

Lighthouse Bible Church

November 9th, 2014

John 21: 15 – 25 *Scripture Reading: Mark 8: 34 - 38*

‘Do you love Me more than these?’

Stand – Read – Pray

Well, this is our final message in the book of John. We have seen 21 chapters of the Apostle John presenting Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God, God in human form.

We started this book study on July 8th, 2012, which was 121 weeks ago. During those 121 weeks I shared 94 messages from John 1: 1 through John 21. The other 27 messages were on a variety of topics.

Of those 94 messages on the book of John, each Sunday’s message averaged 10 ½ pages of notes at an average time of 44 minutes and 32 seconds. The total number of pages of notes is 978 consisting of 306,100 words.

And now we have come to the final message of John that brings this wonderful book to a fitting conclusion with Jesus talking specifically with Peter and offering him unconditional forgiveness and commissioning him to feed and shepherd His sheep.

Just to remind you of what has brought us to this final chapter in the book of John, you remember that after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to the disciples when Thomas wasn’t there and then to the disciples when Thomas was there.

Then as we began Chapter 21 we saw the disciples no longer in Jerusalem but in the area of Galilee near the sea of Tiberias or the sea of Galilee. So several days or longer have passed between chapter 20 and chapter 21.

We saw Peter tell the other disciples that he was going fishing and the other disciples, because Peter was the leader of them, said 'we are going with you'. We looked at that in some detail last week about the fact that several passages showed us that Jesus called them to no longer be fishermen but fishers of men. They had abandoned all to follow Him and now they were going back to their old ways.

We saw that Jesus taught them a very profound lesson by not allowing them to catch any fish in their self effort and then showing them that only through Him can they accomplish anything.

We ended last week by Jesus having prepared a meal of bread and fish for the disciples on the shore and them eating with Him. We saw in Verse 10 that Jesus had told them to bring the fish they caught to shore and in Verse 11 Peter drags the net of 153 fish close to where they were. And that is where we pick it up in Verse 15.

What we have here is Jesus asking Peter 3 times if he loves Him because Peter had denied Him three times. And because, as we have seen all throughout the book of John, love is at the center of a relationship with Jesus Christ that shows itself through obedience to Him, following Him and not denying Him.

Not only in the book of John but throughout the entire Bible, love for God and Christ is first and foremost. In **Deuteronomy 6: 5** says **You shall love**

the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.

When someone asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was, He said in **Matthew 22: 37** and **Mark 12: 29 – 30** **to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength.**

And you see, Peter had made that claim on several occasions. He told Jesus in **John 13: 37** that he would **lay down his life for the sake of Jesus** because he claimed to love Him. In **Matthew 26: 33** Peter told Jesus out of love for Him that **even if all fall away from you I will never fall away.**

So now, Jesus is standing face to face with Peter knowing that Peter had denied Him and knowing that Peter's heart was broken because of his denials, Jesus is about to forgive and restore and commission Peter once again.

Because as you read the gospels and the book of Acts you see Peter playing a vital role in leading the disciples and the new church so he needs to know that although he had forsaken Jesus, Jesus never forsook Him. Peter is about to be fully forgiven and fully restored and commissioned by the love of Jesus. So let's see it starting in Verse 15.

Verse 15: so when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?'

After they finished eating the bread and fish, Jesus initiates the restoration of Peter by asking Peter a question. And by the way, when Peter was called Simon, instead of Peter, it was usually because he was acting like his old self and not the name, Peter or rock, which Jesus gave him.

Jesus asks Peter **do you love Me more than these?** The **these** that Jesus is talking about, as we saw before, are not the disciples.

He is saying, Peter do you love Me more than these fish you just caught, this fishing boat and nets that you have used for many years, these collectively together that have been a part of your fishing business; do you love these more than Me? Are you more committed to them than you are to Me?

And He asks do you **love Me** *agapao, agape*, the strongest kind of love, do you love Me with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, more than you do these things that you have depended on for your livelihood all these years.

Because when I called you to be a fisher of men, you left all of this to follow Me. Now you are back here trying to do what you thought you used to do so well and I have just shown you that you are not called to that anymore. Do you love Me Peter? Wow!

This kind of reminds me of what Jesus said in **Luke 16: 13** when He said **no one can serve 2 masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money**, God and fishing, God and whatever He has called you from. Peter, do you love Me more than these?

Peter answers in Verse 15 **yes Lord, You know that I love you.** Keeping in mind that Peter is still ashamed and feeling guilty about deny Jesus, he says ‘Lord you know I **love** you’. But he uses a different word for love. Jesus used *agape*, the strongest kind of commitment love and Peter uses *phileo* because he is painfully aware of his denial and in humility acknowledges that his love was not what he proclaimed earlier.

But notice that Peter says **You KNOW** that I love you. Whatever disobedience Peter displayed, in his heart he truly loved Jesus and he appeals to Jesus' omniscience to determine that.

Jesus, at the end of Verse 15, says **feed My lambs**. It is in the present tense and He is saying keep on feeding My lambs, and of course, the lambs, which belong to Jesus because He has called and chosen them, are a reference to the other disciples and those followers of Christ that he would be leading.

By the way, that is the same commission that any Pastor has today for those lambs, those sheep, whom He has called to salvation, right? **1st Peter 5: 2** says **Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers**. Part of shepherding the flock is feeding them from the Word of God. Pastors all called to **Shepherd the church of God which Jesus purchased with His own blood in Acts 20: 28**. And here Jesus says to Peter, feed my lambs.

Verse 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'.

