

STEP UP TO THE PLATE

John 21:15-17

Picture this. For the past three to four years you have done your best in faithfully fulfilling the responsibilities of your work. It was your respect and admiration for the president and C.E.O. of the company that captured your attention long before you ever thought of the possibility of working and serving under his charismatic and stellar leadership. Given the fact that your education and experience had nothing to do with the position, you could not escape its attractiveness and fulfillment.

Many times you backed away from applying for the position but it was your family and friends that pushed you to pursue the opportunity. Amazingly you made known your availability and through what seemed no less than an act of God you were given this rare opportunity. Although during these years of work you felt grossly under qualified, inadequate, and often insecure, you continually and persistently persevered.

Then came the moment you feared. In walks the very person you most respected, the one whom you admired, the one for whom you considered such a privilege to work. Your heart sinks as you think about those around you who were dropping like flies, those who had diverted interest and lost commitment to the privileged position. "This is it" you thought. Then in shock you hear, "I've been watching you for three and half years now. I'm fully aware of your feelings of inadequacy, desires to have more education, and vulnerable spots, but, I want you to head up an expansion of our company built upon the principles and personal conviction upon which this enterprise was built."

Can you picture yourself in this position? What would be the first thing you would do? How would it affect your life? Family? Friends?

Guess what. It is this same privilege God has provided for each one of us here this morning. For those here who respect and admire the person of Christ yet do not know Him personally He offers a life changing purpose. For those who know Him, He has given a fresh motivation to step outside of ourselves, off the bench, step up to the plate and knock the ball out of the park.

There has never been a greater need to bring real change to a disintegrating culture and world than now. Each of us live in a vacuum of leadership from the home, to the campus, and the athletic fields; from the work environment to the community in which we live.

This privilege we are to picture is rooted in that one question Jesus poses to each disciple, "Do you love Me?" In the background you can hear, "Yes or no - do you love Me?" If you do, step up to the plate, "tend My lambs." Take your eyes off yourself and "shepherd My sheep." It is like Jesus is saying, "I want you to be a part of the expansion of the most exciting enterprise man can know."

LIFE RESPONSE

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on John 21:15; "*So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.'* He said to him, 'Tend My lambs.'"

 - (a) Picture yourself in Peter's place as you focus on this verse in the context of Chapter 21. What would be your response? What is your response? What would it indicate if you responded in a negative manner?
 - (b) If you were confronted with this question and challenge after breakfast each morning this week how would it affect your purpose and focus for the day?

2. Compare John 21:15-17 with Matthew 22: 37-39. Define the parallels and the implications for your life. Is there really an option for the believer?

3. Read and meditate on Psalm 23 this week in context of John 21:15-17. Picture yourself as a “shepherd” with the opportunity to “tend” and “shepherd” those around you. List the qualities of a shepherd from Psalm 23 and imagine those under your care being able to write Psalm 23 as a definition of your care for them

...as a husband	...in your work environment
...as a parent	...toward your “neighbor”
...as a coach	...in your Mini Church member, Care Group member, or Cell member
4. What reasons do we give for not “stepping up to the plate” in leading, “shepherding,” or caring for those around us? What can we each learn from the feelings of inadequacy from the disciples and God’s grace?
5. Last week Nate emphasized that God has given each of us gifts, “talents,” or special abilities for “tending the sheep.” What are yours? How are you using them to “tend the sheep”?

“...it is true that each individual Christian must help to care for the flock. Each of us has a gift or gifts from the Lord, and we use what he has given us to help protect the flock.” - Dr. Warren Wiersbe

THE PRIVILEGE OF PROFESSION

John 21:15-17

- Addressing disciples
 - Revelation and intent of the church
 - ↳ Looks back at the promise
- Matt. 16:15-20
- ↳ Looks forward to the privilege → Acts 1:6-8; 9-16
 - ↳ Looks toward the responsibility
 - Eph. 1:7-12 ←
- Profession: Two dimensional
 - Do you love Me? Belief
 - Tend My lambs? Occupation (Profession)

THE PRESENCE OF GRACE

John 21:2-3

- At our low point
- When controlled by circumstances
- Can miss the presence of Christ

THE PROVISION OF HOPE

John 21:1; 4-14

- Hope is found in common experience
- Hope is always pre-established (Eternal)
- Hope is confirmed