

Be Sure to Tell Peter

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to the foundational aspects of faith to renew one's relationship with Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 18:3, Mark 16:6-7, Luke 15:17, John 21:15

Topics: "Faith Restoration", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Richard E. Bieber delivers a powerful sermon about returning to God after experiencing doubts and disappointments, using the stories of a man struggling with his faith and Peter's denial of Jesus. He emphasizes the importance of honesty, listening to God's word, and obedience in maintaining a strong faith. Through the example of Peter's restoration in Galilee, he encourages believers to go back to their spiritual 'Galilee' where they first encountered Jesus, to rediscover their faith and renew their commitment to follow Him.

Transcript

Some time ago, after a meeting, there was a chap sitting at our table who kept talking about his wife's fellowship, his wife's teacher, how active his wife was in this and that. "How come you keep talking about your wife's fellowship? Don't you go too?" "Oh," he said, "I go sometimes. But it would be rather odd for me to belong. I'm an atheist." It turned out that in his earlier life this man was as faithful to God as he knew how. But a crisis came when he really needed God and it seemed as though God didn't come through.

He felt that God had let him down. Then he began to wonder whether God ever existed. Ever since, this man has been sitting on the sidelines encouraging his wife to go to fellowship and do things for God while he continues to nurse his doubts. What's he doing by encouraging his wife to go to fellowship? He's sending her to the tomb to find out whether Jesus is dead or alive. One day she's going to come home with the message his heart is dying to hear. She's going to come home, and she's not going to say, "We had a nice crowd."

It was a good meeting." She's going to come home and say, "Jack, he's alive! He's alive! And you're going to see him soon." How many of us attend meetings to pay our respects to a faith we once had. We can look back at a time when God was very real and Jesus Christ was close. But then something happened that knocked the pins away and our faith collapsed. Some of us then went to the other extreme. Like the prodigal son, we turned our back on God and went into a far country and began to live as if there were no God.

We lived only for ourselves. If you have ever turned your back on God and gone into that far country, you know what happens. Pretty soon you're all spent out. There's a famine in that land. You come to the point where nothing satisfies, nothing works. There's nothing to live for. And you end up like the prodigal son, feeding the swine, serving demons. Moods, fears, regrets, begin to plague you until one day you come to your senses and say to yourself, "Maybe I should go home to my Father."

So you start limping home. You don't know whether God will hear you or not. You're still full of doubts as you draw nearer to your Father's home. Your heart trembles. "Is he there? And if he's there, will he accept me?" This is how Peter felt that first Easter morning. He was out of it. He didn't feel like going to the tomb to finish burying the man he had denied and forsaken in a moment of disappointment. "What's the good of it anyway, he's dead. The whole thing's finished.

I just wasted three years of my life. And if something wonderful should happen, if by some fantastic miracle Jesus should be alive, how could I ever face him again?" So, Peter stayed home while the women went to the tomb to finish the burial. And entering into the sepulcher they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment and they were afraid. And he saith unto them, "Be not afraid. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified. He is not here, he is risen.

Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee. There shall you see him as he said unto you." Mark 16 Go tell his disciples, and Peter. Be sure to tell Peter. Tell that man who's full of guilt and doubts that he's going to see his Lord. This message is for those who are trying to find their way back to the Father's house, trying to find their way back to God. Those whose hearts are aching to know whether the Christ they denied and forsook is dead or alive.

"And, if he's alive, will he accept me after all the things I've done?" The answer is "Yes," Jesus Christ is alive and you're going to see him. And all the sins you've committed, things you've done, cannot keep you from seeing him. Not even those doubts that linger in your mind can keep you from seeing him if you want to see him, if you want to come back. Who was the first person to see Jesus alive from the dead? The person who probably had the most unseemly past of any of his followers, Mary Magdalene.