Now its not 'more than these' it is simply, Simon do you love Me? Again Jesus uses *agapao* and Peter, again unable to use that word, says 'yes Lord, You know that I *phileo* You. I have a deep affection for You Lord. Then Jesus says again **tend My sheep**. This time Jesus uses the word **tend** which is different than feed in Verse 15. Tend is the word *poimaino* which is translated SHEPHERD other places in Scripture.

Verse 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'.

Jesus asks Peter a 3rd time, because he had denied Him 3 times, **do you love Me? And Peter was grieved...** Why was Peter grieved?

Because Jesus, when He asked Peter if he loved Him didn't use the word *agape*, He used the word that Peter used, *phileo*. What Jesus is saying to Peter is 'Peter do you even have a deep affection for Me? O that had to hurt Peter and that is why he was grieved.

So all Peter can do is appeal to Christ's knowing his heart and he says to Jesus **You know all things, you know that I *phileo* you.** And for the 3rd and final time, Jesus accepts Peter's failure, denial and sin and, in His grace and mercy, forgives Peter, restores Peter and commissions him for service.

Then Jesus shares, as the all knowing God in human form, an incredible insight into the martyrdom and death of Peter. Look at Verses 18 – 19.

Verses 18 – 19: Read

Jesus tells Peter how he is going to die in Verse 18 by **having his hands stretched out and another will carry you where you do not wish.** In other words, he would suffer death by crucifixion. When he was younger Peter went where he wished but when he is older he will be taken where he does not want to go.

Verse 19 says that in his death he will **glorify God.** Can you imagine living another 30 years, which he did, in anticipation of the time coming when you will know how you are going to die. We all know we are going to die someday, unless the Lord comes back, but not many know how that is going to happen.

He is the ultimate living example of what Jesus said in **Matthew 10: 38 – 39** and **Matthew 16: 24 – 25** when He said **let him deny himself and he who**

does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Peter never forgot Jesus words; as a matter of fact Peter wrote in **2nd Peter 1: 13 – 14**: **I think it is right as long as I am in this tent, this body, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent JUST AS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST showed me.**

Peter, according to church tradition, did die by crucifixion. Some historians report that He was arrested around 67 AD and placed in the Mamertine prison in Rome. They say he spent 9 months shackled to a post in the lower portion of the prison. No light, no cleaning. Smelled. In early AD 68 he was finally taken from their and crucified upside down after watching his wife be crucified by Nero's soldiers.

But for now, all Peter knows is that someday he will die by crucifixion and in his death, God will be glorified. So Jesus says until that time **follow Me**. Remember He had said that to him earlier in **Matthew 4: 19 – 20** when He said **follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. Peter left his net and followed**. After what had just happened, Peter needed to be reminded and re-commissioned to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost. Same for us today.

Sometimes the hardest things for us to do today is to follow Jesus by following the word of God, no matter what others say. Immature believers may question why you are doing what you are doing and criticize you and an unbelieving world certainly will criticize you for doing something or speaking against something that the world approves of.

Verses 20 – 23: *Read*

Peter begins walking with Jesus and **turns around** and sees John, the writer of the book of John and the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one **who leaned**

on Jesus breast at the supper, **John 13: 23** following after them. The Peter asked Jesus in Verse 21 **what about this man?** What will happen to John?

Jesus answers in Verse 22 **if I will that he remain till I come what is that to you. You follow Me.** Again Jesus tells Peter to **follow** Him and not to worry about anyone else, in the sense of what will happen to them and how will they die.

If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you. His life or death has no bearing on your responsibility to follow Me. Jesus says I don't want your attention on anyone but Me. Something we can all certainly live by today. Follow Jesus, focus on Jesus and not on any man.

Well, because Jesus said this to Peter, Verse 23 says **that a saying went out that John would not die.** So John, in writing this book has to add **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.** Because if that did get out that John would not die and then he did die, what would that do for the testimony of Christ.

Verse 24: This is the disciple who testifies of these things and wrote these things and we know that his testimony is true. This is John testifying to all that is written in the book of John, chapter's 1 – 21 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be true. Because we know what **2nd Timothy 3: 16** says **all scripture is God breathed, is given by inspiration of God...**

Verse 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.

John says there would not be enough room in the world to contain all the books that could be written about all that **Jesus did.** We just get a glimpse

here in John and in the gospels and in the New Testament of what Jesus did; and it is enough to overwhelm us with His glory and majesty. John said in **John 1: 14** and we beheld His glory and we have for 21 chapters.

Then we go back to **John 20: 31** and see, once again, why John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote just what he did out of the **many other things** he could have written about what Jesus did.

These were written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

From July 8th, 2012 to this very moment, after reading what you have read and hearing what you have heard in the book of John, do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Not a good teacher, not a moral man, not a God, not a great leader, but God in human form. Because if you do, then you may have life in His name.

Jesus said in **John 5: 24**: **he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death into life.**

If you do not believe that, after sitting under the Word of God in John for 94 weeks, then hear the words of Jesus as well in **John 3: 18** **He who believes in Him is not condemned but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 8: 24 I say to you, you will die in your sins for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.** What about you today?

Gospel

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Introduction and Review:

Deuteronomy 6: 5, Matthew 22: 37
Mark 12: 29 – 30, John 13: 37
Matthew 26: 33

Verse 15:

Luke 16: 13, 1st Peter 5: 2, Acts 20: 28

Verses 16 – 19:

Matthew 10: 38 – 39, Matthew 16: 24 – 25
2nd Peter 1: 13 – 14, Matthew 4: 19 – 20

Verses 20 – 23:

John 13: 23

Verses 24 – 25:

2nd Timothy 3: 16, John 1: 14, John 20: 31
John 5: 24, John 3: 18, John 8: 24

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John 5: 24, John 3: 18, John 8: 24