

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 22 (May 28-June 3, 2017)

Peter has already been assigned the duties of feeding the young lambs as well as nurturing the adult sheep. We will conclude Jesus' threefold command and follow Peter's spiritual journey in this week's devotions.

**Sunday, May 28** (reread John 21:15-19)  
*Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." (John 21:17b)*

As I stated yesterday, many churches have chosen to neglect the Word of God to focus on the **physical** needs in their community. Some have chosen to refrain from preaching any Biblical truths that would make anyone feel uncomfortable. In contrast, my job description is simple: "Comfort the hurting, and hurt the comfortable." Many church members are starving for spiritual food, because they are hearing a watered-down gospel. Jesus commands Peter to **feed** His sheep as well as **nurture** His sheep (v. 17). The emphasis on only one of these will not leave the people feeling completely cared for. In case you have forgotten, the theme verse of this ministry is Acts 20:20: "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house."

**Monday, May 29** (reread John 21:15-19)  
*"I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; 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." (John 21:18)*

Jesus does not sugarcoat His calling to those who will lead His ministries. We must nurture and feed the flock of His choice, not ours. Left to ourselves, we will all avoid persecutions and hardships, choosing instead, the more lucrative and comfortable ministries. The Lord wants Peter, and all those who follow him in ministry, to know that He chooses the location, the message, and the results. Like Peter, we must follow Him wherever He leads, even to death (v. 19). Of course, this is also true for all of His followers: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). That's the message that many preachers avoid, because it makes their listeners feel uncomfortable, but that's the command from the mouth of Jesus Christ.

**Tuesday, May 30** (read John 21:20-21)  
*When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" (John 21:21)*

From the beginning of their walk with Jesus, Peter and John have been competitors. Neither of them will receive the Holy Spirit until the Day of Pentecost; therefore, they are walking in the flesh, not in the Spirit. Peter has just received a tough calling from the Lord, so he wants to know if this will apply to all eleven of the remaining disciples. The sight of John following them (v. 20) prompts Peter to ask the question printed above. What about you? Do you, like John, feel as if you are the one whom Jesus loves or do you, like Peter, feel as if you may be getting the short end of the stick? Your answer should reveal something about your relationship with the Savior!

**Wednesday, May 31** (read John 21:22-23)

*Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." (John 21:22)*

I love the Lord's answer printed above. His disciples are called individually; therefore, they must accept their unique calling without comparing themselves to others. God the Father plants each seed where He wants it to be and God the Son is the Vine who provides nutrients for the young plant (see John 15:1). We are nothing but branches! As long as we remain in the Vine, we will bear fruit and accomplish His will (John 15:5). Jesus is not predicting John's future in these verses. He will reveal that only to John, not to Peter. History records the fact that Peter was later crucified upside down after watching the crucifixion of his wife. John's life was to end much differently on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9), but both were mighty men in God's service.

**Thursday, June 1** (read Acts 2:14-21)

*"And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Acts 2:21)*

The scene in today's text takes place on the Day of Pentecost after the 120 people in the Upper Room receive the Holy Spirit (v. 1-13). Having been broken of his arrogance by Jesus, Peter emerges as the spokesman for the group as he stands to address the critics (v. 13-14). Please note that he doesn't start his first sermon by giving his personal opinion; instead, he quotes from the prophet Joel to bring the ancient prophecy to life for his listeners (v. 16-21). That's my most important role as well! If you read the Bible as only a history book, even though it is flawless, you will never get the blessing that God has in store for you. His Word is alive (Hebrews 4:12)! Read it, believe it, apply it and follow it and you will experience joy beyond your wildest dreams!

**Friday, June 2** (read Acts 2:22-28)

*"But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him." (Acts 2:24)*

Peter continues to make his point by quoting another Old Testament passage from Psalm 16:8-11. In so doing, he models what he will later write in his epistle, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Peter, who had fearfully denied even knowing Jesus less than two months back, now directly blames his Jewish listeners for the death of Jesus, even though this was God's plan from the beginning of time (v. 22-23). David's psalm predicts the resurrection of the Lord, and God the Father brings it about as the printed verse proclaims. We will continue with his sermon in tomorrow's devotion.

**Saturday, June 3** (read Acts 2:29-35)

*"Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." (Acts 2:33)*

Peter declares that David understood God's promise to him that he would **always** have a man from his family occupy the throne, and that this would ultimately be fulfilled only through the Messiah (v. 29-32). He takes it a step further by proclaiming that the crucified Christ has returned to His place in Heaven and that the Father has now sent the Holy Spirit to earth to finish His glorious plan of salvation (v. 33). This fulfills Jesus' promise to His disciples that the Spirit who lives with you will soon reside in you (John 14:17). King David reminds us that Jesus will conquer His enemies (v. 34-35). We will conclude Peter's first sermon in next week's devotions.