



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Participant 9/16/2018

H

HIGHLIGHT: John 21:15-25

¹⁵When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said to Him, “You know that I love You.”
“Feed My lambs,” He told him.

¹⁶A second time He asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?”
“Yes, Lord,” he said to Him, “You know that I love You.”
“Shepherd My sheep,” He told him.

¹⁷He asked him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved that He asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You.”

“Feed My sheep,” Jesus said. ¹⁸“I assure you: When you were young, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.”

¹⁹He said this to signify by what kind of death he would glorify God. After saying this, He told him, “Follow Me!”

²⁰So Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them. That disciple was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, “Lord, who is the one that’s going to betray You?” ²¹When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord—what about him?”

²²“If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow Me.”

²³So this report spread to the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain all the books that would be written.



EXPLAIN

On the night Jesus was arrested, Peter denied Him three times out of fear that he would be killed, also. Jesus then appeared to ten disciples at a time (all except for Judas and Thomas), then again to the disciples with Thomas, and finally in the account we will read today in order to restore Peter to ministry after his tragic fall the night Jesus was arrested. As we study, see how Jesus restored Peter to ministry despite his past shortcomings so that you will feel confident in serving the Lord, also.

w.15-17

“Simon, son of John.”

Jesus addressed Peter here not as the name that was given him after meeting Jesus, which means “Rock,” but as Simon. This would have served as a reminder to Peter that he has not stood as a rock in his faithfulness to the One who called him.

“You know that I love You.”

There has been a lot of scholarly attention paid to the different Greek words John recorded in this section for “love” (*philo*, *philo*, *agape*, in vs. 15-17, respectively) and many sermons have been preached about how they demonstrate that Jesus will come and meet us at our level of commitment and work from there. This is true, but modern commentary tends to shy away from such inferences based on these verses, alone. Their reasoning is that John tends to use interchangeable words like this in other places in his gospel, and that in those places they are to be noted for their stylistic, not theological, subtlety. The emphasis in this passage is not on the verb that Peter used, but on the fact that He had to repeat it three times, just as He had thrice denied Christ.

v.15

“Do you love me more than these?”

“These” has attracted some debate, as well. Some argue that “these” could refer to the fish and a fisherman’s life—the thing Peter returned to when he needed something comfortable and familiar. In this view, Jesus was asking if Peter would be willing to give that up for the sake of following Him.

A different view is generally preferred, though, and reads this question as Jesus asking Peter to compare his love for Jesus with that of the other disciples. In Matthew 26:33 Peter exclaims that he loves Jesus more than anyone else, which is a mere 36 verses before he denies Him for the first time.



A

APPLY

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. In this text, Peter is being restored to ministry after having failed repeatedly. Tell about a time you experienced failure, how that made you feel, and what you felt like you had to do to overcome it.
3. What are the two commands Jesus gives Peter in verses 15 and 22? How are these two commands related? How can you tell if someone is following Jesus?
4. What was Jesus' response to Peter's uncertainty in v.22? What is something that you're uncertain, or perhaps even fearful about? How does Jesus' answer speak to you today?
5. How often do you stop in the middle of a trial or in the wake of a failure to refocus on the true mission: following Jesus? What can you do this week to refocus on the calling to which you have been called?

R

RESPOND

Challenge your group to respond either privately or corporately to this question:

- What is a challenge or a trial you are going through this week? How can you take time to rest in the midst of it in order to refocus on Christ?

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

