

“I Need Thee”
John 13:36-38

Introduction:

1. Let's Head Back To:
 - John 13 This Morning - Where:
 - We Come To The Last Verses Of This Chapter:
 - In Which The Lord Has Been Teaching His Disciples About:
 - Real Love & Service!
 - So That - As Jesus Served Them:
 - They Would Serve Each Other!
 - And - As Jesus Loved Them:
 - They Would Love Each Other!
 - And This Is Jesus' "New Commandment" For All:
 - Who Would Follow Him!
2. But - As We Come To 13:36-38:
 - Once Again, We Find Peter:
 - Addressing Jesus!
 - This Time, Perhaps, After He Regained Some Of His Composure:
 - After His Interaction With Jesus:
 - About Getting His Feet Washed!
 - But - Instead Of Acknowledging:
 - Jesus' Example Of Service:
 - That He And The Rest Of The Disciples:
 - Just Witnessed!
 - Or Even - Jesus' Exhortation To Love:
 - That He And The Rest Of The Disciples:
 - Just Heard!
 - Peter Is Focused More On:
 - Something Else Jesus Told Them:
 - Back In 13:33 - When He Said:
 - "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you!"
 - 3. *This* Is What Peter Has In Mind:
 - When We Come To 13:36 And Read:
 - "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. / Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. / Jesus answered him, 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!"
 - What We Find In These Verses:
 - Is That - Even Though Peter:
 - Had The Right Desire & Intention:
 - To Be With Jesus - And:
 - To Follow Jesus!
 - Peter Still Did Not Understand:
 - His Own Weakness & Inability:
 - To Do So!
 - 4. And That Is Why:
 - Jesus Would Soon Have To Leave Peter!
 - So That - Through *His* Greatest Acts:
 - Of Love And Service:
 - He Could Enable Peter:
 - As Well As The Rest Of His Disciples:
 - To Follow Him Faithfully!
 - And So - Even With:
 - What We Find In 13:36:
 - Even With:

- You Are *Not Able* To Follow Me Now!

- With This - Jesus Reveals To Peter:

1. *The Weakness Of His Ignorance!*

- Not Only Did Peter Not Understand:

- Where Jesus Was About To Go:

- Peter Also Did Not Understand:

- Why He Could Not Continue To Follow Jesus:

- As He Had Done For The Last Three Years!

- But - Peter Was Not Able:

- To Follow Jesus:

- To Where He Was About To Go:

- For Several Reasons!

- Because Of The Distance:

- To The Place:

- Where Jesus Was About To Go!

- Of Course - The Final Destination:

- Of Jesus Was:

- Heaven!

- And - From Where Peter Sat:

- And - From Even Where We Sit Today:

- That Place Seems So Far Away!

- And - This Is Why Jesus Told Peter:

- “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now!”

- The Place Was Just Too Far:

- For Peter To Go On His Own!

- Another Reason Why Peter:

- Was Not Able To Follow Jesus Was:

- Because Of The Difficulty:

- Of The Path:

- That Jesus Was About To Take:

- To Get Back To His Home:

- In Heaven!

- Of Course - Jesus Knew:

- The Difficulty Of His Path:

- That Started Just When:

- Judas Left The Building!

- But - Peter Did Not Yet Know Or Understand:

- Just How Dark & Difficult:

- That Night & That Path:

- Would Become!

- But - This Is Why Jesus Said To Peter:

- “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now!”

- The Path Was Just Too Hard:

- For Peter To Go On His Own!

- Another Reason Why Peter:

- Was Not Able To Follow Jesus Was:

- Because Of The Disability:

- In His Progress:

- In His Walk With The Lord!

- This Was The Real Problem:

- That Peter Had!

- Though The Distance Of The Place & The Difficulty Of The Path:

- Were Both Real!

- The Biggest Obstacle Peter Had To Overcome:

- In Order To Follow & Be With Jesus:

- Was Internal, Not External!

- He Was Not Yet Ready:

- To Follow Jesus:
 - In The Most Important Sense!
- And So - Jesus Answers:
 - “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now!”
 - Because Of Peter’s Own Spiritual Progress:
 - It Was Just Not The Time:
 - For Peter To Follow Jesus To His Ultimate Destination!
- But - Even Though Jesus:
 - Spoke To Peter About:
 - The Weakness Of His Inability & Ignorance:
 - Jesus Also Wanted To Encourage Peter:
 - With A Special Promise!
 - A Promise That We Find In:
 - 13:37 As Well:
 - “But Thou Shalt Follow Me Afterwards!”
 - So - Some Day:
 - Peter Would Follow Jesus!
 - Because All The Distance & Difficulty & Disability:
 - To Get To Where Jesus Was Going:
 - Would Be Overcome!
 - But - Not By Peter:
 - But - By Jesus - For Peter!
 - But Peter Did Not Yet Understand This!
 - And - Sadly - Sometimes:
 - We Don’t Either!
 - Like Peter:
 - We Are Following The Lord:
 - By Faith!
 - But - We Forget Just How:
 - Weak We Are In Our Own Ignorance:
 - About The Things Of God!
 - How Many Times Have You Wondered:
 - About Why You Can’t Be With Jesus – Yet!
 - Why Heaven Still Seems:
 - So Far!
 - Why The Path Seems:
 - So Difficult!
 - Why The Spiritual Struggle:
 - Is So Real & Strong!
 - You Need To Remember These Words To Peter:
 - “Whither I Go, Thou Canst Not Follow Me Now!”
 - Its Just Not Yet:
 - God’s Time For You!
 - Your Just Not Ready!
 - You Have Still:
 - So Much To Learn:
 - About God’s Wisdom & God’s Will!
 - So - Seek To Be Teachable:
 - As You Rest In His Promise:
 - “But Thou Shalt Follow Me Afterwards!”
 - One Day:
 - The Distance / Difficulty / Disability:
 - Will Be Gone - Because:
 - Jesus Made It All Possible!
 - But - In The Meantime:
 - Remember That:
 - You Need Jesus To Help You:
 - Overcome The Weakness Of Your Own Ignorance!

