

What Matters-Week Two

Texts: John 21:15-19, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Begin with a personal story about not trusting someone because they hadn't performed well in the past.

We are used to the concept of unconditional love, but we typically do not unconditionally trust others.

- We struggle with people at work
- We struggle in our relationships

At what point do we trust people again

- Ask the question when we trust a child who has crashed our vehicle when you trust them again: when we say we love them and trust them, or when we hand them the keys to another vehicle?
- We have to understand this, because one of the incredible truths of Scripture and what God does for us is that He not only loves us, He actually trusts us to do His work and accomplish His mission.
- Give the example of Peter and his denial of Christ. Peter said he would never deny the Lord, even if it meant death. Yet Peter denied Christ three times, and fled weeping into the night like a coward. Yet after Jesus rose from the grave, and Peter (in John 21) had gone fishing, Jesus went and tracked him down.
 - Peter seems to be falling back on what he was. Perhaps he felt like a failure after being with Jesus three years and not being there in His time of need. Whatever the reason, Peter goes back to what he knows and perhaps believes he isn't capable of what God has called him to do.
 - Yet Jesus came to Peter. And asked him three times (give the reason why) if Peter loves Him. Three times Jesus ask, "Simon, do you love me?" Three times, with increasing anguish, Peter answers Jesus that he certainly does love him.
 - I don't know what was in Peter's heart when he said, "Lord, you know all things." I know I would have thought about all my failures, about the most recent failure and denial, and that I know I would probably blow it in the future. That I wouldn't be able to stand with Jesus the way I want and hoped I would because my weakness would get the best of me at times.
 - Can you think of a more gracious thing to give to a failure than the command to get back in the car and drive? Can you think of a more gracious thing to say to a man who feels he can do no good for the kingdom than to call him to go out and serve, protect, and gather Christ's flock?
 - Jesus didn't just say, "I forgive you and I love you." He called Peter to leadership in His kingdom. Did Peter deserve this? No way. So this is an incredible word of grace to Peter. Jesus forgave and *restored* Peter to the work He had called him to.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- We are new, not just different, but in Christ we are a new creation.
- Continue through the passage.
- 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
 - We aren't just reconciled to God, he uses us to bring about his work of reconciliation to the world. God has chosen to work through His word, through His sacrament. Yet people are the ones who bring these to others. While you may not give the sacraments to people, we all have the word of God to share in our lives with those God has placed around us.
 - God uses people like you and me to bring about the ministry of reconciliation to this world
 - He gives us this ministry. Not because we deserve it, but because He restores us. I crash the car everyday. Yet every day God hands the keys back to me and says get in and drive. Go, preach the word, encourage the saints, build up the people around you. I don't deserve it, but he shows His love and trust for me by forgiving and restoring me daily and telling me to get back in the car and drive.
- 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 - Verse 21 tells us that though we crash daily, though we fail daily, He has made us right in His sight. We step out of a smoldering wreck on a daily basis and he pays for the wreck, he puts a new car in front of us, and we are told to drive.
 - He does this not because we deserve it, not because we earn it, but because He is gracious. He does this because we matter. We are studying what matters, well we matter. We matter to God.
- And don't just take these keys that He puts back in our hands and put them on the shelf and say, "I wont drive again." No, get in the car. Drive. He actually has entrusted you with that task. He has restored you and reconciled you to Him. He has given you the ministry of reconciliation. Give thanks and praise to Him.