

**When Your “Loyalty is Tested
Matt 26:31-35**

Loyalty can be defined, as being faithful, be able to defend and to support one in times of trouble.

Has your loyalty ever been tested?
Has anyone ever made you doubt his or her loyalty?
Has anyone ever let you down?
Has anyone ever turned his or her back on you?
Has anyone ever broken a promise when you needed it and were counting on it the most?
Has any ever been disloyal to you?
Have you ever been disloyal?

Can you imagine if we lived in a world where loyalty never existed?

Here's the stage: the disciples and Jesus had just finished the Passover meal together, during the meal; big news is traveling around the table! – Judas is going to betray the Master, the Rabbi, the Teacher – someone is going to betray Jesus! All eyes were on Judas...

BUT, ALL EYES SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON THEMSELVES!

They finished the meal, sang a hymn and headed toward the Mount of Olives...

Turn with me to Matthew 26: 31-35

I. Loyalty is an essential part of true friendship.

Let's take a look at – Peter the Rock, I'll call him Peter BIG Mouth!

Do you remember “Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater”? How about “Peter, Peter, promise leaver”!

Look at verse 33 & 35 again –

V33. Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, **I never will.**"

V35. But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, **I will never disown you.**" And all the other disciples said the same.

Were they really listening to Jesus? – Jesus quoted this passage from Zechariah for a reason! He told the disciples it would be God's plan, God's passion and God's purpose to do this. Yet, Jesus also gives them a statement of hope. Look at V38

“But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

Peter's **Big Promise** – I NEVER WILL DISOWN or disassociate myself from you! All Peter cared about was telling Jesus how LOYAL he was! Can you relate to that – the me, myself & I syndrome?

Do we make promises to the Lord and never keep them? – JESUS understands!
Do we make commitments to the Lord and never keep? – JESUS understands!

Loyalty is an essential part of true friendship!

II. Loyalty is being available to help in times of trouble.

Here's the 2nd stage: the disciples were in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus and asked to stay awake and keep him company while he prayed, when Jesus need them the most – they failed, and they failed miserably THEY ALL KEPT FALLING ASLEEP!

TURN TO: John 18: 1-11

I'll call this "**Peter's Big Blunder**"!

Peter's way of being loyal was to defend and support Jesus while the mob wanted to take him away. So he cut the High priest servant ear off! Peter had to back up his statement; he had to show the people how loyal he was, he had to show Jesus just how loyal he was!

V10 & 11 – READ IT AGAIN

I want you to notice something: Jesus handles loyalty – NOT WITH ANGER or VIOLENCE – but with commitment to the Father!

What if Jesus allowed Peter to have it his way?
What if Jesus' loyalty was in man's way?
What if Jesus ignored the Father's plan for our redemption?

WE WOULD HAVE NO HOPE; WE WOULD BE DEAD IN OUR SIN AND UNDER GOD'S WRATH!

Loyalty is being available to help in times of trouble
Mankind was in trouble!

III. Loyalty cannot depend on mood, circumstances or the weather

Let's look now when one's loyalty is tested.

TURN TO: Luke 22: 54-62

Peter's Big Denial

Loyalty: Is the sign of genuine friendship.

- Peter said he would DIE for Jesus!

Loyalty: To be available to help in times of struggle.

- Peter stood out amongst the crowd in Jesus' defense

Loyalty: Cannot depend on your mood, circumstances or the weather – it must be consistent!

- When Peter's loyalty was tested he blew it!

Loyalty: It must maintain unwavering commitment.

- Jesus is our example of it

What if, God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if, God couldn't take the time to bless us today because we couldn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if, we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if, God didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His Day?

What if, God took away the Bible tomorrow because we failed to read it today?

What if, God took away His message because we failed to listen to the messenger?

What if, God didn't send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to be prepared to pay the price for our sin?

What if, the door of the church was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if, God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if, God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him tomorrow?

What if, God answered our prayers the we answer His call to service?

What if, God met our needs the we give Him our lives?

IV. Jesus forgives & restores Peter

TURN TO: John 21: 15-17

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Notice: Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus confronted Peter with three questions and He is confronting you today as well.

No matter what you have done – Jesus is committed to being your friend – he was Peter's!

No matter what you struggle with – Jesus will be with you and help you in your struggle.

No matter what your circumstance – Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!

He is not affected by moods, circumstances or the weather – Jesus is committed to you!

Our commitment to Jesus must be consistent.

REMEMBER - Christ committed himself to us first.

While we were still sinners "CHRIST DIED FOR YOU & ME -- these are amazing words.

God sent Jesus Christ to take our place on the cross, not because we were good enough, loyal enough or faithful enough, but because he loves us.

Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you, remember that he loved you even before you turned to him.

If Jesus loved Peter when he denied him, he can surely love you no matter what you've done.

We have the Bible's promise that Jesus is the same yesterday, today & forever! And He will never Leave or forsake us!

PRAY

Close with 2 Cor 13: 11 - 14