But now her sins are gone, buried in that tomb, never to be remembered by God again. Mary is clean. And how kind God is toward Peter who had cursed and swore he never knew Jesus! "Tell the disciples, and Peter. Be sure to tell Peter," because Peter is forgiven. Peter's sins are no more. They're buried in that grave. And now God comes to you with this same message. - of course you can see Jesus. - of course you can meet your Lord. "Tell his disciples, and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee.

There shall you see him." If you want to meet Jesus, all you have to do is start heading for Galilee. Why were they told to go back to Galilee? Why can't Peter just go to the tomb and find Jesus? Why does he have to travel seventy miles north? Because Galilee is the place where it all began. Galilee is where Peter first met his Lord. And Galilee is the place where he's going to make a new start. If you really want to meet the risen, living, almighty Son of God today, you must go back to your Galilee, you must go back to the place where it all began for you.

Now, of course, - you can't go back in time, - you can't go back to that little country church where you knelt at the altar, - you can't go back to those summer days when your mother first taught you about Jesus. But, you can go back to what you were when you first met Christ. Do you remember what you were like when you first met Jesus Christ? I'll tell you. You were three things: 1. Back in your Galilee where you first met Jesus, you were honest. - You weren't wearing a mask. - You admitted you had problems. - You admitted

you had doubts.

You didn't walk around pretending to have life all figured out. You took those questions in simple faith to Jesus, you started to pray, and you got answers to your prayers. You got answers because you were honest, like a little child. But after a while, you slipped into the old human habit of covering things up, pretending, hiding behind a mask. And soon you lost contact with Jesus. 2. Back in your Galilee where you first met Jesus, you were a listener. - You used to listen to what Jesus had to say. - You would sit and ponder his words.

It was important to you to be where his Word was proclaimed. But after a while, you grew careless. It didn't seem so important any more. You had so many things to do, so you stopped listening the way you used to listen. And when you didn't hear the word, your faith began to shrivel. 3. Back in your Galilee where you first met Jesus, you were obedient. - When Jesus said to Peter, "Lend me your boat," - Peter did. "Let down your net," - Peter obeyed. "Follow me," - Peter followed.

That's how you got going as a follower of Jesus Christ. - You took him seriously. - You did what he said. But after a while you began hedging on those commands. When he said to your heart, "Stay awake and pray with me", you fell asleep like Peter in Gethsemane. When he said, "You must forgive that person," you still held the grudge. And after a while it didn't seem so important to obey those commands. When you left Galilee. When you left that blessed honesty, that wonderful habit of listening to Jesus, that practice of obedience, that's when you lost touch.

That's when you became weak and began making mistakes. It was not God who let you down, you let God down long before that thing happened that wrecked your faith. You had already wrecked your faith on the inside. So Peter goes back to Galilee, to the very spot where he first became a disciple. He takes his old fishing boat out once more and fishes all night long like he did three years before. And in the morning, there's Jesus standing on the shore waiting for him. Three times Peter had denied Jesus.

Now three times Jesus says to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "Then come, feed my sheep, and follow me on." And it will happen to you too, today. You will meet Jesus, a new Jesus, a Jesus a thousand times more glorious than before. He has gone ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. All you have to do is go back to what you were when it all began. open your heart, lay aside your sophistication, be the child you were then.

Become honest once more. Honest with yourself. - Admit that you're scared, or hurt, or angry, or guilty. - Admit that there are things that trouble you or puzzle you, and with an honest heart, start crying out to Jesus. Become a listener once again. Start listening to his word. Not just on Easter, or when there's nothing else to do, but Sunday-by-Sunday, yea, day-by-day, open your Bible and let him speak. Become obedient once more. Start practicing the things you know he wants you to do.

Break with those things you know he has told you to put away from your life. If you will return to these things, you will find the same Jesus that Peter found in Galilee, - and Jesus will renew your faith, - and make your heart burn within you. And this time when he says, "Follow me," you'll follow him. Not just to his cross, but to your own. You will follow him forever.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net