- Even When Your Intention & Desire:
 - To Be With The Lord:
 - Is Good & Right!
- But - Then We See From Peter:
 - Another Weakness - And That Is:

2. ***The Weakness Of His Impatience!***

- Which Is What We Find In Peter's Reply To Jesus:
 - In 13:37 - "Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?"
 - Though We Can Still See Peter's Devotion:
 - To The Lord In These Words:
 - We Can Also See A Growing Impatience:
 - With The Lord!
- After All - Hadn't Peter:
 - Followed Jesus:
 - Up Until Then?
 - When Peter Said This:
 - He Probably Thought Back To When Jesus:
 - Called Him - And Said To Him:
 - "Follow Me, And I Will Make You Fishers Of Men!"
 - And So - In Faith:
 - Peter Did! And:
 - Ever Since Then:
 - Through All The Highs & Lows:
 - Of Jesus Ministry:
 - He Continued To Follow The Lord!
 - And Since Peter Was Able To Follow Jesus:
 - Up Until Then:
 - Peter Asked Jesus:
 - "Why Cannot I Follow Thee Now?"
 - But - What Jesus Had In Mind:
 - Was Once Again:
 - Different Than What Peter:
 - Had In Mind!
 - Jesus Was Talking About:
 - Following Him:
 - From Then On!
 - Though Peter Was Able To:
 - Accompany Jesus:
 - On The Path Of His Ministry:
 - For Those 3 Years!
 - The Path That Was Now Before Jesus:
 - He Had To Travel Alone!
 - So That He Could Pave The Way:
 - For Peter & For Us:
 - To Follow!
 - When We Struggle With:
 - The Weakness Of Our Own Impatience:
 - As Peter Did:
 - And Wonder Why We Can't:
 - Be Or Do Or Have What We Want *Now*:
 - In Our Walk With The Lord!
 - Remember: The Lord's Ways Are Still:
 - Higher Than Our Ways - And:
 - His Thoughts & Timing:
 - Are Greater Than Ours!
 - And - Learn To Be Patient:
 - Even Until:

- “The Coming Of The Lord!” (James 5:7)

- But - Then:
 - We Can See Even Another Weakness:
 - In Peter’s Reply To Jesus In 13:37:
 - And That Is:

3. ***The Weakness Of His Independence!***

- Again - With The Best Of Intentions:
 - Peter Declares To The Lord:
 - 13:37b - “I will lay down my life for thy sake!”
 - Even - His Very Soul!
 - This Is A Powerful Expression:
 - Of Peter’s Resolve To Follow Jesus:
 - Even If It Would Cost Him His Life!
 - And - This Resolve Would Be Seen:
 - In Just A Few Hours Time:
 - In The Garden Of Gethsemane:
 - When Peter Takes Up His Sword In Order To Defend His Lord!
 - And - Even In The Words Themselves:
 - We Can Get A Sense Of:
- The Certainty:
 - Of Peter’s Resolve!
 - “I Will” Do This:
 - Peter Says!
 - Without Any Doubt Or Hesitation!
 - And - We Also Get A Sense Of:
- The Completeness:
 - Of Peter’s Resolve!
 - Even To The Death!
 - “I Will Lay Down My Life!”
 - But - As Admirable As:
 - The Certainty & Completeness:
 - Of Peter’s Devotion Is!
 - We Must Also See:
- The Contradiction:
 - Of Peter’s Resolve!
 - In 13:36 - Jesus Just Told Peter:
 - “Thou Canst Not Follow Me Now!”
 - Or - You Are Not Able:
 - To Follow Me, Peter!
 - Because:
 - The Distance Is Too Far!
 - The Difficulty Is Too Hard! And:
 - Your Disability Is Too Great!
 - But Peter Ignores Jesus:
 - And, In Effect, Tells Him:
 - You’re Wrong, Jesus!
 - I Can! I Am Able!
 - And - He Puts Himself:
 - Not Just Before:
 - The Lord - But Even:
 - In The Very Place Of The Lord!
 - When Peter Tells Jesus:
 - “I Will Lay Down My Life For You!”
 - He Didn’t Understand That:
 - By Going Before Peter:
 - This Is What Jesus Was Doing For Him!
 - Already In John:

