

“Remember the Lord”

In this latest series from John 21, we’ve received some important truths about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We’ve learned that: Jesus claims our total allegiance; Jesus commands our dependent obedience; there’s true freedom and fullness of joy only in seeking to faithfully follow Jesus; Jesus cares for our needs; Jesus must be our priority in all of life; we must continue to repent of our sins; genuine love for Jesus must be our primary motivation for all of life; Jesus’ disciples will suffer; we must deny ourselves and take up our cross daily; and we saw last time that we need to avoid being distracted and seek to stay focused on what God is doing in our lives rather than be confused, discouraged and in doubt because of what God may choose to do in the lives of others. Let’s conclude today with:

—Sufficiency of the Word

In the last two verses, we get confirmation from John the Apostle that he’s borne witness to that which he’s written, and his testimony is true. Interestingly, we’re told in the last verse that, “.....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.” John is amazed at the entire scope of the ministry of Jesus! There’s so much that he’s not recorded about what Jesus did and yet, what he’s written down—under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—is sufficient for our needs.

Something of this same truth was spoken of by John earlier in this gospel. “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which *are not written* in this book, but these are written *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 20:30-31) So, then, John gives us his record about Jesus, the Word *made flesh* (John 1:14); we learn that the Holy Spirit working in and through the *written* Word—as recorded by all the writers of scripture (2 Peter 1:21)—is sufficient for salvation as well as for life and godliness (e.g., John 17:17, 20). There’s nothing lacking.

Given the fact that John 21 places a major focus on Peter, I want to conclude this series with Peter. After Jesus’ ascension back to the Father, Peter clearly obeyed Jesus and sought to shepherd the sheep and to teach others to shepherd the sheep; that is to say, Peter sought to shepherd the church that Christ died for. In the last inspired letter written by Peter—2nd Peter—we read these words in chapter 3 about the last days prior to Jesus’ return. “I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish,

but that all should reach repentance..... Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace.....take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people, and lose your own stability..... But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” (3:1-4, 9, 14, 17-18)

Very shortly after this letter was written—and just as prophesied by Jesus in John 21:18-19—Peter died a martyr’s death. Although scripture doesn’t record Peter’s death, church history indicates that Peter was crucified under the reign of the wicked Roman Emperor, Nero around 68 A.D. just shortly *after* 2nd Peter was written. Church historian, Eusebius cites the testimony of Clement of Rome who says that before Peter was crucified, he was forced to watch the crucifixion of his own wife. As Peter watched his wife being led away to be crucified Clement said that Peter called his wife by name and said, “Remember the Lord.” It was after this that Peter himself was crucified. There’s a long-standing tradition that says that Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he wasn’t worthy to die as Jesus had died. As we close this series from John 21, may we be reminded of the love of Jesus for all his disciples. And no matter what comes; no matter whether we’re running a corporation, running a marathon, or wiping runny noses and changing diapers, “Remember the Lord.”

Rev. Dr. Steve Jones is the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church PCA in Paxton, Illinois.