

You Follow Me

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Preacher: Donald J. Macaulay

[0 : 00] We'll turn back into the chapter that we read. We can read again at verse 20. Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who had been reclining a table close to him and had sent, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?

When Peter saw me, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?

You follow me. Especially the words at the end of verse 22. What is that to you? You follow me.

It's put much stronger in the Gaelic, Deishon Guts, Yan Usymish, much stronger, as it is also in the Greek, it's stronger in the Greek.

We'll come back to that in a moment. The chapter that we have here in John is not recorded for us. The events in it are not recorded in any of the other gospels.

[1 : 13] And that in itself is not surprising. If you consider the Gospel of John as a whole, you will find that there are many things that John records that are not recorded in the other three synoptic gospels.

In terms of synoptic, we simply mean that they give a synopsis of the light of Jesus, pretty much in chronological order, and they sort of tell the story. But that is not John's objective at all. John's Gospel is quite different for a number of reasons.

It is written much, much later than the others. We'll have a look at the detail of that in the moment.

But John's objective is different. And we see that even at the very beginning of the Gospel.

The beginning of the Gospel of John is quite different to any of the other gospels. And it starts with words I'm sure you're familiar with. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

[2 : 20] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. And you can see from the beginning of the Gospel, and throughout the Gospel, and you can see it again in the first letter of John, that John's objective is quite different from the other Gospel writers.

His objective is to prove the divinity, or the deity, of Jesus Christ. In other words, to prove that Jesus really was God.

Now, why was this? About the time that John was writing, a heresy had entered the church. And particularly in Ephesus, where John almost certainly was at that time.

We're not 100% sure where John wrote his Gospel, whether he wrote it in Ephesus, or perhaps in Patmos, where he was exiled by Domitian, just after Caesar's, after Nero's death.

And he may have written it there at the same time as the vision, the book of Revelation, that he was given. But it doesn't really matter. But it's written much later than the other Gospels.

[3 : 35] The other three Gospels had been in circulation probably for about 30 years before John writes his Gospel. And we can see indications of that in the chapter.

If we go back to the very beginning of the chapter, we'll see in chapter 21 that the very first verse tells us, after this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias.

Now, we're not familiar with the term sea of Tiberias. It's not used anywhere else in the Gospels except here. Why was that? By the time John is writing his Gospel, some 40 years after the events here take place, the town of Tiberias by the side of Galilee had grown considerably.

It had been named after Tiberias Caesar, and therefore the sea of Galilee was now referred to as the sea of Tiberias. And we can see another thing that tells us very clearly that this is written much later onwards.

If we can jump forward now to verse 18. And if you look at verse 18, you will see what Jesus has to say to Peter here.

[4 : 53] We'll come to the detail of various things that Jesus says to Peter. And here he says, truly, 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. Now, if that was all that was there, then we would think that that is simply a prediction towards what happens to us in old age, when we become no longer capable of looking after ourselves.

But then John adds immediately after that in parenthesis, the words in brackets, this he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.

And that tells us very clearly that Peter at this point is already dead. Now, we know that the death of Peter took place approximately 40 years after the episodes in this chapter.

And you will remember that the episodes in this chapter are taking place after the resurrection. They take place between the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 09] Ascension day has not yet come. Remember, it is 40 days after the resurrection. We've already celebrated the resurrection at Easter. We celebrate it again, every first day of the week, every Sabbath.

And it may well be that the events recorded in this chapter are taking place actually here and now, this particular week. We're not told what day of the week it is.

It's unlikely to have been the first day of the week or the Saturday, this is the Jewish Sabbath, because of the disciples going fishing. But that doesn't really matter. And so we see that this is written quite some considerable time afterwards.

How did Peter die? Well, according to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down in Rome some 40 years after this particular period.

According to church history and church tradition, he himself insisted on being crucified that way, because he refused to be crucified in the same way as the Lord Jesus Christ had been.

[7 : 19] And it's almost certain that this was on the orders of the emperor Nero, his crucifixion took place. At the same time, Paul was almost certainly decapitated in Rome, probably at the same time, the two of them probably together, some think in the same day even, but we don't know that for sure.

But Paul was a Roman citizen and therefore could not be crucified, whereas Peter was not. And this then shows us that this, to show what kind of death he was to glorify God, this shows us that this is written some considerable time afterwards.

