THE FRIEND OF THE FALLEN

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**DATE: 12/09/2018 am**

**TEXT: John 21:1-19; Matthew 26:69-75**

**INTRODUCTION**

After several months, we have finally reached the end of our journey through John's Portraits of Jesus

I’d like to Hope that these Messages were a Help

In this final chapter of this great book …

We find one more Portrait of Jesus that I believe will help us live out the Christian Life

In these verses, we find Jesus being revealed as …

**“The Friend of the Fallen”**

This is a side of Jesus I have become very familiar with over the last 40 years

There have been many occasions when I had to come to the Lord confessing my sins and seeking forgiveness and restoration

Each time, I have found Him to be a faithful Friend to those who have fallen

**Proverbs 24:16 a – *“For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again:”***

Jesus has always been there to lift me up

While the focus of this chapter is on the Lord Jesus,

There is also a major emphasis placed on the interaction between Jesus and Peter

It’s that conversation that I would like to zero in on this morning

As I do, I would like to speak about what it means to be Backslidden

Maybe you don’t even know what it means to be Backslidden (Out of Fellowship)

This passage will help us better understand it

Maybe the things of God aren't as sweet as they used to be

Maybe your Love for the Lord, His Word as cooled off

Maybe your church attendance has become a thing of drudgery

(If you need to compare it to something, think of the time right after you first got saved)

My duty this morning is to remind us that someone doesn’t have to remain that way!

Jesus Christ is still the Friend of the Fallen this morning

As we look into what the Lord did for Peter, I want us to know that He will do the same for us if we will respond in the correct manner

With that in mind, let's pray and look together at …

**“Jesus - The Friend of the Fallen”**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “FAILURE” – Matthew 26:69-75 …**

Before we can see how the Lord Restored Peter

We must first understand what happened to Peter and how he Fell in the first place

**A. The ‘Place’** (Where it all started)

Before the Lord went to the Cross

Peter Boasted that he would never forsake the Lord

**Luke 22:33, 34 – *“And he (Peter) said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death” “And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me”***

Yet, when the time came and Jesus was arrested,

Peter, like all the others, forsook Jesus and fled

**Mark 14:50 – *“And they all forsook Him, and fled”***

However, **Matthew 26:58** tells us that Peter decided to follow the Lord to see what happens

***“But Peter followed Him afar off”***

When Peter found himself surrounded by the Lord's enemies, it became hard for him to stand by his earlier boast

Now, he takes the low road and denies that he even knew the Lord Jesus – **vs. 69-74**

There is always a Place where we begin to Backslide

One day we are going forward and the next we are going backwards

How does it happen? One word, 3 letters … S-I-N

Unconfessed Sin puts us out of Fellowship with the Lord

It starts by Not Praying like we should, Not reading our Bibles like we should, Not Attending church like we should, Not Sharing the Gospel like we should, Not Giving like we should

Not maintaining our relationship with the Lord

**B. The ‘Pain’** (It caused)

When Peter denied the Lord that night, the Bible tells us that he went out and ***“wept bitterly”***

Peter was miserable in his new condition

He knew that he had wronged the Lord

He knew that he had violated something very precious and sacred

He was a miserable man!

**C. The ‘Price’** (He paid)

After Peter sinned, he felt a definite Loss of Fellowship, Peace and Joy (Loneliness, Fear, Sadness)

He knew that things were different, that things weren’t right, not the same

**THE “FAILURE”**

**II. THE “FOOLISHNESS” – v. 3**

When your out of Fellowship, you do Foolish things

Even though Peter has seen the Resurrected Lord previously on 2 occasions

I believe he Remained out of Fellowship with the Lord

He hasn’t gotten things right, he hasn’t confessed

Because we see him making this statement in **v. 3 a**

***“Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing”***

Let look at how his Foolishness is Revealed

**A. In His ‘Choices’ – v. 3 a**

After the resurrection, Peter must have assumed that his ministry was over

He had denied the Lord and so he decided to return to the old way of life

***“fishing”***

I’m sure that he tried to justify it

People who are out of God's Will always make excuses

People who are out of God’s Will make the wrong choices!

They always base their decisions on fleshly motives rather than spiritual ones

Living by sight instead of by Faith

This is what Peter did and he was foolish for it!

Whatever Peter’s motivations were,

Peter had been called to forsake all those things and to follow Jesus

**Matthew 4:19 – *“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”***

The Lord's call had been to come and be a fisher of men!

**B. In His ‘Companions’ – v. 3 b**

Peter’s Backsliding took others with him

***“Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee”***

You affect a lot more folks than just yourself

These other Disciples weren't as sold out to the Lord as they should have been either!

If they had been, they would have been waiting for the Lord’s Direction

After all, Jesus had told them to go into Galilee and wait for Him

**Matthew 28:10 – *“Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me”***

**C. The ‘Consequences’ – v. 3 c**

Peter and his cronies fished all the night long and did not catch a single fish!

***“They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing”***

Most of these men had been professional fishermen before they met the Lord

And this must have been a frustrating thing to have to deal with

They toiled and labored all night and produced nothing!

This is just the way it works for those who are out of Fellowship with the Lord / backslidden

No matter what we try to accomplish in our own strength, it always comes to naught

As believers, we are totally Dependent on Jesus

**John 15:5 – *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing”***

You can produce nothing of lasting value in your own effort!

