

The Word Would Go Forward

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. That is how we began. Now, the Word will go forward. The Word was there to create the world, and man in His image. The Word was there when man turned away. He came to die on our behalf, and rose again that we might live with Him forever. John has been recording this “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name,” (John 20:31). Because, though Jesus has defeated the grave, He has not yet come back a second time to abolish sin from all the earth and bring His full kingdom. In today’s passage, before He leaves to rejoin the Father, Jesus addresses the mission ahead. He calls His followers, even those that turned from Him, to take care of the Gospel message and continue to tend the flock. He desires for you, and the whole world, to know that He is the true, risen King. The church will begin, the gospel will be recorded, so that the Word can go forward.

Prepare Your Heart

Take a moment to pray before you begin: that God would remove any distractions, that He would reveal Himself in today’s passage. Praise God for sending Christ to die for us, and praise God as we wait for him to come again.

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9P9ucV-sNEE>

John 21:1-14 ¹After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. ²Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. ³Simon 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.

⁴Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.” ⁶He 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. ⁷That 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. ⁸The 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 off.

⁹When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

- 1) Read Luke 5:1-11 to see how Peter and a few of the other disciples first came to follow Christ. How is it connected to the way Jesus reveals himself now?

- 2) In verse 7, how does Peter react to hearing this is Jesus on the shore? Is this typical of Peter's character?

- 3) After Jesus died, the disciples left Him (Mark 14:50). Does Jesus bring that up now? What is His reaction to the disciples as He returns?

- 4) What kinds of things does Jesus do when He reveals Himself to others? What are the actions of Christ in this passage? Is this typical of His ministry?

John 21:15-19 ¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶He 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." ¹⁷He 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. ¹⁸Truly, 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."

- 5) Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" (Look back to John 13:38 and John 18 for the answer.)

- 6) How do you think Peter feels in this conversation?

- 7) Peter says, “You know that I love you,” and he’s right. Jesus does know. He also forgives. How can you take comfort today from this conversation? How do you take comfort knowing Christ accepts you even after you have turned from Him?

- 8) What does it mean when Jesus says, “Feed my sheep” or “Tend my sheep?” What is He asking Peter to do?

- 9) Look up Luke 22:31-34 to get more insight into Christ’s conversation with Peter.

³²“*but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, _____.*”

Jesus is still the Good Shepherd (John 10). He cares for His sheep, His followers. He even prayed for Peter before and after Peter turned from Him. Now, as He is preparing to leave again, He knows that He must send some to care for the followers He leaves behind. He wants to send them out. Peter, though he is often rash, and when things got hard he did not die for the Lord but denied Him, is forgiven and loved by God. Jesus has poured into him, seen him grow, and now desires for Peter to use his God-given leadership skills to tend to the church that will now form. Peter is not just welcomed back into the flock, but called to tend the sheep.

- 10) How have you seen the Lord use you? How has He forgiven you and also helped you grow? What desires and talents has He given you that He wants you to use for the church?

John 21:20-25 ²⁰Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” ²¹When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” ²²Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” ²³So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”

²⁴This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

- 11) “The disciple who Jesus loved” is John, the writer of the gospel. What are some of the things that brought him close to the Lord? Peter is going to “tend the sheep” and help build up the coming church, what will John’s role be moving forward?
- 12) In verse 21, Jesus does not answer Peter. How do you feel when God does not answer your big questions about the future? Why does the Lord not always answer us?
- 13) What is John’s purpose in writing this gospel? He uses words like “testify” and “witness” as if this is a court case. What/who is on trial?

Reflect

Now, we wait. Yet, we wait actively. Christ has come to die for our sins, He has risen again, His eternal kingdom has begun, but as we wait for His return and His final defeat of sin, we are tending the sheep. We are hoping, running, and working as the Word goes forward. It begins in Acts and continues now. As the hymn goes, The Word would go forward:

*Some through the waters, some through the flood
Some through the fire, but all through the blood*

“Waiting is your calling. Waiting is your blessing. Every one of God’s children has been chosen to wait, because every one of God’s children lives between the “already” and the “not yet.” Already this world has been broken by sin, but not yet has it been made new again. Already Jesus has come, but not yet has He returned to take you home with him forever. Already your sin has been forgiven, but not yet have you been fully delivered from it. Already Jesus reigns, but not yet has His final kingdom come. Already sin has been defeated, but not yet has it been completely destroyed. Already the Holy Spirit has been given, but not yet have you been perfectly formed into the likeness of Jesus. Already God has given you His Word, but not yet has it totally transformed your life. Already you have been given grace, but not yet has that grace finished its work. You see, we’re all called to wait because we all live right smack dab in the middle of God’s grand redemptive story. We all wait for the final end of the work that God has begun in and for us.”

— Paul David Tripp, [New Morning Mercies](#)

14) What does active waiting look like in your life right now? How are you on mission with the Lord? How is God using you, or how does He want to use you?

15) Complete this statement and explain: Knowing that God is _____ shows me that I am _____.

If you have done this study alongside us, the greatest message you can get from this study is that God created you to be His child in His image. Though you are broken in disobedience and not perfect, He sent himself, His perfect son Jesus, to die in your place (John 3:16). Jesus rose again and defeated death so that you could live an eternal life with Him if you choose to follow Him as your Savior. For those of you who already know, I hope this video encourages you, and for those of you who have more questions, they can be answered here:

<http://www.fallingplates.com/en#!/player>