And we see the same thing in the last verses 24 and 25. We see that we're told there this is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written these things.

And then you notice the change of pronoun. We know that his testimony is true. And then you see in the last verse again that the pronoun changes again.

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

[8 : 37] Now, these last two verses were almost certainly written by what we call an abannuensis, that is somebody who was writing down as John dictated his gospel.

We know that John died as a very old man in Ephesus. He was the only one who died a natural death of all the disciples.

Every other disciple died a martyr's death. John is the only one who dies a natural death. And some have inferred from this from what is said here in verse 23.

The saying spread 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?

Some infer from that that all the other disciples except John have already been martyred at this time. But again, we can't be 100% sure about that.

[9 : 44] We know of John's age, advanced age from the historian Irenaeus, who tells us, one of the church fathers, who tells us that John was carried into church as Ephesus as an old man in his 90s by the young men of the congregation when he could no longer walk.

And that may well be the references that are included in verse 18 as well. 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.

That it might apply not just to Peter, but also to John. So that allows us to put in perspective when John is writing. It allows us to see that this particular incident must be recorded for a very special reason.

If John's objective is to prove the deity, the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, then there must be something in this chapter that goes towards doing that.

And we see from the beginning of the chapter, we're told that after this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberius, and he revealed himself in this way.

[10:58] And then we get the list of those seven disciples who are present here. Simon Peter, Thomas, the Dyn.. or Dynamos, the twin Nathaniel of Canaan Galilee, better known to us probably as Bartholomew, the sons of Sebedee, that's James and John, and two others of his disciples were together.

And there has been much speculation about who the other two disciples were. It would seem logical and perhaps correct that it was Andrew and Philip.

Andrew, who is the brother of Peter, a Galilean, a fisherman also, and Philip, who came from Beside, also a town by on the shores of Galilee, that the two would come together.

And then we get a question that arises there that we can't really answer. Who was missing? Matthew, James the Less, and Simon the Sellout. Why were they missing?

We have no answer to that one. It would seem probable that they were missing because they were not from Galilee. And we have a question, of course, as to what on earth they were doing in Galilee.

[12:13] Why are they in Galilee at this particular time? And there are many who think that this fits along with what we see with the two going on the road to Emmaus.

You remember that the two on the road to Emmaus had explained to Jesus why they were so sorrowful, that they had thought that he was the one who was to redeem Israel, but having been crucified, etc.

That as far as they were concerned now, they thought that the work, the ministry of Jesus, and everything that should have followed it, as far as they thought, was now over, and that they were then going home.

And you remember that that was Cleopas and probably his wife. And some then say, okay, what are the seven disciples doing here by the sea of Galilee going fishing?

It's because they think the work is now finished, and therefore they are returning back to their normal jobs and their normal occupations. And if that were so, that would explain why the three who are missing are missing because they were not fishing.

[13:27] But you would be quite wrong in thinking that. You would have forgotten completely what has already been recorded. John doesn't repeat what's been recorded already.

But if you go to Matthew 28, I don't think we've got it on screen. No, we haven't got it on screen, so I'll read it. If you go back to Matthew 28, and the appearance of the angel to the woman at the tomb, and look at what is said to them.

This is the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. And then if you jump to verse five, the angel said to the woman, do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He's not here, for he has risen as he said. Come see the place where he lay. And then the instruction follows, then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

And behold, he is going before you to Galilee, there you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and run to tell his disciples.

[14:41] And behold, Jesus met them and said, greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brother to go to Galilee and there they will see me. And therefore we can see clearly that the disciples here are carrying out the instruction that has been given to them.

It's very interesting that Jesus himself will appear to them that particular evening in the upper room. And he may well have repeated that same instruction that they were to leave Jerusalem and in that intervening period, they were to return to Galilee to meet with them.

And we know, of course, that they are then instructed to return again to Jerusalem where the ascension actually takes place. And so they are going fishing.

And it's almost in a sense that Simon Peter says, I'm going fishing because I've got nothing else to do. And an evening's fishing would be a nice relaxing activity.

[15:52] Or perhaps is it in his mind that he is to retake his former occupation? People argue about the interpretation of that, but I think again clearly from the words of the angel and from the words of Jesus himself to the woman, that they have gone to Galilee waiting for the appearance of the Lord.

