

We just heard Shawn and Tommy answer very important questions. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? What difference does Jesus make in your life? What purpose does God have for your life? Do you commit yourself to follow Jesus? These are important questions for all of us.

But these are not the typical questions we hear every day. High School Seniors are asked where are you going to college? College grads are asked if they have a job lined up yet? Where are you going for Memorial Day? Do you have enough saved for your children's college? When do you plan to retire?

Some questions are more important than others. Today we are looking at three questions Jesus asked Peter. The first question was, "Peter, will you follow me?" The Gospels do not tell us that Jesus asked Peter a question, but I think it had to be a question in Peter's mind. Could he leave everything behind to follow Jesus? Before this Peter heard John the Baptist call Jesus "The Lamb of God." (John 1:35-42)

Sometime after that, Jesus was teaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When the crowd got so big that it was pushing Jesus closer to the water, Jesus asked Peter if He could talk from his boat. Peter said yes. When Jesus was done, He told Peter to try one more time to catch some fish. They had been shut out the night before. Peter and his partners did and caught so many fish that they filled two boats. Peter felt overwhelmed. That is when Jesus asked Peter to follow Him!

Jesus was inviting Peter into a very special relationship with him. Jesus was giving Peter the opportunity to follow Him, listen to and receive on the job training from Him. This meant Peter would have to leave his fishing business behind. Peter accepted the invitation and started following Jesus. There were other people who did not follow Jesus. A rich young man turned down Jesus' invitation because he loved his money and stuff too much. Many of the religious leaders of Israel turned away from Jesus because they loved their power and positions too much.

What about us? Are we willing to answer Jesus' invitation to follow Him, or do we love our stuff too much, have we put other relationships ahead of following Jesus, are we following the ways of the world than the path the Lord sets out for us?

The second important question came about halfway through Jesus' ministry. Peter and the rest of the Disciples had heard Jesus preach, seen Him heal the sick, feed the crowds, and eat with the outcast. They were in Caesarea Philippi, a center of emperor worship, when Jesus asked the Disciples, "Who do the people say I am?" The Disciples answered, "Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead." (John 9:19) Then Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

"Who is Jesus?" This is a question we all need to answer. Historians say Jesus was the founder of one of the world's greatest religions. Muslims say that He was a prophet, but not the son of

God. Mormons claim Jesus was a man who became a god. Libertarian theologians turn Jesus into a revolutionary who shows them how to remake the world the way they want it to be. Then there are the name it and claim preachers who think Jesus is the one who can give us prosperity and security. Too many people today have no clue who Jesus really is.

Who is Jesus to you? The story we are looking at in John 21 begins with the phrase, “After these things.” What things? This event was preceded by Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the price for sin. The Apostle Paul tells us, **“But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.”** (Galatians 4:4-5) Is Jesus your Lord and Savior?

The third question took place at what we might call “The First Breakfast.” After His resurrection, Jesus told the Disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. Peter decided to go fishing. Jesus was standing on the shore and asked if they caught any fish. When they said no, Jesus told them to try one more time. This time they caught 153 fish. When they came to the shore, Jesus had them bring some of the fish to cook. Then Jesus fed them the first breakfast after His resurrection.

After breakfast, **Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?”** three times. Peter had denied knowing Him three times during Jesus’ trial. Jesus was giving Peter a second chance and told him to feed His sheep. Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. Jesus was going to return to heaven in a short time and had trained His Disciples to continue His ministry, to take of the people who would answer the call to follow Him. Jesus was asking Peter to become one of his under shepherds.

Peter was a broken man because he denied Jesus. God uses broken people for His mission. He forgives us. He restores us. He calls us to continue His work, to love, serve and care for one another. He also tells us to invite other people to follow Him. That was the last thing Jesus said before returning to heaven. **“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:19-20)

**When Jesus calls us to a new life,** He does not set us up for failure. He promises to always be with us. He gives us the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. We have His Words to teach people. We are not telling them about ourselves. We are introducing them to Jesus.

How will you answer Jesus’ questions today? Will you follow Him and let your relationship with Him continue to grow? Will you confess your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Will you respond to His love by loving Him and loving others in His name? Like Peter, you and I have failed to faithfully follow Jesus. Like Peter we have been forgiven, restored and called to a new life in Christ. Will you answer Jesus’ Call?

We can't follow the Lord on our own. We need help. God gives us that help through His Word and Spirit. God brings us together in the Christian faith to help, support and encourage each other. It is not easy trying to be a solo Christian. We need the Lord and each other.

Tommy's personal Bible verse tells us that God gives us the strength that we need to follow Him. "But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength, they will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak." (Isaiah 40:30)

Shawn's Bible verse tells us that we can't change ourselves. But the Holy Spirit can. "The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy, and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself." (Galatians 5:22-23) The Spirit helps us to become more like Jesus.

The Lord is calling us today to follow Him. The Holy Spirit promises to give us a new life and help us live like Jesus. Answer His Call!