

LESSON 22

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."

by Royce Hutain

We all know this scripture finds Peter being asked three times by Jesus: "Do you love me?" There certainly is much to say about this verse. We first notice that Peter was asked three times. I'm sure Peter was thinking back to his denial of Christ three times. Also of note: Jesus addressed him as Simon. I am sure Peter, which means rock, did not see himself as one. This was done for a time of reflection for Simon Peter. He had not stood as a rock for faithfulness.

How many times has Jesus asked you, "Do you love Me?" Do you know that He "agapes" you and me? Do we value Jesus as an all-satisfying bread? Do we crave and deeply desire His bread?

Jesus addresses Peter as a leader. Jesus states "Tend my sheep." Why does He say that? Jesus is exercising the role of shepherd to Peter. Why? Jesus is our Good Shepherd and he wants Peter to be the same.

John Piper said we are to lead by feeding and tending. Shepherds, that is pastors and leaders, are to provide guidance and protection. That vocation can be demanding. One feels alone and solitary at times. Peter reveals to us what is the outcome of emulating Christ in all that we do: I Peter 5:1-4: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God, and when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

Sheep, like people, stray; can be very passive; get fed, and be tended by the knowledge of God and be satisfied, nourished and supported by the loving arms of Jesus Christ.