

This week...

Scripture: John 21:15-17

Monday John 21:1-25

Read the entire chapter of John 21, and notice the following: 1. How many and who went out to fish? 2. Though John is the first to recognize the Lord, Peter is the one who jumped into the water and started for shore. What would this indicate to you regarding his feelings for Jesus?

Tuesday John 21:3:15 “*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’*”

Thomas, some time earlier, had refused to believe that Jesus was alive, but at this encounter no one asked Jesus who He was. They knew. What was the significance of Jesus asking Peter if he truly loved Him more than the others did?

Wednesday John 21:15 “*‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’*”

What do you make of Peter’s answer in light of Jesus’ question, keeping in mind that Jesus spoke of agape love and Peter responded about phileo or brotherly love? Do you see a difference? What does, “*Feed (pasture, graze) my lambs*” mean?

Thursday John 21:16 “*Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’*”

Jesus’ second question is the same as the first as he asks about agape love, and Peter’s response concerning brotherly love is also the same. But this time Jesus tells Peter to “*Take care of*

(shepherd) my lambs”. Do you see the difference between “*feed*” and “*shepherd*”?

Friday John 21:17 “*The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep.’*”

This final time Jesus asks if Peter loves Him like a brother (phileo). Peter is hurt that Jesus has asked him three times about his love for His Lord. What else might be hurting Peter in this exchange? Consider Jesus’ change in terms for love and Peter’s denial following the arrest in the garden.

Peter asserts that Jesus already knows he loves Him like a brother. What does Jesus’ use of “brotherly love” instead of “agape love” indicate to you in this final question? Jesus then tells Peter to feed (pasture, graze) His sheep. Notice, too, that in this third exchange Peter is called on to feed sheep rather than the lambs of verse 15.

Our depth of love and commitment and ability to verbalize it has much to do with our relationship with that person. Agape love has been described as an unconditional love, a love that best portrays God’s love for us. It is the desire for God’s best in another’s life. On this day Peter was not quite ready to commit to such a love, though he had a very deep affection for Jesus. We should examine our own level of love and commitment to see if it is ready to surrender all to the other or prefers to hold onto what self desires. Much later Peter demonstrates how his love has grown as he writes to the Christians in 1 Peter 1:22 that they should “*love (agape) one another deeply, from the heart*”. Peter’s faith and understanding had matured. What word best describes your love for Jesus? How are you caring for and feeding His lambs and sheep?