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JOHN 20:19-21:25

John Series

John 20:19 to the end of the book today. The day and the time are these. Sunday, the day of the resurrection. Resurrection was revealed in the morning, took place in the morning on Sunday. And in the evening we have these words.

John 20:19: *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them.*

The idea that they're afraid of the Jewish leaders is not just because Jesus was crucified and maybe they'll crucify or they'll kill some of the other people, but the reality here is this. What happened in the morning was that the angel moved the stone away and then sat on the stone and the guards were frightened and ran. But where did they go to? When the guards ran away, they didn't go back. The Roman guards didn't go back to their commanders. The Bible says they went to the Jewish leaders.

They're saying, "We've got a problem here," and the Jewish leaders conspired with the guards to create a story. The story wasn't true, but a story that the Bible says the rumors circulate to this day. The rumor was that the disciples stole the body. Now if the rumor is the disciples stole the body, you can bet that they're going to be after the disciples.

So they're afraid and they've got the doors locked. We're going to see the doors locked on this Sunday and the next Sunday. A point is being made about the doors being locked because Jesus couldn't have come through the door. That's the idea. He *came and stood among them*. I don't know whether He was beamed down or He would mesmerize through the door or something. With TV today we can imagine a lot of things how this might have happened. They didn't have TV. He just appeared. Luke tells us they were scared to death.

But notice what He says in the rest of verse 19. It says He *said, "Peace be with you!" After He said this He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

Luke 24 tells us they weren't overjoyed at first. They were frightened. They were scared to death. I can imagine that. All of a sudden Jesus appears there. The Bible tells us in Luke 24 that they thought it was a ghost. So they were upset and scared at first. But when Jesus says, "Come and see my hands, see my side," then it says they were *overjoyed* by this.

But notice the words that He says to them. He says to them when He first appears, “*Peace be with you!*” Maybe this is just the *shalom* greeting of the Jewish people, but I suspect it’s more than that. Because you remember in John 14, just a few days earlier, Jesus had said to them, “*My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives, but I give this to you.*” So He is talking about this peace. He says, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not be afraid.*” That is what He said to them back in John 14.

I think that sometimes that happens in our lives. You come to listen to sermons or you read God’s word for a while and the information is great, you’re taking it in. It may not hit you at that time, but then something later happens in your life, and you go “Whoa! There was a sermon about that, or “there was that teaching,” or “there was that scripture I read about that.” Then it comes to have tremendous meaning. I think that’s what happened with the disciples here – kind of a flashback to what was said before and now they see the Lord. Now they experience this peace in a way they needed. There’s a sense of “wow.” They’re excited. They’re overjoyed at the fact that Jesus would reveal Himself to them in this particular situation.

It’s going to be interesting that they’re going to touch Jesus, they’re going to see Him. John, who’s writing the gospel we’re at right now, writes another book, 1 John, and as he introduces 1 John 1:1 he says these words, which have more meaning to us when we have just seen this story. He says, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.* This made a marked impression, this whole experience on John. He’s going to share that with people later on.

In Luke’s gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, “You got anything to eat around here? Give me something to eat.” They have some broiled fish up in that room that’s all locked up. They give him some broiled fish. I’m just trying to imagine. He goes through walls and then He eats fish. I wonder what happens when He leaves. Does it all disappear? It’s just kind of an odd thing to ponder what’s happening in this story.

But notice verse 21 as we continue. *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

This is a rather interesting passage. Let’s kind of take this one step at a time.

First He says, *Peace be with you* again. But then He says, “*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*” Our God is a missionary God. Our God sends us out to tell people about Jesus, to tell them the message. The book of John was written for this purpose – so that we can understand and believe that Jesus is God. So He’s sending people out.

There are some people today who believe that religion is a private matter. You really shouldn’t talk about it with other people. God does not believe that. God believes that this is a message the world needs to hear. And so that message is being shared here and He’s sending them out. “*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*” I’m sending you out with authority in the same way

the Father has sent me. I am empowering you to go forward with a message. And then He breathes on them the Holy Spirit.

