

Comparison Clouds Commitment

John 21:1-25

August 11, 2024

Pastor Art Dunn

Preview

- How comparative and competitive we are in our thinking.
- You can lose focus by asking the wrong questions.
- The Christian life in this story can be reduce to one 2-letter word.

Beware of assuming things about familiar stories in the Bible.

Scripture Reading

John 21:1-25 ESV

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

¹ After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. ⁸ The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus and Peter

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He

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said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" 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." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Jesus and the Beloved Apostle

²⁰ Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" ²¹ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" ²² Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" ²³ So the saying spread abroad 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?"

²⁴ This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ Now 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.

MAIN IDEA

The Grip of Comparative Living is Broken by Taking the Right Measurements...

- Comparative and competitive thinking can make us ask the wrong questions.
- Negative thinking gets me to the wrong place. I need to focus on what's important and everything else will fall into place.
- A disciple is paying attention to the 2-letter word on Jesus' lips "me".

...Right Measurements...

- Grip is a bondage of living in a way that whatever you do is always compared to other people. It is a bondage to a false measurement.

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- The only meaningful measurement of the Christian life is the personal commitment to Jesus. That is emphasized by the words “follow me”. The true measure our lives is by our devotion to Jesus.
- One of the greatest pitfalls of the Christian life is trying to look and be like or not look and be like other people. We need to keep our focus on Jesus.
- Other people are important in the formation of our Christian life.
- Other people are to be cared for and nurtured, not competed with. If I am free from comparison, I am free to reach out and help people.
- The right measurement is always related to the “me” relationship between us and Jesus.

...And Asking the Right Questions.

- The right questions are not related to other people, but related to my responsibilities in my relationship with Jesus to fulfill what our relationship is all about. Asking wrong questions will lead us down the wrong path.
- The right question is always “How is it with us my Lord and what is the role that you have for me to carryout in this relationship?”
- In comparative livin, we traded away our devotion to Jesus and we become idolaters.
- The freedom that comes to us is only by focusing on Jesus and by measuring everything in terms of Him and our relationship.

CONCLUSION:

Every Sermon Should Have Something To

- ❖ Know/Understand: We all measure our lives by something. Everybody has measurement, so let’s choose our ruler very carefully. We all ask questions of the Lord, so let’s ask questions to fulfill our responsibility in doing what God wants me to do in my life.
- ❖ Believe: We get great freedom in our Christian life by forgetting about comparing ourselves to other people and focusing on Jesus.
- ❖ Do: Before I start asking the Lord questions, I ask myself is this question important to help me fulfill my role in walking with Him.