

# Keep Pedaling

Hymns from "Favorite Hymns of Grace."

## Greeting and Opening Prayer

## Hymns of Worship

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## Devotional Summary: "Keep Pedaling"

**John 20:21 (KJV) Then said Jesus to them again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."**

Our text today comes from the middle of John's description of the events immediately following the resurrection of Christ (John 19:38-21:35). We are told in this passage that as yet, the disciples of Jesus still did not understand that the Scriptures taught that the Lord would come back to life after His crucifixion (20:9). Rather than cluck our cheeks at their ignorance, we need to try, with our imaginations, to see their circumstances through their eyes back then.

The Bible says that they were gathered together in fear (20:19). If the authorities would do such a horrible thing to their powerful leader, what lay in store for His followers? I'm sure that at least for some of them their imaginations were running wild with horrific possibilities. They had seen, first hand, the armed mob that had arrested Jesus. Peter and John had been at the High Priest's house when the Lord was abused and officially accused of blasphemy. Surely they had told the other disciples about the lies and the hateful venom so rampant at that mockery of a trial. And then, all of them had probably witnessed in the past, the Romans executing poor souls by crucifixion. It is one of the most cruel forms of extended, torturous death ever devised for capital punishment. Though hours and hours away, the condemned one's death was sealed as they nailed their hands and their feet to the wooden crossbeams. Then they erected the poor criminal into the air to hang there, naked, in the sun, on the busy road outside of the city until they eventually died from the accumulated effects of shock, thirst, exposure and pain.

And all of this happened before their eyes to the One that they personally witnessed for three and one-half years in miraculous, powerful ministry. Peter himself had testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. They were there when He healed the sick, raised the dead and delivered the demon possessed. And not just a spattering of miracles did they see, the Lord would go about the countryside healing and delivering everybody of every sickness in the whole crowd that followed Him everywhere He went.

And now their "messiah" was dead! This potent, indomitable Son of the Most High God had been defeated by the religious leaders and the long arm of Rome! What chance did they have

if this is the plight of their Master?

Look at our text again. **"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."** I wonder how many of them suddenly had a flashback of what the Lord had cried out from the cross just before He died? **"My God, My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me!?"** (Mark 15:34 KJV) If the Father would forsake His only begotten Son, what were their chances against the seat of Jewish religious authority and the will of mighty Rome?

Mary Magdalene had already reported that she had seen the Master and that He had told her He was going away, back to the Father (20:17-18). So we begin to get a picture into the dilemma the disciples may have seen themselves in. They did not know what was happening as the resurrected Christ stood before them in His crucified body. Was this a ghost or a vision or a trick? They knew He said He was leaving them to go back to Heaven. They knew the authorities would be hot to have them killed too. They knew the Father had forsaken His Son and we can be sure they had no understanding of these things. They were full of fear.

And in walks Jesus who calmly says..."Peace!?" Then the very next thing He says is, "You see the way the Father sent me to do my task? Well, I'm sending you the same way."

We can almost hear one of them mutter under his breath, "Thanks a LOT!"

Now, if this were the end of the story what a tragic tale it would be! But we know that this is not where the Gospel ends. This is not the complete picture of what the message of Jesus Christ is all about. He did not come down here, live an unbelievably perfect and miraculous life, paid the price for our sins, get resurrected and just ascend back to Heaven, leaving His followers to fend for themselves. NO!!!

In John14:25-27 (KJV) we read: **"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

Here is the ground for peace, for joy, for courage, for shouting...for those first disciples, huddled in fear behind locked doors, and for us today! Maybe you can relate to the questions these pioneers of the Church had. As you struggle with loneliness...as your sight, hearing and memory fails you...as your pain sometimes is overwhelming...as time becomes your boring enemy...as your faith is tested...as the encouragement of Christian fellowship becomes more and more rare...as your struggles overwhelm your Christian disposition...as you feel more and more put on the shelf...

The Father will send the Holy Spirit in the powerful name of our Savior, Jesus Christ and He will be our Comforter, He will be our teacher! Peace?! O peace indeed...peace that passes understanding! **"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:7 KJV).

The Comforter is teaching us His peace! In the face of our hurts, our struggles, our failing health, our waning strength, thought we feel like we have been forsaken, the truth is that we have a Friend who did not leave us alone when we got too old to go to church. He did not

desert us because our bodies are worn out. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever and He is teaching us right now, here in this place how much He loves us, how faithful He is...no matter how low we feel, no matter how low our opinion of ourselves, no matter how hard the battle - He is with His child all the way!

Remember when you first learned to ride a bicycle? Your daddy would run along beside you holding the seat, hollering, "Pedal! Pedal!" And what happened when he let go? Boom! Down you went! What did your daddy do? Did he bust you up side the head and send you to bed without supper? No. Your daddy understood. He knew you would struggle. He knew you would fall. He dusted you off. Put a band-aid on your boo-boo and said "OK. Let's try again!"

Are you beginning to get the picture? Your Comforter, your Teacher, is comforting you. He is teaching you. He is teaching all of us to trust Him as we hear His whisper, "Peace." in our hearts. Listen to Him. Let Him teach. Let Him strengthen and comfort. Sure you will fall. He is there to pick you up and dust you off and set you back to trying again. Every day. Under all circumstances, He is there with you. Dear child of God, He has not left you comfortless!

And one day soon, sooner than we think, He is coming for us to take us Home, to be with Him in Glory and everlasting peace. Come on...keep pedaling!...you will make it!...and when the battle's over He will take you home!

## **Closing Hymn**

At Calvary      p. 18

## **Prayer Requests and Corporate Prayer**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

## **Recessional**

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Web: [www.christianconcourse.org](http://www.christianconcourse.org)

Email: [chco@christianconcourse.org](mailto:chco@christianconcourse.org)

Phone: 757-714-3133