This must be different than the breathing or the coming of the Holy Spirit that's going to happen on Pentecost, which is an empowering and indwelling that now happens and empowers the church and so on. But He does something here with the Holy Spirit that is illustrating the authority again that He's giving them. You're taking with you the Holy Spirit when you go. As you share this message as I've appointed you in the same way God has sent me, I'm sending you out. You have the Holy Spirit with you. Go for it!

Then He makes this statement. He says, *"If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* Which has led some, of course, in history to believe that pastors or leaders or church ministry leaders have the ability to forgive sins. I think that would be a mistake, understanding theology from God's word.

I would suggest what He is saying to them is this. He's saying to them, "You have seen today I have raised from the dead. You've have seen in the last couple of days that I died on the cross and the work was finished. And when I died on the cross I died for the sins of the whole world so that people could be forgiven. So I am sending you out now with the power of the Holy Spirit to go out and proclaim that message that when you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior your sins are forgiven." You can go out with authority and you can say that to someone. "If you accept Jesus in your life your sins are forgiven." It is a beautiful message.

So if you're listening to this today and you're not a believer I want you to know that if you accept Jesus Christ in your heart you can be confident of the fact that your sins are forgiven. That's the power that He's passing on to them and sending them out. He's not sending them alone; He's sending them with the Holy Spirit with this authority that backs it up.

Now we're going to look at a specific story about Thomas who was not there that evening. Let's see what God does with Thomas starting in verse 24.

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), which means twin, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" They went and told Thomas all about it. But Thomas said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger where the nails were, and put hand into His side, I will not believe." I've got to have it my way is kind of what Thomas is saying. Once I get it my way I will believe. It has to be in this particular box.

It's really interesting that God is gracious with Thomas here. I can imagine that there are some times when God says "No, I'm sorry, I'm not going to do it your way." But in this case, God is gracious with Thomas and reveals to Thomas Jesus in the way he needs it revealed. We see that in verse 26.

A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" So we're repeating the same things from the previous week.

In the room now is doubting Thomas. We call him doubting Thomas. He's inherited that name throughout history. It's probably an embarrassment to Thomas as well. Here's Jesus in the room. It's interesting He doesn't condemn him like, "Where were you? Why weren't you in church last week?" He doesn't do that to him. He just comes and He's going to meet him where he needs to be met.

Verse 27: *He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" In other words, "I get it. He's not just my God now; He's my Lord. I'd give Him everything I have. I believe. I understand this." A remarkable statement. I think when we come to see God for who He is... The disciples went to Thomas, "We have seen the Lord," but Thomas hadn't seen Him personally. Now he sees the Lord, and he goes, "Wow. He is my God."

There's a message here for us because we see the Lord too. Maybe we don't see Him in that same way that Thomas touched Him, but we see the Lord often because of the testimonies of other people. Sometimes we see Him in the things that are going on. But we don't see Jesus walking on earth. We don't see Him healing people. We weren't there at that time.

Jesus has a message for all of us in verse 29. *Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* That's the message for us. We might not see the exact same things Thomas saw, but we still trust in the Lord and believe what He has done for us.

Verse 30: *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* Obviously he's picking and choosing which stories he's going to share in this book and he's going to tell us why here.

Verse 31 – I would suggest this is the key verse for the whole book of John. If you're going to mark one verse to say why the book of John was written, this would be the verse. *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

Some have never heard of Jesus Christ. And they need to hear so they can trust in Him. *These things are written so you may believe.* I know that some of you would have come to Christ earlier if someone would have just told you. When you know who Jesus Christ is and you trust Him as your personal Savior then amazing things happen. This whole book is written so you might see how Jesus is working personally in the lives of people doing miracles, amazing things, but also just touching people on a heart level so that you can believe and understand what happened.

That brings us to the end of this chapter. We are going to go into the last chapter, chapter 21, a chapter that seems to add more material here. The book could have ended right there. But John

says, “I’ve got to tell you a little bit more about what Jesus did after the resurrection, how He appeared to some folks.” We’re going to read that story now, starting in John 21:1.

