

The Final Test

John 21:15-25

Thank you for joining us; we are glad to be with you today to finish our study in the Gospel of John. We are Heralds of Hope, and our mission is to use media to make disciples of Jesus Christ to accomplish the great commission in our lifetime. Teaching through the Bible is one way we are working toward this goal of making disciples, and radio is one of the mediums we use. We are thankful to God for His people who share our goal of making disciples, and support Heralds of Hope so we can continue sharing the Word of God with you.

Yes, you heard that right, this will be our last lesson from the book of John. This lesson is called “The Final Test,” and like a real test, there are some questions for us to seriously consider. Listen for the questions Jesus asks Peter and think about your answers to these questions as well. After all, the test is not only for Peter; we also must give an answer.

J Mark is here and ready to lead us in a closer look at this story. Let’s give him our attention.

Life is somewhat like a school. When we are in school, we are given tests. Teachers need to know what the pupils have learned, so they administer tests.

Quite frequently, we get a letter from some listener asking that we pray because that listener will be taking an examination, a test, and wants to make sure that he is going to pass it. He wants to progress in his education.

We often face tests. Sometimes they are hard tests. There comes the final test, and the final question, what do you think of Jesus?

If you have been with me throughout the studies of the Gospel of John, you have noticed that we have seen Jesus in many different situations. We’ve seen Him with the crowds. We’ve seen Him feed five thousand with five loaves and two fish. We have seen Him before the Roman Governor, before the religious court, and finally crucified. Then John shows us Jesus as He showed Himself to His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (also known as Tiberias) after He arose.

Our studies in John’s Gospel have brought us face to face with the evidence again and again that He is the Son of God, our Saviour. But there is that final test: what do you think of Him? We will find the answer to this test in John 21:15-25, the last part of John’s Gospel.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Amen! There is a final test. Peter's experience demonstrates for us the **AREAS** where we also face **THE FINAL TEST**.

First is: **In The Area Of Loving**.

Peter had vowed before Jesus was crucified that he would go even to death with Jesus. Then when the test came, he denied Jesus. He said, "I do not know him."

Now Jesus was testing his love again. Jesus used the word for love which is of the highest order. In Greek, it is the word *agape*. When Peter responded to Jesus, he used the lesser word, *phileo*. He said, "I like you," with a different kind of love. He was more careful. Peter had learned his lesson, probably, that it's best not to boast when you are putting on the armor. It's better to boast when you are taking it off! (That's a reference to First Kings 20, where the king of Israel refused the demands of the king of Syria.)

Then Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." If you love me, then serve me. Do My work. Peter was grieved because Jesus, for the third time, used the same word that he did, meaning, "Are you sure that you really love me with the kind of love that you are expressing?"

Ah, my friend, that is a final test, the area of loving. Do you really love Jesus with that high divine love? Or do you only have a regard for Him? Do you only like Him?

I remember speaking with a man once who told me, "Yes, I believe in Jesus." I said, "If you really believe in Jesus, then you will do what He says." That's the way with us. Yes, we're facing that final test, the test of loving.

Second is: **In The Area Of Living.**

Peter often spoke out when it would have been better if he had listened. He was a committed man, though, to do what he thought was right. Remember him in the garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers came to take Jesus. Peter drew his sword to defend the Lord right there. He did, in fact, cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Peter was a strong man, but he was impulsive, though, and he needed to be subdued. He was subdued when he realized that all his words didn't really add up when the test came.

So, Jesus said to him, and I put it in my words, "When you were young, you did what you wanted to do, and you went where you wanted to go. But when you will be old, somebody else is going to take you where you don't want to go. You will be led away against your will; you will be subdued. And when you are, the most important thing for you to remember is to follow me. No matter what happens to you, Peter, follow me." That's what I call the test of living.

We are facing that final test, too. Yes, we are, my friend. The area of living, not doing simply what we want to do, but doing what Jesus wants us to do. That is the important thing. That is why those two words Jesus gave to Peter are so important for you and me, "Follow me." That's what I call the test of living, to follow Jesus.

Third is: **In The Area Of Listening.**

John's Gospel closes with the important test in which Jesus met Peter: Jesus said, "don't bother yourself so much about John. Do what I tell you, have your ear tuned to me. Do what I tell you to do." That was important for Peter. He needed to learn that.

You and I need to learn that, too. There are many people who are very concerned about somebody else when they ought to be concerned about doing what Jesus has said to them. What Jesus has said to you and me is very important. Don't bother yourself so much about John, don't bother yourself about Peter, bother yourself about yourself, yes?

Can you pass the final test? In reality, Jesus must be first in these three vital areas of life: in the area of loving, do you really love Jesus? In the area of living, are you living for Jesus? And in the area of listening, are you listening to Jesus? That is the final test.

Thank you, J Mark, for sharing this teaching from the end of John; those are important questions you have left us with. We want all of you to pass the test and hear those wonderful words from God Himself, "Well done, thou Good and faithful servant." At that point, you will have passed the test! It will be heaven with Jesus forever, and it will be worth it. That is our focus; that is our goal.

This brings us to the end of John, and we are finished with this study. Thanks for being here with us, and we trust you have been encouraged throughout the year. As I mentioned previously, all these lessons have been compiled into one book titled *The Word*. If you would like a copy, please let us know. I'll be giving you our contact info in a moment.

Next week we will begin studying in the Old Testament book of Exodus. We believe you will enjoy going with the children of Israel on their journey toward the promised land. There are valuable lessons to be learned in every book of the Bible, and as we go to Exodus, we are sure you will be encouraged. Don't forget the big picture. The Israelites leave Egypt, and at Mt. Sinai, Moses receives God's law from God. This is a new nation. The rest of the Old Testament is centered around these people.

We know how the Israelites walk away from God, and they are punished for their sin. It looks like God's plan isn't working, but God's ways will not be thwarted. He is bringing all things together for the grand entrance of His Son, Jesus Christ. You know History is His story, and the book Exodus plays an important part in the formation of the Jews, God's chosen people.

Once again, our study guide, *The Hope Herald*, will be available. You can follow our programs through Exodus in the Hope Herald. If you are interested, just contact us and ask us for your copy; we'd be happy to send you one.

Here are a few ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. And you can always contact us through our website. Go to heraldsofhope.org, click on "Connect," which is at the top in the middle; scroll down till you see "Contact

Us,” then you will need to fill in your information. While you are on our website, please look around and use the resources which are available there. We hope it will be a blessing for you. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org

Thank you for being with us for this last lesson in John. Lord willing, we will be with you again next week to begin our study in Exodus. Till then, stay faithful, Love Jesus, and show His love everywhere you go.