

Do You Love Me?

“So when Peter had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?”  
John 21:15

How did we get here? Peter, essentially the most prominent of the 12 disciples sitting with Jesus after they’d eaten and being asked by Christ “Do you love me?”

Of all the questions Jesus could have asked Peter, why did he choose this one?

Wouldn’t Jesus being God robed in flesh who knew what was in the heart of every man already know the answer?

Maybe the question wasn’t really about Peter’s love at all; maybe the question had everything to do with Christ’s love for Peter.

The greatest principle of the love of Christ toward His children is that it never fails, and it never gives up on us.

“For I am **persuaded**, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
Romans 8:38-39

As children of God we have to constantly be “persuaded” just like Peter and Paul that our failures will never separate us from the love of God. God’s love for us is not based on our performance, it is based on the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. **What does Christ’s love do for his children?**

The Love of Christ Redeems His Children - Luke 5:1-10; John 1:41-42

Peter’s life just like the life of every man is on a trajectory toward death, and destruction. He is an unredeemed fisherman, whose only earthly purpose was to make a living day after day until he took his final breath.

Peter’s New Purpose (Luke 5:1-10)

* Luke 5:1-7 – Jesus reveals himself to Peter as the Messiah
* Luke 5:8 – Peter sees himself for who he really is (a sinful man)
* Luke 5:10 – Jesus gives Peter an eternal reason to live (a fisher of men)

As Christians we are living for something much greater than ourselves, we are called by God for an eternal purpose (2 Peter 1:1-11)

Peter’s New Name (John 1:41,42)

* John 1:42 - Jesus refers to Peter by his family name and told him he would no longer be identified by his earthly name, rather his new name which being interpreted is “a stone”.

As Christians our value is no longer in what our family name is, how successful we are, or what the worldly good’s we inherit. Our value is now entirely rooted in who we are in Jesus Christ “living stones” (1 Peter 2:1-10)

The Love of Christ has rescued us from our fallen condition, guilty before God, and redeemed us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ; giving us a new purpose, and a new name.

The Love of Christ Reminds His Children – Luke 22:54-63; John 21:1-15

The redemption that Peter received by the love of Christ seems like that would be all that needs to be said on the matter. So what happened?

Peter Denial – Luke 22:54-63

* Luke 22:54 - Peter’s fear overcomes his love “followed afar off”
* Luke 22:56-61 – Peter Denies Christ 3 times
* Luke 22:62 – Peter is broken, his love for Christ is revealed in his brokenness, and he is overwhelmed by guilt and by shame. He didn’t love Christ **enough.**

The Penalty of Peter’s Denial – Matthew 10:32-33

* Matthew 10:32-33 – Peter would have been present during this teaching; it may even have been what gave him the great boldness to tell the Lord “I’ll never deny you.” However, this teaching would also be his greatest condemner, the law is no respecter of persons, and bring with it only guilt. It’s no wonder Peter wept bitterly and returned to his old profession.

Too many Christians have fallen along the wayside because they have forgotten a very important principle. They are no longer guilty under the law, they have been justified before God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is why we need to be reminded of Christ’s love.

The Love of Christ Reminds Us Who We Were – John 21: 1-15

* John 21:3 – Peter has returned to his old profession
* John 21:5 – Jesus asks the same question when he first met Peter
* John 21:6 – Jesus gives them the same instruction he gave at their first meeting
* John 21:15 – Jesus calls Peter by his old name reminding him who he was

The Love of Christ Reminds Us He Is – John 21:7

* John 21:7 – Jesus didn’t stop his miraculous work in the life of Peter even though he was running from his call. Immediately he reminds his disciples “It is the Lord,”

Our Lord never stops knocking on the door of our hearts. He reminds us of our sinful condition, but even more importantly his everlasting love for us. God’s love for us is always searching us out to bring us back into fellowship with him.

All of this reminding is the work of conviction in our lives, not to put the child of God under the extreme weight of guilt, but instead to bring us to the next step of Christ’s love working in us – restoration.

The Love of Christ Restores His Children– John 21:15-19

A three-fold denial required a three-fold question from the Jesus. Though the Lord had every right to condemn Peter, and to bring just accusation of his sin against Him, the Lord chose to ask Peter three questions each time reminding him of his calling.

John 21:15 –

* “Lovest thou me more than these?” The Lord was asking Peter about the highest kind of love possible. Do you love me more than fish? Do you love me more than these other disciples like you boasted? (Matthew 26:33-35)
* Peter responds cautiously stating Lord you know I have a brotherly love for you.
* Jesus responds by affirming his call on Peter’s life “Feed my Lambs”

John 21:16 –

* This time Jesus asks him directly “Do you love me with the highest love?”
* Peter responds again in the same way “Lord you know I have affection for you.”
* This time Jesus gives him another directive “Feed my sheep” Now Peter is being given a higher calling, not only to be a fisher of men, but to be an overseer of the flock of God.

John 21:17 –

* The final time Jesus asks him again to you have the highest love for me?
* This time Peter is broken because he has finally come to realize that he will never be able to love Christ the way that Christ loves him. *“It was the confession of a man who had been put to the wall by his conscience and who stood now before the Lord, broken, aware of his weakness, sensitive to his limitations, and afraid ever to boast again.”*
* Now the final directive, restoring Peter to even greater things. Now he is able to truly fulfill the calling God had put on his life.

The love of Christ is never through with you, the heartbeat of it is to restore his children and to once again hear the call of vs 19 “Follow me.”

Do not be afraid to agree with God about your failure to love him as you should, instead run to him in repentance without a care of what those around you may think*. “Perfect love casteth out fear.”* (1 John 4:18)

The Love of Christ Rewards His Children– John 21-18-21

In what seems to be a strange turn of events given Peter’s beautiful restoration by Christ. In his old Peter way becomes more concerned with how Jesus is going to treat the other disciples, specifically John.

John 21:18,19 – Jesus reveals to Peter the nature of his death, and how it will bring glory to God.

John 21:21-23 – Peter is concerned about what will happen to John. Jesus tells Peter regardless of what happens to the others, follow me. Trust in my love for you, and trust my plans for you. What does it matter to you what happens to the others, follow me.

Peter gives hope to all the children of God as he writes his final letter, (2 Peter 2:10-11) children of God, make your calling and election sure, if you do, you will never fall. An abundant entrance is waiting for you in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Trust his love, abide is his love, be restored by his love, what awaits every child of God is an abundant entrance into his kingdom to experience his perfect love forever.