Afterward Jesus appeared again to His disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. Let’s stop right there. All these events took place in Jerusalem. Now we’re moving over to the Sea of Galilee for our setting of this story.

We’ve got seven characters besides Jesus in this story, listed here starting in verse 2. *It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee (we know those are James and John), and two other disciples were together.* We’re not told their names, but they are all together. Seven guys. *“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*

These guys are professional fishermen. They know how to fish. They go out and they catch nothing all night. They work all night and they catch nothing. I think it is going to be really important here because my sense is that the disciples who had been called (remember they had been called away from fishing – *leave your nets and follow me*), and so the Bible says they left their boats, they left their father and their servants, and James and John followed. Peter and Andrew followed Jesus. They left fishing to follow Jesus and to be *fishers of men*. They took on a whole new lifestyle. They were converted and their conversion changed their occupation what they did. They were no longer fishermen.

But now I get the impression they’re kind of disillusioned with it. They don’t know what to do. They’re not on a mission to go start a church or something. They’re kind of like “Well, let’s go back fishing. We don’t know what else to do.”

So they’re going to go there in Galilee. They’re all going to go out and go fishing and they aren’t going to catch anything. Nothing. All night they are going to fish. They cast this net out and the net has sinkers, sinks down, or they throw it out and the middle sits down and the fish come by and they pull it all back. Different ways they can do this thing with the net in order to catch those fish and bring them in. They catch nothing. They go all night and they catch nothing.

So verse 4: *Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.* You’ve got to know they don’t know who it is. There’s a guy on the shore who’s going to yell at them. The Bible’s going to tell us it’s about a football field’s distance away, a hundred yards away. That’s quite distance. This guy’s yelling from the shore. *He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.* And who could it be? It could be the fish market people, the people who would buy the fish from the fishermen who come and bring their boats back. And if they have any fish, these buyers would buy the fish, take it to market and they would sell it. They don’t know who it is. But this guy yells out and he says. “Got any fish?” “No” they said.

Look at verse 6. *He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

I am not a fisherman. I grew up in a home where my dad taught me a lot of things. He tried to teach me how to fish, but it never worked. We had fishing poles. With four kids in my family we had fishing poles. We'd go out to the river. I lived in Oklahoma for four years, from the ages eight to twelve. We went fishing. We'd go down to the river and go fishing. We couldn't catch anything. We tried corn and we tried the little plastic lures and we tried all kinds of stuff to catch fish. We tried putting worms on. Nothing worked for us catching fish. So we started developing this reputation that we can't catch anything.

My dad would share that and so some real good fisherman said, "We'll take you out. Come on, we'll go out." We'd go out with those folks and then they wouldn't catch anything that day. So we started developing this reputation of being the curse because we couldn't catch any fish.

My dad hated fish anyway. He never would eat fish. He didn't like to eat fish. But fishing is a fun thing we thought. I mean that's what everybody told us. But we could never do it. We could never catch anything. My dad was a preacher and he hated fish. He would say to people in the congregation, "I hate fish so much I don't even preach on the five loaves and two fishes." I mean he just did not talk about fishing. He did not like it and we had a bad reputation as fishermen.

I'm no fisherman, but I can tell you that just moving a net fifteen feet to the other side of the boat can't be a solution. That's like telling us, "You guys are fishing with the wrong hand because you've got left-handed fish and you're fishing for right-handed fish." It just doesn't make sense.

So here, this guy on the shore whom they don't know (they don't know it's Jesus), is saying, "*Throw your net on the other side.*" I almost think they must say, "This is silly, but we're going to try it anyway."

I want to make an application of this because here's what I think happens. As I work with people I find people who come to me, like they did yesterday. I was at a seminar and a lady says, "I've tried everything with my kids." I feel like saying, "Try fishing on the other side of the boat." That's what I wanted to say, because I was studying this passage. But she says, "I've tried everything". And sometimes I say to a parent, "Well, what have you tried?" "We've taken everything from this kid. He's twelve years old, he doesn't have anything in his room except a bed now." I'm going, "Maybe you ought to try a different approach? Try to throw the net on the other side."

