

John 21: 15-22, ***“What about him? It’s you I’m talking to, “Follow me!”***

I have spent a lot of time as a parish minister preparing and leading funerals – and that it something I am still doing albeit complying with current restrictions. Why do I bother?

I do know that when 32 years ago, my own Dad died, we had talked with the officiating minister about him and what he meant to us, But at the funeral, apart from getting some names right, it was all so impersonal and the family felt cheated. So now I try to do my best for each family and the deceased and also to remind people of the reality of God’s love and the grace of His promises

Why? Because each of us matters to God.....is precious to Him
& our Lord wants us to know the life He offers.

At funerals, I often read Psalm 139 because it speaks of the Lord knowing all about the deceased - and about each of us too – our memories, mixed feelings, regret, guilt

When we wrong someone and realise it, we want to say sorry & make it up,
but too often, we may say or do nothing, deny blame and try to forget and bury it
and all that is unforgiven & buried deep inside,
all that can so quickly and easily become embedded & fester & eat us up
& when a person, we have wronged dies, without our saying sorry,
it is surely too late!

Certainly, that was what Simon Peter thought.

Despite all his promises & fine words and bravado, He had failed Jesus.....

Ashamed, he had rushed ashore but then had hung back from the fire

Then Jesus takes him aside, gets him to profess his faith, his loyalty and his love – 3 times.

Once for each of the 3 times, Peter had denied him.

Then Jesus gave him work to do and reassured him of His love

Often Christ can only really use us and work with us, when we too recognise our failures, Our own need of Christ’s grace and healing and forgiveness.

Like Simon Peter, we must come to Christ recognising our need

For then we too will know that we are forgiven and be reassured us of God’s love in X.

& asked to then use that to care for the Shepherd’s flock.

The risen Christ also asks you and me, not, “Do you promise never to make a mistake?”

Not, “Will you never let me down in the future?”

Not, “Do you now understand everything?”

But “Do you recognise my love for you & want to respond?”

God not only forgives but He forgets. *“If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, no one could stand, but with You, there is forgiveness.” (Psalm 130:4).* That is God’s grace or constant loving kindness, the love that we can never earn or deserve but that pursues us (Psalm 23: 6)

Thank God and trust that love.

v. 19c - ***“What about him?” Jesus still says, “It’s you I’m talking to, “Follow me!”***