

## *Feeding and Following* *John 21:15-25*

Intro:

In this prolog to the Gospel of John, the Apostle John, under the direction of the Holy Spirit tied up a loose end in the Apostle Peter's story. Peter not only needed to understand how he could do nothing without the Lord's help. He needed to experience the depth of Christ's forgiveness and the commission he was assigned to do.

There are two things Jesus called Peter to do, first, he must feed the Lord's sheep. Second, he was to follow the Lord Jesus all the rest of His life.

### ***I. Feed My Lambs (v. 15-17)***

### ***II. Follow Me (v. 18-25)***

#### ***I. Feed My Lambs (v. 15-17)***

*“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.’ 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.’ 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.’”*

(John 21:15-17)

A. After Peter and the others had eaten, the Lord talked to Peter. In all probability, this happened in front of the others. The Lord Jesus asked a vital question. One that at some time or another all of us, who know the Lord as Savior, must answer.

***“Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’” (v.15)***

Peter do you love me more than all of this? The question in this text is what were the ***“these”*** Jesus referred to? Was it the other disciples? Some commentators think so. Most likely, Jesus was speaking of the life Simon knew before. He loved his profession, but the Lord was about to give him another.

1. The question to all of us who are converted is do we love Him more than all the trappings of our life? The Lord Jesus summarized the great commandment from God in **Matthew 22:37** saying;

***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your mind.”***

The Lord asked Peter, are you willing to love me more than your old life, your old friends, even your old profession?

2. Peter answered, ***“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”*** (v.15) The pride was squeezed out of this once proud disciple.

3. Do we realize how important it is that we love Him? It is not just important because the Lord commands it. Love is the major mark in our hearts to show we are truly His.

**Romans 8:28** says, ***“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”***

This translation keeps the Greek sentence in its correct order. Those who have put their trust in Christ are described as those who love God. We love Him much because He forgave us so much.

B. Twice more the Lord asked the question. Most likely Jesus did this because three times around a coal fire on the day of His betrayal Peter denied Him three times. The last time when it seemed Peter could no longer take the pain of having the Lord who knew his heart question his love, he cried out,

***“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.’”*** (v.17)

1. It is very comforting to know when we are misunderstood the Lord always knows our hearts. He knows we love Him when at times we slip up.

2. But more than confessing Peter had a job assigned to him. Three times he was commanded to feed the sheep of God. He was to feed God’s people on the Word of God. We sometimes get our priorities out of shape. While evangelism is vitally important, feeding the people of God is equally important. If all we do is reach and never teach we are not doing all of His will.

## ***II. Follow Me (v. 18-25)***

***“Verily, verily, 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.”*** This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ***‘Follow Me.’*** 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?’*** Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus,

***‘But Lord, what about this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.’” (John 21:18-22)***

A. Following Jesus may be costly. Before the Lord called Peter to follow Him, He gave him a glimpse of what was to come in His will. He told him that one day when he was old, Peter would put forth his hands to someone else and they would dress him and take him where he did not want to go. I am thankful God did not drop it there. John includes a divine editorial comment to help us understand what the Lord was referring to in this cryptic phrase.

***“This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.” (v.19)***

Evidently, both Peter and John understood what the Lord said. Peter had promised he would follow the Lord even to death. That did not happen at the crucifixion, but it would happen later in Peter’s life. He would accomplish the purpose for which the Lord laid hold of him. Part of that purpose was to die to glorify God.

B. Following Jesus also meant not comparing your path to that of others. When Peter started following, he could not help but look around to see if others were following also.

***“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?’ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, ‘But Lord, what about this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.’” (vs.20-22)***

The Lord gave Peter a mini biography. Now Peter wanted to know about John. What was the Lord’s plan for John? Jesus is very direct in His answer. In effect, He said to Peter, it’s none of your business what I plan for John. Your only job is to follow Me.

Many times I have heard others say, or I have said to myself, no one else is following Jesus why should I? Christ’s answer to Peter applies to us also. Whatever I do with so-in-so is none of your business. Your responsibility is to make sure you are following Me.