

In the End...

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John 21:20-25

Finally, we arrive to the end of this gospel Badveli Kevin preached last Sunday and stressed some important points.

John's Gospel has a prologue, "In the beginning..." And now we have an epilogue, an ending for the gospel. In fact, it is an ending which challenges the disciples (apostles) and the church to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ. It is a new beginning when Jesus is telling us about our responsibilities in this world. We learn to obey Jesus—something which will be costly even to the extent of martyrdom.

-We see Jesus feeding the disciples a breakfast of bread and fish. (I can imagine Jesus smiling and making food for those hungry, tired disciples...)

-We see Jesus teaching the disciples and us today that without his guidance, direction, and leadership we cannot "catch fish."

-We see Peter again taking action by swimming towards Jesus. I wonder what was going in his mind: "How am I going to face Him?"; "What about all the promises I did not keep?"; "I told Jesus. 'I will lay down my life for you'" (John 13:37); "I denied him three times"; "Those charcoals remind me of when I denied him even in front of a servant girl". I wonder if Peter was filled with shame, guilt and feelings of failure...

-We see Jesus restoring Peter, and in reality, restoring the church and all of us.

-We see Jesus healing our shortcomings, our denials, our shame and guilt, and asking us, "**Do you love me?**" over and over. "**Do you love me?**"

-We find out that to love Jesus means to make a commitment.

-We see Jesus asking us to feed his sheep, to take care of them.

-We see Jesus teaching us to be shepherds, to be fishermen.

-We see Jesus as the role model of the Good Shepherd. He is the fisherman who leads the disciples and humbly washes their feet.

-We see Jesus preparing Peter's mind (and ours) that following him has a price, and it is costly. Peter, too, died on cross, and the legend says he wanted to be

crucified upside down because he was not worthy to be crucified like Jesus. Peter's arms were stretched out on the cross as Jesus had predicted. Yes, **what Peter said about laying his life for Jesus** (John 13) would become a reality.

In fact, Peter later wrote two letters, where he encouraged the elders (us the church) saying:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² 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; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Peter 5:1-4 NIV11)

Please read Peter's 1st and 2nd letters in the Bible. You will find this impulsive man anointed by the Holy Spirit and writing with its inspiration. Yes, the same Peter who jumped outside the boat, who took the sword and cut the ear of the servant, who was always first to do act without thinking about the consequences...

Yes, this is Peter who announced that Jesus is **"the Messiah, the Son of the living God."** (Matt 16:16 NIV11)

The same Peter who said, **"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."** (Mat 26:35 NIV11)

He was the first apostle to preach **after the Pentecost event and 3000 people believed in Jesus (Acts 2).**

The ending of this chapter:

Peter asks Jesus an interesting question concerning our author John:

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." ²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" (John 21:20-22 NIV11)

“What about John? Is he going to die like me?”

A simple answer is “Peter, this matter is none of your concern; it is mine. You have one duty which is to follow me.”

In fact, we see **John and Peter** are very different characters but both of them are followers of Jesus.

-If Peter is the first one who jumps outside the boat, John has other qualities. When Jesus is on the cross, John stands faithfully with Jesus’ mother.

John witnesses Jesus’ suffering (19:25-37)

-While Peter may race first to the empty tomb, John looks inside and believes (20:1-10)

-In today's chapter (21), John is the one who recognizes Jesus on the shore.

“Two strong men; one Christian movement. Yet John possessed intuitive skills that permitted him to grasp aspects of Christ’s personhood in a way that may have eluded others. The leadership of the body of Christ demands a diversity of gifts, and John possessed his own unique set.”¹

Let us be careful not to compete against each other or compare our gifts. God gave to each of us a gift. God will use those gifts according to His will.

Thus, the ministries of John and Peter would be different. Peter would be the shepherd, John the seer; Peter the preacher, John the penman; Peter the foundational witness, John the faithful writer; Peter would die in the agony and passion of martyrdom, John would live on to a great age and pass away in quiet serenity.²

The worst thing church people can do is to compete against each other or compare. The grass is greener the other side of the fence.

The author of Hebrews says we are in race running together and not against each other. I wish Christians learn not to compete but, on the contrary, edify the body.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV11)

Finally:

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.²⁵ 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. (John 21:24-25)

John is verifying that the texts he wrote are true. And there is much that is not written. And the life of the church continues...

What can learn from this Gospel?

We each are **called to follow Jesus**. We are called **to believe in Jesus Christ** who grants us **Eternal Life**.

1. Jesus' earthly ministry: his incarnation, the signs, the interpretation of those signs, the seven I AMs, who Jesus is and how he replaced the Old Covenant.
2. Jesus died and rose from the dead; the hour has arrived that Son of God was glorified.
3. Jesus departed, and the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, was granted. The divine presence of God is with us.
4. We are sent to the world as God sent His Son to the world. Until the day when Jesus returns, we all are called to follow him and be his disciples, apostles, those sent with a mission.

Matthew finished with the Great Commission:

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV 11)

Mark finished his Gospel with Jesus sending the disciples to preach and then ascending into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father.

¹⁹ After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰ Then the disciples went out

and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. (Mark 16:19-20 NIV11)

Luke finished his Gospel with the ascension of Jesus and the disciples worshipping him.

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (Luke 24:50-53 NIV11)

It will not be easy. The world will not receive us. They will reject us. Yet the advocate is with us:

Let me finish with these words that Jesus said to the disciples:

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (16:33)

1. Bruce, Gary M, NIV Application Commentary, p 597

2. B. Milne, *The Message of John* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 319.