

## DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?

John 21:1-25

Key Verse: 15

### 1. Read verses 1-3. To what does "Afterward" refer?

In the previous passage, Jesus appeared twice to his disciples after his resurrection. More importantly, this event happened after Peter denied Jesus three times and after all the disciples ran away. Now was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples (14).

#### **Where did this third resurrection appearance occur?**

By the Sea of Tiberius, which is Lake Galilee. This was the home town area of the seven disciples. They had gone back to the place where they had lived before meeting Jesus. With nowhere else to go, you can always go home.

#### **Who was there?**

Verse 2, "Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the Sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples." 7 disciples in all were back together in their old job and life before they met Jesus.

#### **What did Peter and the disciples do?**

Verse 3, "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." The disciples went back to things pre-Jesus. They tried to overcome their failure as disciples by doing something they were good at; fishing.

#### **With what result?**

Verse 3b, "...but that night they caught nothing." It seems that after their spiritual failure it was interfering with their lives, they couldn't even do what they were good at after spiritually failing Jesus.

#### **What was their spiritual/human condition?**

Not only was Jesus gone and their lives as disciples over, but also they spent all their time to catch fish and could catch none. Their condition was depressed. They had zero future security and zero hope left now that Jesus was gone.

## **2. Read verses 4-6. Why didn't the disciples recognize Jesus?**

Perhaps because of the early daylight, but more likely for a spiritual reasons. When we are depressed or hopeless we can't see Jesus and all the great he has done right in front of our faces. They weren't looking for the risen Jesus so they would not recognize his call.

### **How did he greet them and restore their fishing failure?**

Verse 5, "He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

Jesus understood their spiritual condition. Jesus called them first as friends. What a warm greeting and inviting greeting when the disciples deserved much worse than that. Also he told them how to catch more fish and how to have a successful catch by throwing the nets on the right side of the boat.

### **Of what important event does this remind us? (Lk 5:4-6)**

#### **Luke 5:4-6**

"When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets. When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break."

This reminds us of Jesus first calling of the disciples to be fishers of men.

### **Why might Jesus be concerned about Peter?**

Jesus called Peter to be a fisher of men, but Peter lost his direction after Jesus' crucifixion. So Jesus visited him out of love like he did in Luke 5:4-6, so that Peter could recognize Jesus on the shore. Jesus visits us because he is concerned about our salvation as well. Jesus wants to restore us to have faith in him.

## **3. Read verses 7-8. Who recognized Jesus first?**

Verse 7, "Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!..."

The disciple John recognized Jesus first. John was keen to recognize Jesus' voice. John knew the voice of his shepherd and when he heard it he could recognize him. We must have good and clean ears to hear Jesus' voice. When we recognize it we can follow it and come to know his voice better.

### **What did Peter and the others do?**

**Verse 7b,8** "...he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water." The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards."

Peter put his clothes on, out of respect for Jesus, and jumped in the water and swam to the shore to meet him. The others carried the fish in to the shore. Once Peter realized that it was Jesus he wanted nothing more to meet him again.

### **How successful was their fishing trip?**

Look at verse 8, "<sup>8</sup>The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish..." Now with Jesus' help to throw their net onto the right side of the boat, their trip was immensely successful. The disciples caught 153 giant fish. It took the entire boat full of disciples to carry the net into shore.

### **Why was Peter so excited?**

Peter was excited because Jesus had returned and had given the disciples the miraculous catch of fish.

### **What does this incident reveal about Peter and about Jesus?**

It reveals that Jesus loves Peter with his unconditional love. It moreover reveals Jesus' love for Peter and the disciples. Jesus' love is far greater than Peter's sin. It covers all their failures. It reveals that Jesus loves Peter and wants to help him overcome his failure.

## **4. Read verses 9-14. How did Jesus serve his disciples?**

Jesus had on some burning coals some fish cooking and some bread prepared. When the disciples were out on the lake freezing in the cold, they came to Jesus with nothing. But Jesus was there preparing fish and bread for his disciples. Jesus was preparing them warmly like a mother who loved his disciples more than anything. Jesus

### **What was his purpose in doing this?**

Jesus wanted the disciples to know that his love is greater than their sins. Jesus was touching their hearts with his love. When they failed, God was their sending his son. When they come empty handed, Jesus is there making them breakfast. This is Jesus' love for failed sinners. This is the love that changes men hearts.

### **What does this show about Jesus' way of shepherding his disciples?**

Jesus' way of shepherding does not hold sins against disciples. Jesus' love is greater than the disciples' sins and he shows them this in his actions. Jesus shows them his love and makes a personal relationship with them so that they may be restored as disciples. Jesus' way does not take revenge. Jesus loves his poor disciples and gave his life for them, even though they abandoned him. Jesus took care of their hungry stomachs and their broken hearts. By inviting them to breakfast he was showing them that they were restored from their failures.

### **Of what previous events might the disciples be reminded?**

At Jesus' making of breakfast all the mercy and grace of Jesus must have come flooding back to the disciples' memories. Especially in the upper room when Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Jesus showed his love for them by giving his life and that his love overcomes all their sins. Jesus was the only way to be restored to God.

### **How did the disciples respond?**

Verse 12, "...None of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord."

The disciples knew from the way he broke bread and the way he treated them and the miraculous catch of fish that it was Jesus. Plus they were too ashamed of their betrayal to ask if it was Jesus, they knew it was him, only Jesus could love them in that way.