Here's what I think. I think that sometimes the difference between success and productivity and failure and a lack of productivity is just fifteen feet of trying something new. If you're in a relationship that's not working or you're in a job that you're having a hard time with or you're having a hard time managing your money or you're having a hard time with a habit inside your life and you're not able to deal with it in a way that you know you should be dealing with, maybe it's time to fish on the other side of the net. Maybe it's time to do something different.

It's really fun to watch God work when we try to do something different. But it's amazing to me how many people stay in the same patterns over and over again and don't try something different. I would just suggest if you find yourself in an unproductive situation maybe God wants

you to try something different. Notice what happens to them as they try something different in the midst of this story.

When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. So now they've got so many fish. We're going to be told that these are large fish, not small fish. We're told they're large and we're told there are 153 of them. Somebody counted these fish. This was important for them to find out how many fish we actually got in this miracle. So they counted them. There were so many fish in the net they could not bring the net into the boat, so they're going to tow the net full of fish all the way to the shore. That's their goal now.

But here's what happened. Verse 7: *Then the disciple whom Jesus loved (that's John) said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"*

Here's what I think is happening. They don't know it's Jesus on the shore yelling out, "*Throw your nets on the other side of the boat.*" They have to do something that's uncomfortable and it's going to be different. They're going to have to get on the other side of the boat, the right hand side of the boat, and throw the net a different way or something. It's going to be different than what they have been doing. It's uncomfortable. They're going to do it, then they're going to see all these fish come in the net, and they're starting to pull the sides of the net together to capture all the fish.

As John is doing that he says, "Whoa. This is the Lord! I have had this experience before. I've been in a place where Jesus has helped us fish. I've been somewhere where He's helped us. He's taught us about these things. He's called us away from this to fish for people, but I know this is God."

I think that's what happens sometimes. We don't even know – it could be anybody telling us. "Hey, try this new thing." And we say, "Okay, I'll try that new thing." We start doing it and then we see God work in the midst of it. Whoa, God is working here. Just like John says *it's the Lord*.

Now notice Peter's response. *As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.* I'm not sure why he did that. Maybe he thought he could walk on the water still. But he puts on his outer garment and it seems like – I mean if I were doing it, I'd at least hold the outer garment in the air – but this guy's so impulsive. Peter just throws his garment on, jumps in the water, and goes a hundred yards. He's got to go all the way to shore because it's the Lord that's there.

Verse 8: *The other disciples followed in the boat.* I can imagine this is a common scenario for the other disciples. Peter's always doing crazy things and the other disciples are just following along. *The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.* That's still a long way, seems to me, to tow fish and to be running or trying to swim to get to land.

When they landed (notice what they saw), they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus was there making breakfast for them. He cares for their personal needs. I just love the way Jesus does this.

He had already been fishing. I don't know how Jesus got these fish. I mean He's in control of all the fish. In the Old Testament when He needed a fish for Jonas' predicament He just had this great fish come up. The Bible doesn't say it was a whale; it was a great fish that God brought to the scene. God's in control of the fish. When Peter asked about the taxes, Jesus says, "Go down to the shore, get one of those fish, catch a fish, and the first fish you catch is going to have the tax in it that you're going to pay." Jesus is obviously in control of what the fish is picking up and putting in his mouth. He could have just said, "Okay fish, jump in the frying pan. Clean yourself on the way. Get in the frying pan." It looks like He picked up some bread on the way. So Jesus is ready to feed these guys and to care for them in a personal way. I love that picture.

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Verse 10: Jesus the cook said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." You've got all those fish there. Get some of those fish. Peter is there on the shore; the fish are still on their way. They're being delivered.

Verse 11: *So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore.* He must have been a big guy. He hauls these 153 large fish into shore. I don't know whether they leave them right in the shallow water there in the net all tied up or he drags them up on the beach. I'm not sure what he does, but they are right there by the shore.

