

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to John 21

After almost two years, by the grace of God – we are coming to the end of our study through the Gospel of John

As I mentioned a few weeks ago – starting next week, we are going to be looking at John's 3 epistles – so, please go a head and read through them.

John will be dealing with love and joy – not only the love and joy we experience with one another but the love and joy we experience with Jesus Christ.

Speaking of love -

I have mentioned this before – but my one of my favorite plays and movies of all time is the classic, "Fiddler on the Roof"

So many wonderful songs -

But there is one song that I feel is always overlooked.

It is a song that Tevye sings to his wife, Golde –

And the song is "Do you love me?"

And in the song -

He repeatedly asks her, do you love me?

We always think of the wife that wants to hear those words –

But it was Tevye who wanted to hear her say those words.

You see in the Jewish culture – marriages were arranged by the parents

And after 25 years of marriage – he wants to hear where his wife stands?

And initially – she says he is crazy and questions why he is asking her “Do you love me?”

And finally, Golde’s response -

For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes

Cooked your meals, cleaned your house

Given you children, milked YOUR cow

After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?

For twenty-five years I've lived with him

Fought with him, starved with him

Twenty-five years my bed is his

If that's not love, what is?

(Tevye) Then you love me?

(Golde) I suppose I do

(Tevye) And I suppose I love you too

In our study this morning, Peter is going to be restored into ministry – but before Jesus restores him into ministry – Jesus wants to know where Peter stands.

So we will see Jesus ask Peter – “Do you love Me?”

And it is the same question that He asks you and me.

Let's pray...

In our study last week – we saw that the disciples had been somewhat obedient up to this point – they had gone up to Galilee as Jesus had instructed them to

However, they didn't go to the mountain that Jesus had appointed them to go to – we find those instructions in Matthew's gospel 28:16 –

They didn't went for Jesus on the mountain – we saw that instead, they went down to the sea of Galilee.

And they went back to what they were doing before they walked with Jesus – they went back to fishing.

But after a long night they'd caught nothing.

They fished and they fished, and they fished and yet at the command of Jesus – when they cast their nets on the other side, they caught 153 large fish.

Church – God will always supply our needs – according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus

They caught so many – that John tells us that they were not able to lift the net unto the boat.

And as they came ashore, they found Jesus was already cooking breakfast them – revealing to them and us,

that not only is He our Provider –

but also that He enables us to do the work that He called us to do – remember, Jesus told Peter to bring the net and Peter dragged the net by himself and

one more thing that Jesus revealed to them once more – was how to serve one another, as - Jesus serves them breakfast by the shore.

That which what they were looking for and they couldn't get Jesus got for them.

So Jesus has dealt with the physical – they were hungry, they were tired, they were cold – now Jesus is going to deal with the spiritual.

Jesus is going to deal with the restoration of Peter.

Now, it is important to understand at that time, being a disciple of a notable rabbi was THE supreme aspiration of almost every Jew.

Young men would PLEAD with a rabbi to take them as a disciple.

The day the rabbi said, “Okay, you can follow me,” was the greatest day in a disciple’s life.

That is what happened to Peter, three years earlier.

He was washing his fish net after another long night of not catching anything and Jesus said to him, “Follow me”

But then, 3 years later, in the courtyard of the high priest, as Jesus was taken from trial to trial, Peter did the unthinkable.

He denied his rabbi and he denied being His disciple.

Peter did not deny Jesus while he was being tortured, he didn’t deny the Lord while his arm was being twisted by the Roman soldiers – he was standing around a fire next to a servant girl.

Back in verse 9 – John mentions that when they came on shore, Jesus was cooking on fire of coals.

It wasn’t just a generic, run of the mill campfire made of twigs & wood.

John makes sure to point out that it was a fire of coals

There's only 1 other time this word is used in the Bible,

John 18:18; it is the word used for the fire that Peter stood before - warming himself in that courtyard.

A coal fire has a distinct smell to it -

People learned a long time ago that our sense of smell is tied to 2 things; memory & emotion.

So as Peter sat there, he would see & smell, & be taken back in his memory to the point of his biggest failure in his life.

In Peter's mind, his ministry was over

He failed and that failure was final.

Now – it is important to understand that Peter denied Jesus three times publicly – therefore, it was important to restore him, publicly.

So we are going to see Jesus ask Peter, three personal questions that would reveal Peter's relationship with the Lord and it really speaks to us this morning about our own personal relationship with the Lord

Let's look at our text –

By the way – make a note of the word love in the first three verses of our text.

**[Jhn 21:15-25 NKJV] 15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.**

How many times did Peter publicly deny the Lord again? 3 times

And how many times did Jesus give Peter an opportunity to affirm his love to Him?

Three times.

Jesus is asking Peter – “Peter, I want you to tell me how much you love Me?”

The issue was Peter’s love for the Lord

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Cor 13 –

We are going to look at the biblical definition of love -

**[1Co 13:4-8 NKJV] 4 Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but**

**rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.**

This is a beautiful definition of love –

Now – an interesting activity that we all can do at home is to stand in front of a mirror and read these same verses – except instead of love, we substitute our own name.

Herb suffers long and is kind

Herb does not envy

Herb is not puffed up

Herb never fails

Yeah right!

If we were to all do it – none of us would be there

But if we take Jesus – we would be able to say it without smirking

And what is beautiful about this definition is that it shows that Jesus needs to be the center of our love.

He needs to be in the midst of our love.

The key point is where is He at in our hearts throne.

Is He on the throne?



And that is what Jesus is asking Peter

**Peter, do you love Me more than these?**

Who are these?

Some people think that Jesus was referring to Peter going back fishing

But I believe that Jesus was referring to the other disciples that had gone fishing with Peter.

