

DEVOTION, JOHN 21:15-25

JESUS QUESTIONED PETER ABOUT HIS LOVE FOR HIM:

Last week we studied John 21:1-14 where Jesus met with Peter and six of the other disciples on the seashore of the sea of TIBERIAS. The men went fishing and caught nothing all night. They were on their way home and when they were near to the seashore, Jesus was on the shore and He asked them if they had any meat, they replied no. He told them to cast their net on the right side of the ship and catch the fish that were there. They obeyed and caught a large amount that they needed help to get it to the seashore. The men from the other ship help them to pull the net to shore. Jesus made a fire and had fish and bread. He invited them to come and dine with Him. He also told them to take some of the fish they caught and roast them on the fire. He sat with them, served them the fish and bread and ate with them. Today we are turning our attention to John 21:15-25.

1. JESUS QUESTIONED PETER ABOUT HIS LOVE FOR HIM: The meeting with Jesus on the seashore was the third time that Peter was seeing Jesus after the resurrection and also after he denied knowing Him during the crucifixion. On none of those occasions did that subject come up. Peter may not be sure of his position as a disciple. These questions could have been on his mind, Am I forgiven? Am I still one of the inner circle? What is my future with this group? And there could be others. Could that be one of the reasons why when John told him that the person on the shore who spoke with them was Jesus, that Peter jumped in the water to get to Jesus.? Jesus taught them to forgive and He, forgave Peter, but there are times when one needs to be assured. Jesus asked that the Father forgave those who were crucifying Him, therefore forgiveness was extended to Peter.

2. When they had finished eating the fish and bread Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these”? Peter replied Yea, Lord; You know that I love you. Jesus said to him “Feed my Lambs”. Notice Jesus did not address him as Cephas or Peter, the name He gave him. He called him Simon's son of Jonas, the name he had when he met Jesus and was called to be one of His disciples. Peter had denied that he knew Jesus. Jesus was then asking Peter if he loved Him. In order to be a minister of Jesus Christ one must love Jesus. Only love for the Savior will enable His ministers to endure the hardship of the office and continue serving faithfully and tirelessly without complaining. Christ will not entrust His tender Lambs to a shepherd who does not love Him. When Peter replied that he loved Jesus, He told him to feed His Lambs. Peter answered that he loved Jesus, he did not answer the second part of the question, “more than these”. He knew how much he loved Jesus, and he could only speak for himself, also he was very diplomatic; he did not want to make a statement that would put him in bad grace with the rest by saying he loved Jesus more than the rest of them. He simply replied “Yea, Lord, I love you”. The question also was asking Peter if his love for Jesus had first place; that is did he love Jesus more than he loved the rest of the disciples. Jesus must be first in our lives; He will not accept second place and He certainly will not entrust His flock to someone who did not love Him above all. Jesus asked him a second time if he loved Him. Peter replied Yea, Lord you know that I love you. Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.” A shepherd must be faithful to nurture the flock. A flock is difficult to care for, some are unruly, some wonder, all need close attention and care. Only love for the master will cause the shepherd to patient, gentle, kind, loving and caring for the flock joyfully under all circumstances. Jesus asked Peter a third time if he loved him. At that point Peter was grieved, because he was asked the third time if he loved Jesus. Peter’s reply was “Lord you know all things, you know that I love you” Jesus said to him “Feed My sheep” That means he was to fulfill all the functions of a good shepherd, as is required

of all Christ's ministers to feed the sheep and lambs. FEED THEM; that is to teach them. FEED THEM; that is to lead them to greener pastures, ministering all the ordinances to them. FEED THE THEM; that is tending to each particular needs; not only laying the food before them but feeding it to them, those who are willful, weak and cannot feed themselves must be fed.

3. If Peter had any doubts, at that point they should all be gone. By Jesus commissioning him to shepherd His flock, that was a sign of restoration to his position of apostleship. When Christ forgives, He also restores. In Peter's case, he was entrusted to shepherd Christ' treasured possessions, that was to feed His flock. The charge He gave to Peter, is the same charge He gives to all who love Him. After He confirmed the charge to Peter, He told him about his future to the end of his life here on earth. He told him that while he was young, he was able to do the things he wanted to do and to go to the places he chose; but when he became old, he would stretch out his hand and others would take him where he did not want to go. That statement signified three things; one, he would live to be old, two he would suffer because of his love for Him and three that his love would lead to his death by being a martyr. He then said to Peter "Follow Me" When difficult times come, follow Me. When persecuted, follow Me. I am your example, just follow Me. Verse nineteen said, what Jesus said to Peter, signified by what death he would glorify God. By glorifying God at his death, means he would remain faithful to the end. In Ezekiel 33:11 a God said, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" In Ezekiel 18:23, He said, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from His ways, and live?" On the other hand, He delights in the death of the saints; Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" Psalm 72:14. says; "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight."

4. John 21:20-25: Peter then turned around and saw John, he asked Jesus what John should do. In

other words, You told me to feed Your Lambs and Your Sheep; what about John. What is he supposed to do? Only when Peter turned his eyes away from Jesus and started looking around did he become distracted and saw John. He forgot to keep his focus on his assignment and started to focus on John. It is not uncommon for believers to turn their attention away from their purposes and begin thinking about all those who appear to be doing nothing for the Lord. Jesus rebuked Peter for asking about John. He said to him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? Follow thou Me". Our mission is not to spend our time focusing on what others are or are not doing for the kingdom, but to joyfully serve with excellence in the calling with which we have been called. That was a lesson to Peter and should be to all of us, that it is God's good pleasure to give gifts and assign ministry to whomever He chooses; our responsibility is to follow Christ so that at the end we will hear well done. He said to Peter, "Follow Me." We are to follow Him in obedience as He was to the Father in subjecting His will for the Father's. We are to follow Him by not yielding to temptations. We are to follow Him in our love for one another. He told His followers that He loved them the same way the Father loved Him. (John 15:9-17) We are to follow Him in forgiving those who hate us and treat us badly. We are to follow Him in sufferings and be prepared to die while following Him. We are to follow Him to the end.

5. When Jesus met Peter while He was walking by the Sea of Galilee and called him, He called him to follow Him. (Matthew 4:18-19) Here in this passage Jesus' final word to Peter was to follow Him. The first call was one with a promise, one to make him fisher of men. Here in this passage, he was told twice to follow Him in verses 19 & 22. In these two verses he was simply told to follow Him. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, three times He told Peter to follow Him. He did not change His command from the first call to His last to Peter. This reminds us that what He tells us to do once, He does not change and tell us something else later, He may tell us to do other things in addition; but the original is still in effect. He told Peter to feed His

Lambs and His sheep in addition to follow Him. Our call is to Follow Him and be faithful in following Him.