He dragged the net ashore, it says. It was full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." I love this picture. None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

They didn't even have to ask Him. In fact it gives you the impression they would be embarrassed to ask Him, "Are you Jesus?" or even to say, "You're Jesus, aren't you?" They just knew it was Him. And when He takes the bread and He takes the fish, it just reminds me of the feeding of the five thousand. He says, "Guys, I'm going to give you some more fish, I'm going to give you some more bread." He serves them breakfast, and so they go around and they eat that food.

In verse 15 we're going to have a conversation that Jesus has with Peter. It implies, as we read later, Jesus walked away from the breakfast meal around the fire. Because it says that John is following them. He must have been walking somewhere. We will get to that in a minute. But Jesus is going to probably say to Peter, "Peter, can we come a long come away and talk for a moment?"

Now the next few verses are the restoration of Peter. Remember Peter denied Christ three times. It's a beautiful picture of Jesus coming and restoring Peter and getting him back involved in ministry. The same thing He wants to do with each one of us. If you have regrets in your life, as Peter must have had, this is a passage for you. Just to recognize how God wants to free you up on the inside and get you back into ministry.

Verse 15: *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”*

It’s interesting. We are not told who the ‘these’ are. The ‘these’ could be the disciples. In other words, “Do you love me more than you love these disciples?” It’s possible. Or maybe He is saying, “Do you love me more than these disciples love me?” I don’t think that’s what He is saying because Jesus does not like it when His disciples compare themselves to one another. I don’t think He would be encouraging Peter to evaluate his love for God compared to the others disciples’ love for Jesus. I don’t think so.

I am inclined to think as they are walking by they are seeing this net of 153 fish. They are seeing the boats. Jesus knows the fact that Peter has gone back fishing. He’s taking all these guys back fishing. He’s called them out of fishing to follow Him. And so He asks the question, “*Do you love me more than these?*” I think that He is saying to Peter “Do you love me more than these fish, Peter?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”
Jesus said, “*Feed my lambs.*”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” This is the second time He says *Simon son of John*. He is going to say it a third time. But the last time He said it was in chapter 1 when He called Peter and said to him (he is just getting to know Him), “Simon son of John, I’m going to change your name to Cephas, which means rock.” I think what He is saying, “I know you. I know you, Peter. I know where you’ve been, I know what’s happened to you, I know the mistakes you’ve made. I know you, *Simon son of John*. Do you love me?”

He answered “Yes, Lord. *You know that I love you.*”
Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” In other words, come on. Let’s move forward. We’ve got things to do here.

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”
He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”
Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

Now in English, we do not see the Greek words that are used here. There are two different words for ‘love’ mentioned in this passage. It’s interesting to look at these, because you know the word *agape* is a sacrificial love of total commitment. Jesus uses that the first two times. He says, “Peter, do you *agape* me?” Peter does not want to use that word. Probably because he’s embarrassed, probably because he feels like he’s inadequate to use that word. So he uses the word *phileo*, which means ‘I’m fond of,’ a brotherly love kind of love. So Jesus says, “Peter, do you *agape* me?” and Peter says, “Yes Lord. I *phileo* you. I’m fond of you.” So Jesus tells him, “Let’s get back into ministry.”

Then Jesus says again, “Peter, do you *agape* me?” Peter says, “Lord, you know I *phileo* you.” It’s like I can’t bring myself to say that sacrificial love that I should have and I want to have in my life. Obviously I didn’t have it a few days ago, so I can’t say that.

So the third time when Jesus says, “*Do you love me,*” He changes. I would imagine the story and Jesus would say, “*Do you agape me?*” and Peter would finally say “Yes, I *agape* you.” But that’s not how the story goes. Jesus changes. He says, “*Do you phileo me?* Okay, Peter. I understand you, son of John. I understand where you are. It’s okay where you are. Do you love me?” And Peter says, “Oh Lord, I feel hurt because you keep asking me this question. Yes, I *phileo* you.” And so *Jesus says, “Feed my sheep. Get back into ministry.”*

Peter’s going to remember this. Peter’s going to write a book in 1 and 2 Peter. In 1 Peter 5 he writes these words – *Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.* So he’s talking about this message that God has given him about being a shepherd and a beautiful picture that God is calling him back into ministry.

