

# JUST AS WE ARE

*“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” —JOHN 21:15*

Maybe we don't have two cents to rub together, or maybe we're multi-millionaires; maybe we're old and sick, or in prison, or suffering from addictions, or someone no one likes very much, or maybe we're just regular people. It doesn't matter. Jesus says, “Come just as you are.”

Simon Peter was a fisherman, a regular guy, and he dropped everything to come to Jesus. The night of Jesus' arrest, he said to Him, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (Matthew 26:33). But that same night, Peter denied Christ three times. Before His ascension, Jesus appeared to His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. After a long night of fishing, He surprised them, had a fire waiting and they had breakfast together.

Jesus then gets alone with Peter and asks him, “Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” From the context in which this is written, ‘more than these’ would almost certainly mean more than his boat, his fishing, his livelihood. Peter answers, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He omits the ‘more than these’ and also responds with a lower level of love. Agape, the word Jesus used, expresses the highest form of love, but Peter answers with ‘phileo’, which is more of an affectionate, brotherly love. Jesus accepts his answer and says, “Feed my lambs.” A second time He asks Peter, “Do you truly love me?” and Peter answers the same way. Jesus then tells him, “Take care of my sheep.” A third time Jesus asks the question, but uses the same term for love as

Peter did. Peter replies, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Again, Jesus commissions him and says, “Feed my sheep.”

Why would Jesus ask Peter three times about his love for Him? Perhaps it may have been to counteract Peter’s three denials of Him, but of far more significance is their conversation, revealing that as long as we’re honest with Jesus, He accepts us just as we are. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus was always a friend to sinners, the outcasts, to anyone who would believe in Him. We don’t need to wipe our feet clean before we come to Jesus. Come just as we are, with all our doubts and failures, and Jesus takes care of the rest.

***PRAYER: Precious Lord, I am so grateful for your transforming work in my life. Thank You for accepting me just as I am.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: In what ways has submitting my life to Christ changed me the most?***