Some might argue that they have been living a mediocre Christian life and that they are still thriving and prospering materially and physically

May I remind you that both of those things are temporary and will soon pass away

In the final analysis, all that lasts are those things you do through Jesus

**I Cor. 3:11-15 …**

Many Christians will see their entire lives go up in flames before their very eyes!

What will happen when you face Jesus?

**THE “FAILURE”**

**THE “FOOLISHNESS”**

**III. THE “FRIEND” – vs. 4-17**

Even though Peter was out of Fellowship with the Lord

He still hadn't gone so far that the Lord had stopped pursuing him! (God never stops loving us)

Peter still had a Friend in Jesus

**Proverbs 17:17 – *“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity”***

And that Friend would make all the difference for Peter

He will do the same for us as well

First, we see how …

**A. Jesus ‘Found’ Him – vs. 4-7**

After the sin, after the return to the old life, after a long night of failure,

Jesus shows up **– v. 4**

***“But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus”***

And, in a few minutes, He would turn everything around and make things like they ought to be

What made the difference?

Notice the 3 things that changed when Jesus showed up

**1.** We see Peter Forced to Admit his Failure **– v. 5**

***“Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No”***

**2.** Peter’s Obedience to the Lord **– v. 6**

***“And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes”***

**3.** With it, Peter’s Renewed Desire **– v. 7**

***“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, and did cast himself into the sea”***

When it doesn’t seem like Jesus is around

We have the tendency to be out of Fellowship

(An indicator that we are walking by Feelings and not by Faith)

But when Jesus shows up everything changes

**B. Jesus ‘Feed’ Him – vs. 9-14 …**

When Peter, and the other Disciples, reach the shore,

They find that Jesus had a fire prepared with fish already cooking

They found there, with the Saviour, all the things they needed after being out on that boat all night

(Out of Fellowship)

They found food, warmth and friendship

They found a Saviour who loved them and who had all the provisions in place that they needed

Everything they lacked out on that boat, they found when they came to Jesus!

**C. Jesus ‘Freed’ Him – vs. 15-17 …**

We find here, the Lord Jesus re-commissioning Simon Peter for service

I am sure that Peter felt that his ministry was forever gone, but Jesus came to call him back into the fight!

This is a time of unique fellowship and restoration between Jesus and Simon Peter

In these few verses, Jesus Freed Peter from all the quilt and shame he was dealing with

**THE “FAILURE”**

**THE “FOOLISHNESS”**

**THE “FRIEND”**

Let’s close with a quick look at …

**IV. THE “FUTURE” – vs. 18, 19**

Jesus now tells Peter his Future

What would the future hold for this restored man of God?

These verses tell us the answer to that question

Let’s look into Peter’s Future

Notice …

**A. It would be One of ‘Sacrifice’ – vs. 18, 19 a**

***“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not” “This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God”***

Peter would eventually give his life for the Lord who had saved and restored Him

Peter's call was literally to follow Jesus unto Death

Tradition states that Peter was eventually put to death by crucifixion

Commitment to the Lord is a serious thing

We Can’t be in one day and out the next

***“A Double minded man is unstable in all his ways”***

God expects us to be serious about our decision to follow Him

And He expects us to follow Him in a sacrificial way that places God’s Will above our own

That is the only formula for true success in the Christian life!

**B. It would be One of ‘Service’ – v. 19 b**

***“This spake he, signifying (that) he should glorify God”***

Peter is told that his life, from that moment forward, is to Glorify the Lord!

He is no longer to live for self, but in everything, he is to live for the Glory of God

God's plan is the same for every Born Again child of God!

His will is that you and I live lives that are pleasing in His sight and that bring Glory and Honor to His wonderful Name

**I Corinthians 10:31 – *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”***

There is no doubt some of us need to come today and repent of living for self, make a change and get up to live for Jesus!

**C. It would be One of ‘Surrender’ – v. 19 c**

The last things Jesus does is to give Peter the command, ***“Follow Me!”***

The last call is the same as the first

When Jesus found Peter and called him the first time, this was His command

When he re-commissions Peter, He issues the same call

This tells us that the Lord hasn't changed His mind about Peter, or about Peter's duty before the Lord

God gives the same command to you and I today that He gave to Peter then, ***“Follow me!”***

All Jesus wants from us is a Surrendered life

One that is lived for the Glory of God

One that exalts Him and one that is lived in His Will and Service

He simply wants us to follow Him!

**Are we?**

**CONCLUSION**

I would like to bring this message to a close by asking,

*“What does your future hold for you?”*

Does it hold chastisement, misery and difficulty?

Or, joy, peace, blessing and glory for the Lord?

The answer all depends on what we do right now

Some of us, like Peter, may be Struggling while Jesus stands calling out to us

Please understand that you do not have to remain at a distance from Him this morning

If this message has found you lost and on your way to Hell, then I invite you to come to Jesus right now

He loves you and wants to save your soul

Dear lost friend, if you do not come to Jesus, you are eternally lost and are headed to Hell with no hope

Forever lost, forever doomed and forever damned

Don’t let that happen

If this message finds you Backslidden, out of Fellowship with the Lord

Then I invite you to make it right

He stands ready to receive, to forgive and to restore, if you will only come to Him

I have delivered the message as it was delivered to me

Now, the final decision is yours

What will it be? You decide!

**THE “FAILURE”**

**THE “FOOLISHNESS”**

**THE “FRIEND”**

**THE “FUTURE”**

**JESUS – THE FRIEND OF THE FALLEN**