

Sunday Service Sermons

11 April 2021

How Much Do You Love Jesus?

When asked how much Jesus loved us, he stretched out his arms and died in our place and took our pain.

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”

Please recall *John 21* where Jesus appears to the disciples when they have fished all night and caught nothing.

“Friends, have you any fish?”

Answer, No!

Suggestion, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”

Response not in the text: Why, we have fished all night and there are no fish around here.

Result: “When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.”

Reason: Said by John to Peter: “It is the Lord!”

Peter’s response to his: “he wrapped his outer garment around him and jumped into the water.”

The rest of them brought the boat to shore towing the net on the side of the boat.

When they got to shore Jesus had a fire with some fish on it and some bread.

He asked them to bring some of the fish they had just caught.

The catch was large enough to tear and damage the net but it was not damaged at all.

Jesus then invited them to breakfast.

Interesting next line.

None of the disciples dare to ask him who he was.

They knew it must be The Lord.

Jesus gave them of the bread and also some of the fish.

This is his third time with them.

Read *John 21:15*

The command: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep and again, feed my sheep.

The other command given by Jesus was to love as He loved.

Now he asks for that love to be put in action as we feed His sheep.

Can we assume from this that there are people around us that belong to Jesus but need to be feed to become stronger in their faith and love, and in their living for Jesus?

I wonder.

It is said that the Sea of Galilee is a most beautiful place.

You can take a boat ride on it today and see for yourself.

The disciples were told to meet Jesus in Galilee.

There were seven of the disciples fishing together that night.

It must have been a long night with no luck.

As he usually does, Jesus had provided all that was needed for the disciples to have a good breakfast.

He also provided for them what they needed in the nice catch in the net after they obeyed and cast it on the right side of the boat.

Jesus now had a message to convey to these men who were his followers.

He directed it to Peter but it is assumed that the message was for all of them.

Why did Jesus say to Peter, “Do you love me more than these”.

Here are three suggestions to what he might have meant.

1. Do you love me more than your fellow disciples do?

Peter had claimed that he would never betray Jesus.

The others might, everyone might but Peter would never!
Jesus quoted Scripture that stated that God would smite the shepherd and the sheep would scatter.

And Jesus told them that they would be offended because of him this very night.

We all can be brave until the crowd goes against us.

Peter denied that he could ever be offended by knowing Jesus.

Peter wanted Jesus to know that he was a devote follower and would never deny Jesus.

It came across like Peter was boasting that he was able to be true to Jesus even if the others were not.

Peter was letting the others know that even though their faith may be weak, he would never fail to trust his Master completely and serve him without compromise or disloyalty.

How about us today?

How strong is our love when compared or contrasted with the love of other Christians?

There is no competition between Christians as to who is the most loyal.

Such an attitude would be totally unchristian and un-Christ-like.

We need to guard against having a pharisaical approach to Christian consecration.

We need to ask ourselves if we are only a nominal Christian or if our loyalty to Jesus is far above the minimal standard?

Are we actually sold out to Jesus?

Churches can have two groups of attendees.

The one group that merely belong.

Maybe saved but they are not showing by their fruits any evidence of a deep love for Jesus.

On the other and there is the inner circle, the nucleus, that bears the load.

2. Do you love me more than you love other people?

There were six others with Jesus and Peter.

What about Peter's love for Jesus as compared with his love for his fellow friends?

Peter was a person of influence for Jesus chose him to be the leader of the twelve.

Peter was a strong person who had lead the group in the past.

Peter enjoyed his leadership of the group.

The disciples were basically lost since the death of Jesus.

Their leader had been brutally taken from them and tortured and killed.

Now He was back among them, but as what?

A spirit? What was this new Jesus?

He was something never seen before.

He has shown his scars, he had eaten with them.

He was something no one was familiar with in any way.

The disciples must have been wondering if all of this was real and what was the meaning of it all?

It was Peter who had lead the group to go fishing.

Peter's decision to go fishing was more than getting away for a few hours: he was ready to return to his old job.

Now Jesus came and showed Peter once again his divine person and his need for Peter to be a part of his redemptive plan.

But Jesus said that Peter needed to love him more than he loved his friends.

Even if Peter's friends deserted him, he must determine to follow Jesus.

How about us?

Who do you love the most?

Approval of others, or Jesus?

Is there a limit to your willingness to give your all to Jesus?

We must love Jesus more than we love anyone else.

And we must never allow another person to come between us and our Savior.

3. Do you love me more than these things that are near you?

The most likely interpretation of this text is that Jesus pointed to the fishing nets and other equipment used in the trade as he asked Peter if he loved him more than these.

The real test of a Christian is when he or she is confronted with the matter of personal priorities.

The problem of “things” and making a living is always with us.

Nowhere does the Bible condemn anyone for striving to earn the necessities of life for oneself and one’s family.

Only when this labor gets out of hand and becomes top priority does it become wrong.

Paul said. “If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

The Bible warns us, however, about majoring on the material things of life.

One of our greatest spiritual needs today is to defy the tyranny of the tangible.

What are the “real things” in life?

Are they those that can be seen and handled?

No! These things can fade away in a moment.

But you cannot tear away the spiritual truths or concepts behind them.

You can burn a book, but you can’t burn an idea.

You can destroy a bridge, but you can’t destroy the concept of a bridge.

What is the true cause of an automobile?

Is it the assembly with all its automated machines?

No, you must look deeper into the personal purposes of the manufactures and the buying public.

How we need to be liberated from the enslaving power of things!

What do we love the most?

Things or spiritual principles?

Answer that question realistically and you will give a correct evaluation of yourself as a Christian.

Years ago an outstanding preacher made a statement that has meaning throughout the years.

He said, in contrasting Abraham and Lot, that Abraham was the kind of man who, if his business interfered with his religion, gave up his business, while Lot was the kind of man who, if his religion interfered with his business, gave up his religion.

Do you love Jesus more than the “things” that are constantly around you in daily living?

The three questions are self-explanatory.

No application or summary is needed.

Rather, we need to look at ourselves realistically and face honestly the question of our love for Jesus.

After all is said and done, the true motivation of service is love.

If we love, we serve.

If we do not love, we do not serve.

If we are not serving, it is because we do not love Jesus enough.

The answer for more dedication on the part of Christians is for each of us to have a greater devotion to the living Savior.

Jesus said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

It requires no strength of character to quit, to give up your faith, to renounce your allegiance to Christ and his church.

Anybody can quit.

Are you an apostate?

Have you given up on living for Christ?

Let us be like Peter and boldly proclaim, Never Lord, Never will we forsake you.

Then be prepared for the test that will come.

For it will come.

Directly or indirectly.

Once we declare; we will be tested.

God is with us and He will strengthen us to compete our resolve to be His in all conditions at all times.

Give all you have to Jesus that he may be able to give all he has for you, to you!