And you notice that when they go fishing, the fishing is useless. They catch nothing. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

And just as the day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, children, do you have any fish?

If you're using the authorised version, it says meat, but that's a bad translation. And so is the word children as a bad translation here as well. It's really lads, boys, have you caught anything? That's the question.

Have you caught anything? Quite a normal question that people from the shore ask to fishermen. They answered him, no. And then you get this instruction where they're told to cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.

[17:14] And therefore they get this miraculous catch of 153 fishes. We'll come to that in a moment. And through this miraculous catch, John is the one who perceives first of all and says to Peter, it is the Lord in verse 7.

Now you notice that throughout John's Gospel, if you're familiar with it, you notice that John always refers to himself as that disciple whom Jesus loved.

And that raises, of course, an interesting question for us. Does that mean that Jesus did not love the other disciples? Obviously not.

So why is John particularly referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved? Most commentators are of the opinion that it was because John is the youngest of all the disciples.

Again, following through the chronology a little bit that we've already seen of John's life, at the time of the resurrection, the time of the three year ministry when John was with Jesus, he must have been a teenager when he started following Jesus.

[18:35] Probably 16 or 17 years old. And he was certainly the youngest of the group of the twelve. Maybe that is the reason why Jesus had a particular affection for him.

We can't be absolutely sure of that, but this is the designation that scripture gives for him, the disciple whom Jesus loved. And you see this particularly that John is known as the apostle of love if you look at his letters.

Particularly the first letter of John, you will see that it is a letter that is essentially about love. And John is often referred to as the disciple of love.

Others think that that is because it is to John that Jesus gives over care of his mother at the cross. There are very interesting things that we have to compare here between the reactions of Peter and John as to what happens here.

The disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord. And Peter heard it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work. The authorised version says naked, but it doesn't really mean naked and threw himself into the sea.

[19:59] And commentators seem to think that the reason for that is that the boat being only a hundred yards or so from the shore, that the water wasn't particularly deep and therefore that Peter was in his eagerness to be with Jesus, was either able to wade ashore or perhaps to swim the first part of it and then come ashore quickly.

And it is Peter who first comes to meet Jesus standing on the shore. And what does he see?

In verse 9, when they got out on land they saw charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread. Now notice that this is not from the net, this is not fish that has been caught by the disciples. This is not bread either that the disciples have provided. This is a miraculous meal provided for them by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And the Greek says quite simply with fish laid on it, it can be translated either way as a fish or a number of fish that would have been eight of them all together, including the Lord Jesus Christ who would have had breakfast together.

[21:16] Whether Jesus actually ate of the fish and the bread is not mentioned. But he then tells them, bring some of the fish that you have just caught.

And you get this peculiar detail then in verse 11, Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish, 153 of them.

Now there are several occasions in which we see a miraculous catch of fish, but there are none in which the number is actually given to us 153.

I suppose the first question that comes to our mind is who on earth counted them? Who actually sat down and counted the fish? Again, we have no answer to that. It may well be as the fish were being thrown ashore by Peter and the fishermen that they counted them there and then.

But why is the number mentioned? What is the significance of the number? And it is one of the church fathers, Jerome, the one who translated the scriptures, first of all into Latin in the fourth century, who points out to us that 153 was the number of known species of fish in the Mediterranean world at that time.

[22 : 37] Would it symbolize? His interpretation was that it symbolized that people of all nations in the known world at that time would come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you notice that the fish are not counted until they are brought to the shore. It is exactly the same way as the number of the elect will not be known until we reach the shore of the promised land.

And again, you can see symbolically that we are in the promised land here as well. This sea of Galilee, sea of Tiberias was part of the land that is the promised land in the Old Testament. Now some think that that is drawing the spirituality and the symbolism of the text perhaps a little too far. But it is significant that the number of fish is recorded.

And again, you can make up your own mind on that. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. And then Jesus has breakfast with them.

[23 : 48] And you notice that he breaks bread and gives it to them and so with the fish. And we are told in verse 14 that this was the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Now this is actually his seventh appearance. It's the third appearance to a group of disciples. The others took place in the upper room.

But this is the seventh appearance. And there is one appearance that is particularly significant and in the light of what is to come and the rest of the chapter that we have to focus on.

