

Jesus let Peter know there were challenges ahead of him, yet His command was simply “Follow me.” By shepherding Jesus’ sheep, Peter would follow, and in laying down his life Peter would also follow Jesus.

*After being told to follow, what did Peter ask? Why do we compare ourselves to others? What are the areas in your life that you are following Jesus?*

Ephesians 2:10 NLT - 10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Jesus not only loved us enough to die for us, but he also loves us enough to share the mission and purpose of the church. He calls us to follow Him, and when we do, we will fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

## WRAP-UP

The resurrected Jesus has appeared to us. But sometimes we revert to our old ways of thinking and doing life as if we were not aware of His resurrection power. Jesus loved Peter enough to meet him where he was and restore their relationship by accepting the level of love Peter could offer at that time. But Jesus loved Peter and saw beyond that moment to what Peter could be. He told Peter to care for His flock, to follow him, and not to be distracted by what others were doing. Our calling is the same, believe and follow Jesus.

## MEMORY VERSE

*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.*

*- Ephesians 4:1 NLT*

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

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*Challenge- Ask God to help you to follow those He has called to shepherd you, and then ask Him if there are some you should be shepherding, perhaps in your family?*

## “Do You Love Me?” Believe and Have Life #10

### INTRODUCTION

This week we will conclude our summer study in the Gospel of John. John closes out his account with an encounter between the resurrected Jesus and his disciples. This account feels almost like a postscript. After affirming and commissioning the disciples in chapter 20, John continues with this retelling of an encounter that happened “later”. For those of us who are encountering the resurrected Jesus 2,000 years “later”, this should serve as an encouragement to live a life worthy of our calling.

### Ice Breaker

How long ago did you first encounter Jesus personally?

### Key Passage

*John 20:30-31 NLT - 30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.*

### STUDY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Do You Love Me?

If you were asked to list the attributes of God, or describe what God is like you would probably include that God is love or loving. But when we say “love” what does that mean? In the English language love can mean many things; I love the Dodgers, I love my spouse, I love my friend. All of these are quite different from our love for God (or they should be). In the original language of this passage, which is Greek, there are two words being translated as “love”.

**agapaō** - The word *agapaō* is a love to which you are totally committed, worshipfully in love with, devoted with everything in your heart, mind and strength, nothing withheld.

**phileō** - The word *phileō* is a type of brotherly love or tender affection.

Let's look at this conversation with that understanding-

15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love (*agapaō*) me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love (*phileō*) you." "Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

16 Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love (*agapaō*) me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love (*phileō*) you." "Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

17 A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love (*phileō*) me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love (*phileō*) you." Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep."

Jesus first asked Peter if his agape love exceeded those of the other disciples ("more than these"). What love did Peter offer in response? Do you remember what Peter declared to Jesus at the last supper in John 16:37 ("I'm ready to die for you")

Sadly, Peter knew he had been unable to keep that commitment to die for Jesus, an expression of his agape love. Then Jesus' second question lowers the bar a little. He doesn't ask if Peter's agape love exceeds the other disciples, but Peter still responds with the offering he feels capable of, brotherly tender affection or *phileō*.

When Jesus asks a third time, what type of love is He asking of Peter? Not only does He lower the bar to meet Peter where he is at, but He allows Peter to declare his love three times, in a sense countering the three times he denied Jesus when He was arrested. Why do you think this question caused Peter intense sorrow and grief? What does this exchange tell you about the love Jesus has for his disciples, including each of us?

Jesus is willing to meet us where we are. He accepts our offering even when we feel it is inadequate. And He sees in us a potential for more, even as He saw that Peter would eventually lead the early church and dare to lay down his life for Jesus as a martyr.

## 2. Feed My Sheep

Are you curious about what else the Greek reveals about this conversation? Good, because there are two more terms we are going to consider, care/feed and lambs/sheep. After Peter responds to Jesus, He instructs Peter in what he is called to do. He refers both to feeding and caring for His flock, and Jesus refers both to His lambs and His sheep. Let's unpack that a little.

Feed, *boskō* – means to nourish, especially of a herdsman

Care, *poimainō* – means tending or shepherding, and includes more than feeding

lambs, *arnion*- a little sheep, lamb

sheep, *probaton* – a 4 footed animal; small cattle, sheep or goat.

Here is what Jesus told Peter

v.15 – *boskō my arnion*- "nourish my little lambs"

v. 16- *poimainō my probaton* – "shepherd my sheep"

v. 17- *boskō my poi probaton*- "nourish my sheep"

Who do you think are Jesus' lambs and who are His sheep? What is the difference between spiritually nourishing and shepherding? Why is it necessary to nourish lambs before shepherding them? Do you consider yourself a lamb or a sheep?

## 3. Follow Me

This was the third appearance of Jesus to His disciples after the resurrection. Even though they knew he rose from the dead, and had seen and spoken to him in person, they returned to their old familiar ways and went fishing. It seems they had not embraced the resurrection power that Jesus demonstrated.

In what ways might we see their response paralleled in our own lives?

John 21:19, 21-22 NLT - 19 Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me." ... 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."