

**Day Thirty-Eight**  
**Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!**  
**Do You Love Me More?**

*John 21:15-24(NLT) After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “**Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?**” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “**you know I love you.**” “**Then feed my lambs,**” Jesus told him. **16** Jesus repeated the question: “**Simon son of John, do you love me?**” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “**Then take care of my sheep,**” Jesus said. **17** A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” **Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time.** He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “**Then feed my sheep.**” **18** “I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” **19** Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “**Follow me.**” **20** Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who will betray you?” **21** Peter asked Jesus, “**What about him, Lord?**” **22** Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you? As for you, follow me.**” **23** So the rumor spread among the community of believers that this disciple wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?” **24** This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.*

Jesus shows up early in the morning while seven of the disciples are fishing. This fishing trip was initiated by Peter. We know from Luke’s account that Jesus appeared to Peter sometime during the morning of the resurrection. We have no information regarding the conversation that took place; we just know it took place. Both Luke and Paul (1 Cor. 15:5) write about it. From all accounts, Peter has seen the Lord three times since the resurrection and now again at the Sea of Galilee. Jesus has finished cooking and serving breakfast, and the disciples are done eating. Then Jesus asks Peter, “**Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?**” It is just my opinion, but I believe Jesus points to the large catch of fish when He asks Peter this question. Peter has seen this before, miraculous catches and a fish with a coin in his mouth. He knows what He feels about Jesus, he knows the answer, and he knows Jesus knows the answer.

Peter’s mind races back to all the different interactions he has had with Jesus. He remembers his great confession about who Jesus is and how Jesus responded to Him. He also remembers how he tried to rebuke Jesus for all His dying and suffering talk. He remembers the several intimate moments that only he, James and John were allowed

to experience; the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration on the mountain, Jesus asking them to go further with Him during His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, asking them to watch and pray. Peter thinks about how he responded in those moments. When Jesus raised up Jairus' daughter, He told those who witnessed the event not to say anything. On the Mount of Transfiguration, he (Peter) wanted to build three tabernacles. In the Garden, he was asleep. Then the collapse at the fire. "How could I do that? But He warned me, He told me Satan asked to sift me like wheat. I felt that sifting, the pain of my own denial. Then He looked at me, my soul exposed with all its treachery. I just wanted to run, get away as far as I possibly could, put some distance between me and my failure. Then the news brought by Mary, I was running again but this time not away. Then I saw Him, then we saw Him and now He is asking what I know He already knows."

"Now I am part of another miracle of fish, big beautiful fish. I love fishing. Yes, it is hard work, but I am built for it. You don't have to overthink it; you cast, you catch. Sometimes you cast and there is no catch. Yet, every time Jesus tells me to cast my net or my line something good happens." Peter responds to Jesus' question **"Yes, Lord, you know I love you."**

Jesus presses in again and asks the same question He asked before. Peter responds in kind. Then Jesus asks it again a third time and Peter has finally reached his breaking point. **"Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, 'Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.'"** The Betrayed, reaches out to the betrayer and reaffirms His love. Jesus is not needing to hear three confessions because of three denials. Peter needs to hear his own mouth confess what Jesus already knew. When Peter's failure became public, it revealed what was truly going on in his heart. Jesus wants Peter to know that He knew what was going on in Peter's heart before Peter knew what was going on in his own heart.

Jesus says, "Peter, I knew who you were before you knew who you were. I knew what you were capable of in your worst moment. I knew in your worst moment you would deny you ever knew Me! But Peter, that is why I died for you. Now I want you to know, as much as I knew the worst of you before you knew it, I know the best of you as well. I know you love Me, but you need to know you love me! Peter, if you say you love Me more than this fishing thing you rely on, here is the way you can show it." **"Feed My lambs. Take care of My Sheep. Feed My sheep."** "Peter, I am calling you to live your life for others. The same way that I laid My life down for you, is the same way you will need to lay your life down for others. I am expecting you to grow up. To be a grown-up in My kingdom is to take care of who I love the most, My lambs and my sheep. Not only that Peter, you are going to grow through this and you are going to not only say you love Me, you are going to show that you love me! Your denial was made in public, so is your love going to be made public. I knew before you knew and now you know. So, your love will be shown, as my love for you was shown, I died for you; you are

going to die for Me!” ***“I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.”*** **19 Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, ‘Follow me.’”**

There was one last gasp left in this crusty sailor. Peter turns around and sees John behind him. He asks Jesus, “What about him?” Jesus replied, *“If I want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you? As for you, follow me.**”* Peter had to learn what loving Jesus was all about. Loving Jesus is not simply making a commitment to obey certain rules. “Do this, do that and don’t do that.” Loving Jesus is demonstrated in the way we love others. Loving Jesus is being willing to give up that which we know and rely on, and trust that He can use us for His glory. Loving Jesus is loving others. Loving Jesus is giving up what I want for what He wants for me. Loving Jesus means that I don’t compare my journey to someone else’s journey. My job is to follow Him.

Just like Peter, Jesus comes to us and He asks us, ***“Do you love Me more than these?”*** I don’t know what your “these” are, but Jesus does. If, like Peter, you are reluctant due to some kind of collapse or failure in your life, remember Jesus will still use you. Demonstrate your love for Him by loving others. Follow Him even if it means that you might be led to places that you would not choose for yourself. He is calling you to maturity. Maturity is following His example. Are you willing to follow Jesus? If you say “Yes,” then get ready to be a pleasing aroma to the Father.

***Ephesians 5:2(NLT)“ Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.”***

#### **Prayer:**

- **Ask the Lord to give you a heart for others.**
- **Pray for your fellow believers to grow in their love for one another.**
- **Ask the Lord to help you be a person who feeds His sheep with care and comfort, not beat His sheep with criticism and harshness.**
- **Pray for your fellow believers around the world, specifically in places of great danger and persecution.**