Our Lord has already appeared to Peter. He appeared to Peter on the first day of the week. You'll find that in other chapters and you'll find it mentioned in various places.

Paul mentions it in 1 Corinthians 15 when he is talking about the resurrection as well. Why did Jesus appear to Peter by himself?

[24 : 56] There are no details recorded of what was said between them. But it is clear and clear from what follows here that his appearance to Peter was to forgive him for his denial.

Forgiveness had already taken place. And you can see the parallels that happen here. Peter had denied Jesus three times at a fire of coals in evening darkness.

And here Peter is restored at a fire of coals in morning light. And you can draw the difference between darkness and light quite clearly.

This is Peter's restoration, his reconstitution, if we can put it that way, as a shepherd of the sheep. And we'll see that in a moment.

And when they had finished breakfast then in verse 15, then we get this series of questions that are put to Peter.

[26 : 06] And you notice he doesn't call him Peter. He goes back to the name that he had before Jesus himself had called him Peter.

It's quite interesting to compare and contrast Peter with John. They're two completely different characters.

We tend to think of the disciples as uneducated, illiterate men. But you would be quite wrong in that belief. Every Jewish child was taught to read and write at an early age through the synagogue schools.

And every Jewish child was educated in the scriptures until they reached the ceremony of their bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah. It was a girl around about 14 years of age.

And they were fully conversant with the scriptures of the Old Testament. And so you get Peter almost being taken back by Jesus to his state before Jesus met him.

[27 : 15] Simon, Bar Jonah, it is in the original, son of Jonah, son of John. Do you love me more than these?

Who are these? These are the other disciples. And it's a direct question into Peter's face. Peter, do you love me more than the rest of these people round about here?

And I suppose in a way you and I would face the same question this evening. Is your love for the Lord more than those round about us here?

How do you compare what your love for the Lord is like to anyone else's? But the question upsets Peter.

Simon, do you love me more than these? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

[28 : 23] Now the English translation does not bring out for us the full difference of the words that are used here. The word that Jesus uses for love is not the word that Peter uses.

Yes, Lord, you know that I have affection for you. It's almost in a sense as if Peter does not dare use the same word for love as Jesus himself has used.

And we'll come to see what that means in a moment. He said to him, feed my lambs. He said to him the second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? And he uses again the same Jesus uses the same word.

And Peter avoids using it and says, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Tend my sheep. And then you get the third question.

Simon, son of John, do you love me? And Jesus changes to use the same verb that Peter himself has been using.

[29 : 32] Do you have affection for me? It's almost as if he's bringing it down to Peter's lap. And Peter is highly upset. 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. You know that I love you. And you notice how Peter declares the omniscience of Jesus, that Jesus knows everything.

You know that I love you. Why do you continue to ask? You know that I love you.

It's interesting, isn't it, that having denied Jesus three times, Peter has to declare his love three times.

In the same way, you know that I love you. And you notice that in the declaration of love comes the restoration.

[30 : 42] Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs. That Peter is now not only forgiven, he's already been forgiven, but he is reinstated in his mission.

He is now to carry out the work of a shepherd. Because it is the shepherd's job to feed the lambs, to tend the sheep, and again to feed the sheep.

It must have been very difficult for Peter to hear these things sent to him. But you notice the change there is in Peter.

This was the guy who used to act on impulse. This was the guy who wanted to walk on water, but then couldn't and sank. This was the guy who refused to have his feet washed by Jesus, but then said, ah, not just my feet, but my head and my hands also.

This was the one who boasted that he would lay down his life for Jesus. This was the one in the Garden of Gethsemane who had a sword, the one who cut off Marcus's ear. But look at him now.

[32 : 10] He doesn't reply to Jesus with, of course I love you, you know that I love you. Why do you keep asking? Peter has learned humility.

And in the process of forgiveness and in the process of restoration, he has learned humility. It's a difficult lesson for us to learn.

It's a difficult lesson for every believer to learn is to be humble in the presence of Christ. Is to be humble in the presence of our brothers.

And our Lord then reconstitutes Peter in his mission. He is now to be an under shepherd of the flock. A great shepherd commissions him as the under shepherd.

Feed my lambs, feed tend my sheep, feed my sheep. And then Jesus reveals to him the words that we've already commented on, referring to his future and his death.

[33 : 14] And after saying this, he said to him, follow me, follow me. And you would think that those words are really in a sense unnecessary after what has happened, what has been said to him.

