

John 21:1-19

“Imperfect People”

April 10, 2016

Last week doubting Thomas had to be convinced that Jesus really rose from the dead. This week Peter is reminded that he denied Jesus three times. This denial happened on the night of Jesus trial. Peter was so sure that he would not deny Jesus and that he could suffer anything for Jesus. Then came the moment of standing up for Jesus and confessing that he too was a follower of Jesus and Peter could not do it because he feared the crowd around him.

We all have faced those times when we were asked to stand up for Jesus and we did not do it. Maybe we ended up stealing something, lying to someone or not working our hardest for the Lord. Maybe we did not worship God regularly, study the Bible regularly or maybe we even denied the Lord when asked if we were one of those who believed in Jesus. Yes, we all have faced those times of weakness. Often we did not think about it at the time but only later did we realize our failure.

Jesus gave His life because He knew that we would never live up to God's expectations until the sinful flesh was removed from us on Judgment Day. As Romans 5 says, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Scripture tells us that He led the perfect life that we cannot live. He lived that perfect life for us. He

never gave in to those temptations that show that we are imperfect people. He never had to live with the guilt that we all live with at one degree or another.

When Christ came among us as Jesus the son of Mary and Joseph, He faced a world that rejected Him over and over again. King Herod sent soldiers to kill Him and the guardian angels sent Jesus family into exile in Egypt to protect Him. Several times they wanted to stone Him. Finally they crucified Him. Yet death could not keep its hold upon Him because the Father who is the source of all life raised Him from the dead.

Those around us are just as imperfect as we are imperfect. They will fail us and they will fail God. For example we will struggle with our teenage children and grand-children as much as our parents struggled with us. We call the church the hospital for sinners because it is filled with imperfect people. Just when we were counting on them to be Christians, they fail us. Instead we find ourselves giving them God's undeserved grace and mercy. Just when we were counting on them to give us God's undeserved grace and mercy, they gave us condemnation.

Christ asked Peter; "Do you love Me?" The first two times Christ asked Peter if He loved Him, Christ used the word agape love or self-sacrificing love. The last time that Christ asked Peter if he loved Him, He used the word for brotherly love. When we become Christians, God is asking us to show both kinds

of love to Him. We are to love God above all things which is sacrificial love. We are to love Christ as we would a brother which is brotherly love. Likewise we are to be sacrificial in our relationships with each other. More we are to show each other the same brotherly love that we give to Christ. Of course our brotherly love is to be without making life miserable for each other as some brothers and sisters do at times.

Jesus said to Peter; “Feed my sheep!” The Disciples were to be witnesses to the world of the sacrificial love to be found in Jesus Christ. The goal of feeding God’s sheep is to gain souls for God so that we can all spend eternity with Him. He paid our way and now we are to share the blessings. Some will listen and many won’t.

Last week through Doubting Thomas we saw the scars in the hands of Jesus and we put our fist into the scar from the spear thrust into His body. I am reading a book by a woman who had a near death experience. When she came back from heaven, she asked herself; “What does God want from me now that I have been to heaven and know that I am going back?” Like this woman and like Thomas, we can ask ourselves the same question. The answer is the same as the one given to Peter. “We are to feed God’s sheep.” Each of us will feed God’s sheep in different ways according to our gifts and the place where we live in this world. However, we

are to feed God's sheep that we may share eternity together. Feeding sheep takes a love of the sharing of God's undeserved grace and mercy. Amen