Remember Peter had a chip on his shoulder.

He thought he was better than the other disciples.

When Jesus told the disciples He was going to be arrested that very night and that every single one of them was going to abandon Him –

Peter said – not me!!!!

“Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”

(Matt 26)

And what did Peter do? He stumbled and he went back fishing.

Do you love me?

The first two times that Jesus asks Peter that question – Jesus uses the word agapao – the verb form of agape

It's a love based on a choice, not an emotion.

It is loving a person because you choose, in your own will, to place value upon them.

Agapao is the word usually used to describe God's love for us, the love we are to have towards one another, and how we are to love even our enemies.

The love of 1 Cor 13 – that is this type of love.

However, Peter responds each time – with a different word for love – the word phileo

Phileo is loving a person because you feel affection towards them.

It is where we get Philadelphia – which is a brotherly love

But it goes deeper than that -

It speaks of a family love – that committed love that is within a family.

It is the kind of love where you don't give up on one another

It is the kind of love where you stand strong with one another

And in the scriptures – the relational aspect of love between our Father in Heaven and you and me is actually described as phileo

Writes this verse down -

**[Jhn 16:27 NKJV] 27 "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.**

God has phileo for us, because we have phileo for Jesus.

The kind of love that a father has for his kids

The third time that Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?"

Jesus uses the word phileo

The first two times He uses agapao and the last time phileo

And the reason that is that in order for Peter to fulfill what God called him to do – he is going to need both – and the same is true for us.

As a church family, we are not going to make it without the agape love of God and the phileo love of God among us.

The people that Jesus tells to "Feed My sheep" to, are people who are in love with Jesus.

Jesus met Peter where Peter was.

And He does the same for you and me.

**18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry [you] where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."**

Basically what Jesus is telling Peter is – “Peter, it is going to be difficult – extremely difficult”

When you were younger – you had it easy. Not anymore.

Peter was not going to be able to do his own thing anymore –

Instead of a self-directed life, Peter would from now on live a Christ-centered life.

And that life would ultimately lead to his martyrdom

That is the commentary that John gives us on verse 19

And church history tells us that Peter was crucified upside down.

Now, imagine what Peter is thinking –

He has been restored to ministry

And now, Jesus is telling him – you are going to have very difficult times ahead of you.

But actually, it is not bad news that Peter is receiving – it is good news.

Jesus is giving Peter the very thing he lacked and needed so desperately – and that is hope!

You see, Peter didn't want the promise of an easy life as he followed Christ, he didn't need or look for guarantees of safety.

He just needed to know he'd make it, that no matter what came against him, he'd never deny the Lord again

Jesus tells him,

"Pete, the days will come when they will lay hold of you as they did Me. They'll stretch out your hands on a cross as they did Mine. You will die a martyr's death. But that death will not be your defeat; it will be your victory, for it'll be your steadfast faith in Me that will bring you there!"

"You're going to make it Pete. In fact, you'll die a martyr's death.

When it gets toughest, you won't bail on Me."

And after giving Peter hope

Jesus makes sure that he understand that he has been fully restored to his position as a disciple.

So just as he'd begun his relationship with the Lord 3 years before with the invitation, "Follow Me," Jesus now makes it explicit & renews the call to discipleship with the same words.

**20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what [about]**

**this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you? You follow Me."**

After Peter is encouraged and recommissioned, we see that once again he takes his eyes off of Jesus – even when Jesus is standing right in front of him.

You said all these things about what is going to happen to me – what about John over here?

Say something about him.

And Jesus' response to Peter –

Don't worry about John

Or in today's language, Peter, it is none of your business what I do with John

You follow Me!!!

It is easy to fall into the trap of getting our eyes onto someone else.

We compare ourselves with someone else

We receive a word from the Lord and we turn around and say, "What about them?"

We find it throughout scriptures.

Psalm 73 –

When we read the psalm – the psalmist is complaining about the wicked – he has taken his eyes off the Lord and is having a hard time understating why does it seem like the wicked continue to prosper, why does it appear that it is the wicked have no fear of God – because the way he sees it - God isn't doing something to stop them.

Until in verse 17 – he writes,

**[Psa 73:17 NKJV] 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; [Then] I understood their end.**

Paul warns us -

**[2Co 10:12 NKJV] 12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**

Paul says it is foolish to compare yourself with others.

But that is what Peter was doing here –

And Jesus rebukes him for it.

Follow Me – stop looking at other people

We probably all known people who fell way from the Lord because someone they looked to as an example blew it.

They blame their loss of faith on that other person's fall.

But all it did was reveal the weakness of their faith.

How does your failure or my failure prove God's not still worthy of our love & devotion?

There is no connection there – yet many people blame their lack of abiding faith in Christ on someone else's moral failure.

Jesus said to Peter, "John's got his own path and future. The only thing you need to concern yourself with is that YOU, SIMON PETER, follow Me!"

**23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what [is that] to you?"**

John here – he is putting a rumor to rest.

Rumors were an issue in the early church as well.

Because Jesus made the supposition of God's will for John to remain alive till the Second Coming, some jumped to the conclusion he was either immortal or the Second Coming was close at hand.

John corrected this goofy idea by putting it in the right context.

Jesus never said any such thing.



His point was that Peter was to take thought for his own life & walk and not worry about John.

**24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.**

The best thing that we can do is to get to know our savior that died for us.

The best thing that we can do – especially when our faith is wavering is to open up John's gospel and read it.

It was written with one purpose – so that we may believe.

That our faith may be renewed and strengthened and built up

Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God

It is just a good thing for us to turn our attention and give God a chance to work in our lives, to step up and to step out in faith and trusting Him in all areas.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Hudson Taylor – missionary to China

God's work done God's way will never lack God's supply

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

