

Prepared to Die

Scripture Reading — John 21:15-25

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. — John 21:19

Are you prepared to die someday?

Before Jesus' betrayal and arrest, Peter had proclaimed his willingness to lay down his life for Jesus. But within a few hours Peter denied that he ever knew Jesus (see John 13:37; 18:15-18, 25-27). Christ addresses this as he prepares his disciples for the ministry he knows they will need to do after his return to the Father.

We may not be called to die for our faith in Christ, as Peter and many others throughout church history have been. But even a natural death requires courage to proclaim something about our faith in God. The process of dying, in many cases, forces us to see our limits to manage and control life. Declining health obliges us to depend on others. And although our humanity grates against being led where we may not want to go, we can proclaim by faith that God remains in control even though we are not.

"Do you love me?" Jesus' question to Peter gently restores this disciple who had denied him three times. But it also equips Peter for the future he would face as a follower of the ascended Lord. Jesus entrusts the task of witness to all who know their weaknesses and failures and who testify that their strength lies in him.

May the strength of Christ be our testimony today and also in the hour of death.

Prayer

Lord, restore us, for we are weak. Our lives often deny the power of your resurrection life in us. Strengthen us to live faithfully, and may even our death bring you glory. Amen.

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