- Peter Would Have Heard That:
 - As The Bread Of Life - In 6:51:
 - Jesus Came To Give His Own Flesh For The Life Of The World!
- Already In John:
 - Peter Would Have Heard That:
 - As The Good Shepherd - In 10:11:
 - Jesus Came To Give His Life For His Sheep!
- And - So - Jesus Came:
 - Not So That Peter:
 - Could Give His Life:
 - For Him!
 - But So That He:
 - Could Give His Life:
 - For Peter! For Us!
- It Was Peter:
 - Who Needed Jesus!
 - And Not:
 - The Other Way Around!
- Because - It Was Jesus:
 - Who Could Pave The Way To Heaven:
 - And Not Peter!
- And - It Was Jesus:
 - Alone - Who Was Able To:
 - “Endure The Cross” - So That:
 - He Might Be Able To Give To His Own People His Own Strength:
 - To Follow In His Steps!
- And Even Though:
 - Peter Had The Right Desire & The Best Of Intentions:
 - His Words Here - “Display Not Only Gross Ignorance Of Human Weakness, But A Certain Haughty Independence That Is The Seed Of Denial Itself!” (Don Carson)

Conclusion:

1. And So - Using Peter’s Own Words:
 - Jesus Tells Him In 13:38:
 - “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!”
 - I Wonder How Jesus:
 - Said These Words To Peter!
 - Was It In:
 - A Stern Voice?
 - As He Made This Pointed & Prophetic Declaration To Peter:
 - Using One Of His “Verily, Verily” Statements!
 - Or - Was It With:
 - A Sorrowful Voice?
 - Knowing What Peter’s Weakness Would Bring About:
 - To Them Both!
2. Though We Are Left To Wonder:
 - How Jesus Said These Words:
 - We Have No Doubt:
 - What Jesus Said & Meant:
 - By These Words!
 - Jesus Revealed To Peter:
 - In No Uncertain Terms That:
 - He Was Not Able:
 - To Follow Jesus:
 - On His Own!
 - Jesus Revealed To Peter:
 - That He Needed Jesus:

- Infinitely More Than:
 - Jesus Needed Him!
- 3. But Also - In His Grace:
 - Jesus Revealed To Peter:
 - That - By Going Ahead Alone Then:
 - He Would Then Be Able To:
 - Enable Him:
 - To Follow Jesus Later!
- 4. If You Are Following Jesus Today:
 - I'm Sure That:
 - If You Were In Peter's Shoes:
 - You Would Have Had:
 - The Same Good Desire & Right Intention:
 - Toward The Lord!
 - Because - They Are The Same:
 - Desires & Intentions:
 - That We Have Now!
 - The True Desire Of Christians:
 - Is To Be Devoted To Christ!
 - And - If This Is Not Your Desire:
 - Then You Need To First Examine Yourself, To See If You Really Are In The Faith! (2 Cor. 13:5)
 - 5. But - If This Is Your Desire & Intention:
 - Then - You Must Not Keep Trying:
 - To Fulfill Your Desire:
 - On Your Own!
 - This Was The Problem:
 - Peter Had!
 - And - This Is The Problem:
 - That We, All Too Often, Have As Well!
 - We Try To Follow Jesus:
 - But Forget That:
 - On Our Own & In Our Own Power:
 - We Can't!
 - We Forget That:
 - Without Jesus:
 - "Ye Can Do Nothing!" (John 15:5)
 - 6. Because - Like Peter:
 - As Strong As We Think We Are - And:
 - As Strong As We Try To Be:
 - We Are Weak!
 - Weak - Because Of Our Ignorance:
 - Of The Will & Purposes:
 - Of God!
 - Weak - Because Of Our Impatience:
 - In The Timing Of :
 - Of Those Purposes And Plans!
 - And - Weak - Because Of Our Independence:
 - Apart From The Power & Strength Of The Lord!
 - 7. You Are Only Ready To Follow Jesus:
 - When He Strips Away Your:
 - Ignorance & Impatience & Independence:
 - By Showing You:
 - Through Peter's Example:
 - Where That Kind Of Life:
 - Can Ultimately Lead!
 - Instead Of:
 - Devotion To Jesus:

- Your Weakness Can Even Lead To:
 - The Denial Of Jesus:
 - As It Will Do In Peter's On Life:
 - In Just A Few Hours Time!

8. Which Is Why:

- Even With The Best Intentions:
 - You Must Never Rely On:
 - Your Own Strength:
 - To Follow The Lord!
 - As We Will Sing In A Moment:
 - You Need The Lord:
 - And His Strength:
 - To Follow Him!
 - Because - Without Him:
 - The Distance Is Just Way Too Far!
 - The Difficulty Is Just Way Too Hard! And:
 - Your Disabilities Are Just Way Too Great:
 - To Follow Him:
 - On Your Own!
- "I Need Thee, Oh, I Need Thee! Every Hour I Need Thee! O Bless Me Now My Savior, I Come To Thee!"

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