### **5. Read verse 15. On which disciple did Jesus focus his attention?**

Simon Peter.

### **Why?**

Because of fear Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus came to Simon Peter and focused on him. Jesus' purpose was to help Peter to know that Jesus already loved him more than Peter could love Jesus. Jesus wanted Peter to see that the reason he denied Jesus three times was that he loved himself more than Jesus.

### **What did Jesus ask?**

Verse 15, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

This is an important question. Jesus wants us to know if we love Jesus more than these. If we think we love Jesus, but really love ourselves more than Jesus, then we cannot answer this question.

### **What does he mean by "more than these"?**

More than these could mean the men in his company, it could mean the 153 fish, it could mean the food he was eating with Jesus. But Jesus really wants Peter to know how much Jesus loves him. Jesus really wanted Peter to know his great love for him. Because Peter had loved his life more than anything else and out of fear he denied Jesus three times.

### **What does it mean to love Jesus?**

To love Jesus more than these means to obey Jesus' words. It means to follow his commands. More importantly it means to remember Jesus' greater love for us. If we forget Jesus' great love on the cross for us, then we cannot but love other things more than Jesus. This is what happened to Peter. Loving Jesus means commitment and to have priority to love Jesus more than anything else.

### **What was Peter's response and Jesus' command?**

Verse 15, "Yes, Lord," he said, "You know that I love you."

Peter thought he loved Jesus. He thought he was ready to show his love. But Peter only responded, "Yes Lord you know that I love you." But he left out the, "more than these," part.

## **6. Read verses 16-17. How is this exchange repeated?**

In verse 16 and 17 Jesus repeated the same question, much in the manner that Peter denied Jesus three times before the servant girl. The decision to love Jesus is not a one-time thing like a flu shot. Jesus repeats this to help Peter to understand the depths of his failure and the depths of Peter's true sin of loving his own life more than Jesus.

### **What does it mean to "feed my lambs," "take care of my sheep," and "feed my sheep"?**

When we love Jesus more than anything else, we want to please Jesus, we want to make Jesus happy. How can we do this? We can feed his lambs and his sheep. These phrases mean take care of God's people. God made us to be shepherds of his people. Those who need the word of God and those who need Jesus' compassion, we must take care of. Those who are moved by the love of Jesus can fully carry this mission. We should teach the Bible

so that others can meet Jesus personally.

### **Why was Peter hurt?**

Peter was hurt because Jesus kept asking, "Do you truly love me more than these?" Peter kept answering, "Yes." But Jesus kept asking the question, almost as if he didn't trust Peter's answer. Peter was hurt by this continual asking. It seemed as if Jesus didn't trust Peter. Peter was also hurt because his idea of love for Jesus was different than Jesus' love.

### **Why did he need to be hurt to be healed?**

Whenever the truth is spoken in love it wounds. But it wounds in order to build back up stronger in Christ. Jesus needed to hurt Peter so that Peter could realize that he indeed did love his own life more than Jesus. Peter needed to realize the fullness of his sin so that he could repent of it and truly love Jesus and follow him and feed his sheep without any burden. In order for Peter to be healed and that he would feed the people of God. We can come to know who Jesus really is through letting Jesus touch our sin. Also taking care of Jesus' lambs is necessary in order to know Jesus more.

## **7. Read verses 18-19. What change would take place in Peter's life as a disciple of Jesus?**

In Peter's life he would begin to now live according to Jesus' will. Peter would no longer live as if he loved his own life more. After realizing Jesus' love and hearing Jesus' rebuke, Peter found a new purpose for his life. Peter began to live for God's glory.

### **What is the same?**

Peter did not have to radically transform his life, or get some special teaching. Everything else would stay the same in his life. But now he was motivated by Jesus' great love for him to take care of his lambs.

### **Why did Jesus speak about Peter's death?**

When we love Jesus more than anything else, we are joyful in our service to Jesus. Even then we might be joyful to follow Jesus to the cross as Peter did. Jesus wanted Peter to know his future and follow him.

## **Read verses 20-23. Why did Peter ask about John?**

Peter only heard Jesus talk about his life and it seemed a bit unfair. So he turned to his rival John and asked, what about him? Peter wanted to know if this fate was for everyone

or just him? In life we often look at others and compare our lives of faith to them. This is the wrong application as we should not compare our mission to others.

**What did Jesus teach him?**

Verse 22, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."

Jesus taught him that each man has his own mission to carry out from God. Jesus taught Peter that commitment and calling are very personal to each person, they cannot be forced or borrowed from others. Jesus also teaches here that others lives may seem strange to us but we must accept others from God's view point.

**What can we learn here about the writer of this book? (24,25).**

These are testimony of an eye witness. John sees shepherding or feeding Jesus' lambs as the way to love Jesus. John knew Peter and he wrote about Peter's struggles in this gospel. John came to know Jesus through seeing Peter's life changing events. John the gospel writer was greatly moved by Jesus' great and redeeming love for all sinners throughout this gospel.

We too should be moved when we realize how great Jesus is, who came from heaven and left his throne. He took the cross in our places for our sins, and he came to the sea shore to restore us out of faith. We should repent that we love our own simple lives more than Jesus. We should take care of Jesus' lambs and his sheep out of love and joy that Jesus loves us.