized? *[discussion]*

- b. Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?” (v.23)

- i. Sometimes when God speaks, we hear what we want to hear, rather than what He has actually said. This can lead to error, the spreading of misinformation and in some cases outright untruths! How can Christians guard against this problem and avoid making this mistake? *[discussion]*

- ii. For this saying to go “out among the brethren”, they must not have had the clarity and understanding of this statement initially as John evidently did when he penned his gospel much later on in life. Is it possible that John’s exile to Patmos and his subsequent long life thereafter (approximately 60 years) could have played a part in perpetuating this misconception of John’s supposed “immortality”? *[discussion]*

- iii. What did Jesus mean when He said, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?” What was His personal message to Peter? What event was He pointing to in the future concerning Himself? *[discussion]*

IV. John Testifies Regarding the Gospel Bearing His Name (vv.24-25)

- a. This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. (v.24)

- i. John, here in this verse, not only identifies himself as the Apostle John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, but also as:

1. A _____, because he was a *learner* and a *follower* of Jesus Christ.
2. A _____, because he *testified* of the things that he had seen and heard.
3. A _____, because he recorded the things that he had seen and heard.
4. A _____ - _____, because the things that he recorded and testified of are accurate based not only on his own eyewitness, but the credible, collective, eyewitness and testimony of the other Apostles as well.

- ii. John, also in this verse, as he did in many verses refers to himself in the _____ person. However, there is more to this than merely identifying himself as the writer. John, in a literary fashion and as a witness, is signing his name to what would be considered in legal terms, an affidavit.
- iii. **Affidavit:**
 1. **Definition:** a written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation, for use as evidence in court.
 2. **Synonyms:** testimony, statement, sworn statement, attestation, declaration, avowal, plea, submission, claim, contention, charge, allegation, deposition, representation, asseveration, averment
- b. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they *were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself *would not contain the books that *would be written. (v.25)
 - i. John here, reminds his readers that what is contained in his gospel account is only a small _____ of what could have been written about the earthly _____ of Jesus Christ and the things that He did during His first advent.
 - ii. John further drives this point home by his use of **hyperbole** oftentimes used as a literary device to overstate a claim or point, not intended to be taken literally.
 1. **Hyperbole:** exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally.
 2. **Synonyms:** exaggeration, overstatement, magnification, amplification, embroidery, embellishment, overplaying, excess, overkill, purple prose, puffery
 - iii. As many as could be counted, though they are so numerous, not even the sands of the earth are enough to fill the earth, because there are other elemental bodies such as water, plants, animals and humans, all of which when compiled, collectively do not and cannot fill the earth completely.
 - iv. John's focus, as stated in John 20:30,31, was specific and his intent was that the purpose of his gospel be clearly seen and understood. That being the case, he only focused on eight (8) signs (John 2:1-12; 4:46-54; 5:1-17; 6:1-14; 6:15-21; 9:1-41; 11:17-45; 21:6) to drive this point home to his readers. It was not the case that he could not have written *more* to help his readers to believe, it was however the case that what he did write was *enough* for his readers to believe!
 1. Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31 NASB)