

“To Bear Witness of the Light”

HOW TO BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST

Lessons About Winning Souls From the Book of John

LESSON 8: Rededicating a Life

(Chapters 18, 19, 20, and 21)

Many wonderful things are recorded in the final chapters of the Book of John! In Chapter 20, verse 31, the purpose of the book is revealed:

“. . . that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

The Book of John was written to introduce people to Jesus Christ, and to convince them to believe in Him as their Lord and Savior. Many have been brought to salvation in Christ through the Book of John!

As we have seen, this book is also a wonderful source of truth about being a witness for Christ! From Chapter 1, verse 7, onward, the theme of testimony for Christ runs throughout John. In the last four chapters, the future testimony of Simon Peter for Jesus is at issue. In Chapter 18, he fails the Lord miserably. In Chapter 19, Jesus dies. In Chapter 20, Peter meets Jesus risen from the dead. In Chapter 21, Peter gives up on a life of service to Christ but is persuaded to rededicate his life by the Lord Jesus Himself!

1. How Failure Happens.

See Simon Peter fall as you read the record, but be sure to notice what led to his fall. Back in Chapter 13 (verses 36 through 38), we saw him boastfully self-confident that he will stay true to Christ. He said, *“I will lay down my life for thy sake”* (v. 37). But Jesus said, *“Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice”* (v. 38). Self-confidence is often the prelude to failure. This is why Paul was inspired to write,

“. . . let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (I Corinthians 10:12)

Our confidence must be in *God* to hold us up every day, and every hour of the day!

Chapter 18 reveals Peter’s unwillingness to yield to the will of God. When the Lord was being arrested, Peter put up a fight!

“Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (vs. 10-11)

Self-confidence and self-will are two errors that lead to major failure. Beware of

them! Satan desires to get you out of fellowship with God so that the Lord cannot use you as His witness. Satan wants you to fall! That is why he tempts you to be self-confident and self-willed. Be sure to stay dependent on God and yielded to His will. Get down on your knees before the Lord every day, and renew your surrender to His guidance and His power (See John 12:25-26).

2. **What Failure Does.**

See how Simon Peter changed when he saw that the Lord's will was the opposite of what he wanted! Suddenly he was timid instead of bold (John 18:15-16). When confronted about his relationship to Jesus, he not only shrunk from admitting to it, but also *denied* knowing Him (vs. 17-18 and 25-27). When Jesus was taken away and crucified, Peter was nowhere to be found (Chapter 19). When Jesus arose from the dead, Peter was doubtful (John 20:1-9). Finally, discouraged by his failure, Peter gave up on the ministry to which he had been called, and went back to the *fishing business* (John 21:1-3). Notice that when he gave up on a life of witness for Christ, he took others with him! Notice also that he failed in his first attempt at doing something outside the will of God. He first failed the Lord; then he gave up on serving the Lord; then he failed at doing his own will in opposition to God's will. Failure leads to failure! Thank God Simon Peter did not stay in this unhappy position. Jesus came to bring him back!

3. **What To Do About Failure.**

Be sure that you read all of John 21. Here is the touching story of Peter's rededication to Jesus Christ. It could be your story, too. Notice these things:

- a. Peter and his friends recognize that the Lord has come to them (vs. 4-14). Jesus takes the initiative in retrieving wayward witnesses. Look at what He says in Revelation 3:19.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

He loves us enough to rebuke and chasten us when we go astray.

- b. Jesus reminds Peter of his (Peter's) love for Him (vs. 15-17). Backsliders still love Jesus even though they are not obeying Him. Notice however that love ought to lead to obedience. Jesus asked Peter, "*Lovest thou me?*" (vs. 15, 16, 17). When Peter answered, "*Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,*" the Savior's response was "*Feed my sheep.*" Peter had been called to be a preacher, a feeder of God's flock. If Peter loved Jesus, he ought to fulfill his calling. Remember that in John 15:14, Jesus said,

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

In John 14:15, He said,

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

- c. Peter heard again and heeded the call to follow Jesus (vs. 18-22). Hearing and heeding the call to follow Jesus Christ involves the decision of *dedication*. If it comes after a period of failure and disobedience, it is *re-dedication*. Throughout

the Bible we are told that servants who fail can come back. Let Simon Peter show you the way! Rededicate your life to Jesus Christ today. Confess your failure, and ask His forgiveness (I John 1:9). Commit yourself to follow His Word, His leading, and His example from this day forward. Avoid self-confidence by trusting in Christ continually for the power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Avoid self-will by re-making your dedication decision daily. Set out to let the light of your life shine for Jesus. Peter rededicated his life, and in a few weeks (Study Acts 1 and 2), God used him to turn a multitude to the Lord.