But then you see in the final passage, Peter turned and saw the disciple of Jesus loved following them, the one who had been reclining a table close to him and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you when Peter saw me said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?

What about John? You're telling me what's going to happen to me. What about John?

And you notice the misinterpretation that went among the words that Jesus replied. Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come.

And you see how clearly Jesus says forth the fact that he will come again. There are many, of course, 2,000 years later who doubt the veracity of these words.

[34 : 29] But the Lawrence people believe fully that he will come again. And we look forward to the second coming of Jesus.

And it is my will that he remain until I come. What is that to you? You follow me. And you notice how Peter is given a clear instruction.

Never mind what will happen to the others. You follow me.

How often are you and I guilty in the same way of thinking and comparing ourselves to others? How often do we hear people saying, even among the Lawrence people, people saying, oh, I wish I could pray like that man.

Or I wish I knew the scriptures like that man. Or I wish this or I wish that. But you see, the command to each and every believer is quite simple.

[35 : 40] Never mind what others are doing. You follow me. That is what you and I as believers are commanded to do.

Each one of us should be following the Lord in the process of sanctification on the highway of holiness, as it's put in Isaiah, in our own time and in our own way.

Every single believer is a saint in the process of sanctification. Not one of us will be fully sanctified until we pass from this life into the next.

And we should remember that because it means several things. It means, first of all, that each one of us has different gifts and abilities. Each one of us are at different stages on the road.

And it has nothing to do with our age. It has to do with our maturity as Christians. There are some very young Christians who may be very mature in the things that they are aware of.

[36 : 59] And perhaps some older Christians who are not quite so mature. Each one is on the process of the highway of holiness.

Each one is on the road to sanctification. And each one has been given gifts. Each one has been given different abilities by God Himself in this walk that we have with Him.

Paul says that some are teachers, some are preachers, some are evangelists. Some have the gift of tongues, meaning languages. Some have the gift of hospitality, of exhortation, exactly.

All of us are given different abilities. That's the way that the church is built. And he also likens to it that in the body of Christ there are many members.

Each member of the body has a different function. And without it, the body is incomplete. We have different gifts and different abilities. You follow me.

[38 : 03] Rather than comparing yourself to someone else, your job is to follow Jesus. Your job is to keep your eyes on Jesus.

Since that what the Old Testament commandment had also said to us, be ye holy as I am holy. But yet you and I know that it is impossible for us in this life to be holy.

The more you go on in the Christian walk of life, the more mature you become as a Christian, as a believer, the more you are aware of your own sin.

And the more you realise how you fail each day in thought, word and deed. There is no such thing as a perfect Christian.

There will be no perfection until we pass into glory. And therefore we have to be very careful of the comparison that we make.

[39 : 10] What is that to you? You follow me. That's the primary instruction that every believer is given. That's the primary instruction that everyone in here this evening, whether you have come to faith or not, should also take to heart.

That it is not a question of comparing yourself to others. That it is not a question of seeing if you are good enough.

Christians never become good enough. You are never good enough to sit at the Lord's table. You are never good enough to say that you have come to faith by your own efforts.

That's not the way it works. You will never be good enough in this life. If you are good enough, then there would have been no need for the Lord Jesus Christ to have died on the cross, for the blood to have been shed.

And so often so many people will look and say, and Satan is continually attacking believers in this way. That's what he does. He's saying to you, you call yourself a Christian?

[40 : 30] Look at you. Look at how you failed. Look at how you sinned. Look at how you fall in thought, word and deed. And which one of us perhaps even hear this very evening in the hours since we've come in here, to worship God, cannot but help admitting that at times your thoughts have drifted away.

They have drifted away to other things. You see, Satan is ready to attack you at all times. As a believer in the Church of Christ, you are constantly under attack by Satan.

You see that clearly in the life of Job. You see how Job was totally unaware of what we can read in chapters 1 and 2 of how Satan is given permission by God to be attacked.

You see it again in the prophecy of Sakharaya, how the High Priest Joshua is accused by Satan before God. And Satan so often is accusing believers in this way.

Ah, you're not good enough. You should have done this and you should have done that. You should have read your Bible more. You should have visited so and so. You should have done this. You should have done that.