Back to verse 18. *Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted.* In other words, when you were young you just did whatever you wanted to do. And that was fine. That word *but* is a discipleship word. I think that continually we used to be able to do whatever we wanted to do, *but* God now is directing us. He goes on here. *But when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.*

Verse 19 explains what those words mean to us. We have the commentary there. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, “*Follow me.*”

Tradition tells us that Peter died. He was crucified. But when Peter was about to be crucified, he said to his captors, “No. Don’t. I cannot be crucified the same way that my Lord was crucified.” So they crucified him upside down.

But the picture here is given to Peter right at the beginning and He’s telling Peter this is what is going to happen, but you need to follow me. These are the same words He said to Peter early on in his life. “Peter, leave your nets and follow me.” That’s what He’s telling Peter. “Come on, Peter. You need to follow me.” He’s giving him that message.

Now Peter responds to Jesus in verse 20. It says, *Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them.* That’s why it gives the impression they are on a walk of some kind because John is following along. *(This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”)*

When Peter saw John, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” This just reminds me of children. You know, “Hey, he got a bigger piece than I did. How come you’re punishing me? What about him?” And not just children. Us too. We say, “Lord, how come he gets that? How come she gets that? I wish I could get what other people get.” We start comparing ourselves to other people.

I love what Jesus' answer is. When Peter is saying "What about John, Jesus? You just told me about how I'm going to die. What about him?" *Jesus answered* in verse 22, "*If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?*" I imagine what He's saying is mind your own business. In other words, don't be worried about someone else and comparing yourself to someone else. You worry about your relationship with me. The next words are *you must follow me*. Let's worry about your relationship with me. Let's worry about what's going on here. Let's not worry about the other things that are going on with somebody else. Because that's not your business.

I think a similar response, maybe more gracious than what I said, we can do with children who are comparing themselves. We need to recognize that ourselves too. When we start comparing ourselves to someone else, we need to recognize we need to follow God. We're on a different path than the person next to us. God has other things going on in their lives. He's got a plan for us and we're moving forward. We need to know that, and we need to stick with that in our lives.

Verse 24: *This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.* He's talking about himself, John. *We know that his testimony is true.* He's pointing out that he was an eyewitness.

Then the last verse – *Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*

This is powerful. God designed this book. John writing it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit identifies several things – several *I Am*'s, many times he's talking about the belief these people have. He does several miracles, all chosen to direct us to all believe in God and what He's done. To believe in Jesus, to recognize that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God as the end of the last chapter told us. It's a powerful book.

I would encourage you, if you're going to share with someone about Jesus and they want to know where to start reading in the Bible, start them in the book of John. Because the book of John is written so they might believe and understand more about who Jesus is. But it's an application not just for those who are not saved; it's an application for you and me as Christians. As we come before God and we are trying to live our lives, sometimes we get distracted and we find ourselves not following God the way we should, not doing what we need to do with our relationship with the Lord. We need to come back and follow Him. We need to do what's right.

If you find yourself in a place where you've made some mistakes, significant mistakes, regrets, like Peter had, get back into ministry is what Jesus is saying to Peter. "Come on. Let's get back in there. *Feed my sheep. Tend my lambs,*" is what He's saying. Be the people of God.

Together, as we serve the Lord, we're doing that in the God we believe in. A God we believe in because He's true. We are truth seekers first. Because we know the truth, that's what we believe in. It's a message that the gospel of John is teaching us. Wow. Great book.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I thank you for your word. We've enjoyed looking at this piece of it. I personally have appreciated the way you work tenderly with the different characters in this story. I appreciate the sacrifice that you made many times in being a servant. I appreciate the way you are patient with your disciples as they were trying to learn and grow. Lord, I'm grateful for the way you do those same things in my life. I pray that as we continue to study your word and different parts of it that we would come away from it changed people. We would learn, we would grow, and we would have a passion to share that message with others. So, Lord, I ask for opportunities now. Opportunities for us to share with others the message you have given to us. Because we believe in you. Even though we haven't walked with you or seen you on this earth, we believe in you and we're grateful for that privilege. Bless us, Lord. We ask in Jesus name, amen.