

**Sermon Series: “Good News for Life”**  
**“Misplaced Confidence”**  
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**Sunday, March 7, 2021**

Cockiness— can be a recipe for failure. A misplaced confidence can involve a person not taking seriously what is required. E.g., when I was playing basketball at Ecole a guy was guarding our best player Michael and he said to Michael, our high scorer, that he was going to shut him down, and Michael laughed, and indeed, it was misplaced confidence because he did not shut down Michael! This can happen in college sports as well. E.g., in the final four championship football teams, Ohio State was playing the Clemson Tigers, and the head coach for Clemson made a remark in the news the week before the game that surprised many— he said that he did not think Ohio State deserved to be in the final four teams to play for the championship because of their schedule— well, this comment rubbed Ohio State the wrong way as brazen cockiness and inspired them to beat Clemson soundly 49-28! Sometimes cockiness can work against a person in romance as well. E.g., I recall in high school we had a big football player who wanted to date a girl in our class, and he was pretty confident that he could win her over, and the more he tried, the less she was interested, until finally he just gave up! Life is like that— having a cockiness, a misplaced confidence can work against someone. Today in our passage we can see that can also happen in spiritual things.

READ John 13:36-38 (p. 108)

**CONTEXT:** Jesus has just talked about His death and resurrection in being glorified now that Judas has left to betray Him. He says He will be leaving them, and where He is going the disciples cannot go. Jesus gives the disciples a new commandment to love one another as He has loved them.

READ v 36. “Despite Jesus’ beautiful new commandment, Peter has only one thing on his mind— did Jesus just say He was going to leave without them? Cf. Proverbs 17:17; 18:24.” Friendship is always important. To the ancient Jews this seemed to be especially so. In Proverbs 17:17 we read, “A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity”. In Proverbs 18:24 we read, “Some friends play at friendship but a true friend sticks closer than one’s nearest kin”. Jesus also understood friendship; in John 15:13, Jesus stated, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”. It is great to have a good friend, but it is especially difficult when one loses a good friend to death. Have you ever lost a good friend to death? E.g., one of our good friends at Lake Vista UMC was Pic Cyr, who passed away in April, 2015; I recall when he went in to Touro Hospital for pneumonia, I did not think he would not be checking out of the hospital; the TV was on in the emergency room when I went to see him, and he was hooked up to oxygen and he referenced to the news on the TV and I could tell he wanted to talk about it or make a comment, and I just wanted him to rest—I thought we’d have plenty of other chances to talk, but we did not. Peter in our passage seems to be thinking something similar— Jesus, are You leaving us? There is so much more time I wanted to spend with You! Where are You going? Jesus reassures Peter that where He is going he cannot follow now, but he will follow later.

READ vv 37-39. “Despite Jesus’ reassurance that he would follow Him later, Peter boldly proclaims he would pay the ultimate price for Jesus. Jesus’ reply was not only humbling, but also a warning. Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:21a-33;

12:8-10.” Humility is an important part of the Christian lifestyle. READ 1 Peter 5:5b-6. And who was the most humble person in the Old Testament? Moses! READ Numbers 12:3. Have you ever encountered someone who would make the bold proclamation that he or she would die for Christ? I have usually found such talk needs to be more careful; it often sounds to me a bit rash. E.g., I recall I was on a mission trip out of the country and I met a young woman who was a Christian, and she was very bold, and in our first day of meeting, from what I recall, she was telling me with a smile on her face how she would die for her faith; I could not help but think there here we are sitting in a comfortable place, feeling safe and not threatened, and she is making this statement— it seemed rather boastful, full of misplaced confidence, confidence that was in herself, and not in Christ. I think of those who have paid the ultimate price, who have died for their faith. E.g., we recall the tragedy at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999 when one of the shooters put a gun to the head of a Christian girl named Cassie Bernall and asked whether she believed in God, and she said yes, and he killed her. We all who follow Jesus want that kind of faith. And it is a faith that comes with the right confidence. We recall Paul the apostle spoke of his being willing to die for Jesus in Acts 21:13, but he did not rest on his own strength. In 2 Corinthians 11:21a-33 Paul shares the different ways he has physically suffered for Christ, even three times being beaten with rods and once stoned; in 12:8-10 he reveals that he has had a thorn in the flesh and asked the Lord to remove it, but God said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness”. Paul says next, “So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me”. E.g., I think often of Corrie ten Boom in the book *The Hiding Place* where she and her Dad and sister hid Jews from the Nazis, and her Dad and sister lost their lives. God does not call us all to die such deaths, but He does call us to be ready to do so, as in taking up our cross and following Him.

“What does this episode with Peter teach Jesus’ followers today?” Three points I would like to make. First, we are not to deny Jesus. We recall that Jesus said, “. . . but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:33). Second, there is grace and mercy and forgiveness, as Peter experienced in John 21 with the resurrected Jesus. And third, the way we stand up for Jesus, even in the face of our own death, is by the power of Jesus within us, not on our own strength. I am reminded of the words from the hymn, “Are Ye Able”: “‘Are ye able,’ said the Master, ‘to be crucified with Me?’ ‘Yea,’ the sturdy dreamers answered, ‘to the death we follow thee.’ Lord we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like thee, divine. Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love, and loyalty.”