[41 : 56] And there are times we have to confess that yes, we failed. Of course we failed. We're human beings. We are sinners. And therefore we are prone and bound to fail.

And very often when people who are not believers criticise us for our failures, they use that as an excuse not to believe themselves.

But you see, if you're here this evening and you're not yet a believer, it's not your comparison between you and anyone else that matters. Deshen Gupta, Gyanri Semishan, what is that to you? You follow me. That is what you are told this evening. Whatever state you are in before the Lord this evening, this is the instruction that you are given.

Never mind what anyone else does, what anyone else says. That's not what matters. What matters is, are you following the Lord Jesus Christ?

[43 : 04] You follow me. We see, of course, from the Book of Acts how clearly Peter would carry out these instructions.

We see that once the day of Pentecost comes and the Spirit is poured out from on high, that it is Peter who is the first leader of the church.

Peter then becomes Sifas, the Rock, the name that Jesus had given to him. And he becomes the leader of the early church. It is he who preaches.

And when you look at him in the beginning of the Book of Acts and so on, after Pentecost you see a completely different Peter to the Peter that we have seen in the Gospels.

He is no longer the Peter who acts on him. He is no longer the Peter who jumps feet first into things without thinking. But he is the Peter who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

[44 : 06] And under the influence of the Holy Spirit he is able to lead the church. And we see Peter and John together throughout the first chapters of the Book of Acts as the leaders of the early church.

This is the message that comes across from this chapter. The recommissioning of Peter, the service of John. John is quite different to Peter. He is the quiet one who meditates on things.

The beloved disciple. The one who is given the special revelation in the Book of Revelation and patterns. He is the one to whom Jesus came over the care of his mother at the cross.

He was the only one who was there at the cross. As far as we know, the other disciples may well have been looking on among those who looked on from afar off.

But John was at the foot of the cross. And you see how the ministry of Peter and John will continue but in many different ways.

[45 : 21] Perhaps the Lord is equipping you this evening for a different ministry as well. Each one of us has a ministry to carry out.

Every believer is given a mission and a ministry by the Lord Jesus Christ. But every one of us has a different mission and a different ministry.

And you are being given the gifts to carry out that ministry. But perhaps you hear this evening as well and this instruction you follow me is one that you have refused up until now.

You don't want to follow Jesus. You hear the words. Perhaps you think you're waiting for a soul of Damascus road experience to happen to you.

That's not the way the majority of people come to faith. Some do. The majority of people come to faith through a quiet, gentle, loving process.

[46 : 30] In the same way as the Apostle John did through love. When you become convinced of your need to come to faith. When you see yourself as a sinner before the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are so many nowadays who object to being called sinner. I'm not a sinner. I'm not any worse than that person. What about him? You notice how we carry out this game of comparisons all the time.

If you're going to compare yourself to something, compare yourself to the holiness of God. That is where your comparison stands all for.

How are you this evening compared to the holiness of God? And yet it is the Holy God through the sun, the Lord Jesus Christ who is calling you this evening once again.

You follow me. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your world this evening.

[47 : 40] We pray that you would help us to follow you in all circumstances, in all situations, through all trials and tribulations that you would teach us to depend entirely on you.

We pray for any who are struggling with their faith this evening. We pray that you would open their arms to see the need that they have to come to this man.

This man who died for them. This man who gave himself in love so that through his blood they would find peace. We would find peace with God. We thank you for that sacrifice.

Bless it to us. Be with us now as we conclude our worship and partners in through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us conclude our worship then by singing in Psalm 62. Again the Scottish centre verses 5 to 8. Psalm 62, words which are perhaps very fitting in these circumstances.

[48 : 51] My soul wait thou with patience upon thy God alone, on him dependeth all my hope and expectation. He only my salvation is and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence.

God moveeth me. In God my glory placidus and my salvation sure. In God the rockers of my strength. My refuge most secure. Ye people place your confidence in him continually before him pour you out your heart.

God is our refuge high. Let us sing these verses then to God's praise. My soul wait thou with patience upon thy God alone, on him dependeth all my hope and expectation.

He only my salvation is and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence.

I shall not move with me. In God my glory placidus and my salvation sure.

[51 : 00] In God the rockers of my strength. My refuge most secure.

Ye people place your confidence in him continually before him pour you out your heart.

God is our refuge high. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever. Amen.