

ENCOUNTERING JESUS

John 21:15-24

Following Jesus

1 – Love

- Clearly the point of the exchange between Jesus and Peter is that a true disciple will love Jesus.
 - By implication this is about our love for Jesus or any follower of Christ loving Him.
- But – First we must see that this conversation is initiated by Jesus.
 - He is, of course, the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 who are safe to seek the one that is lost.
 - Just like He came to Mary and called her name...
 - Just like He came to the disciples in the upper room and said – “Peace”...
 - Just like He came to the disciples a second time when Thomas was there...
 - Just like He came to the Sea of Galilee and made breakfast...
 - Jesus seeks the one who is lost!
- Three times Jesus will ask Peter – “Do you love me?”
 - The first and obvious point for us to see is the number 3 –
 - Just as Peter denied Jesus three times, now he is being restored with the question asked three times, “Do you love me?”
 - For each denial there is a matching confession.
 - But it’s not just the number that’s important –
 - Peter had said in front of the disciples – *“I will lay down my life for you.”* (13:37)
 - Peter had publicly denied Jesus around the fire at the house of Caiaphas – (18:15-18)
 - Now his restoration is public in that it is before the disciples!
- This leads us to the rest of the question – “Do you love me **more than these?**”
 - Some will assume that **these** refers to **these things** – i.e. fishing and his previous way of life.
 - And that is for sure part of discipleship – loving Jesus more than the things of life.
 - But more accurately, Jesus is asking him if he loves him more than **these disciples**.
 - Two other gospels tell us that Peter had said, in front of the other disciples, -
“Though they all fall away...I will never!” (Matt. 26:33; Mark 14:29)
- So Peter’s confession is 3 times and is public (at least in front of the other disciples).
- Why is love for Jesus the essence of a confession for Jesus?
 - Why not trust? “Simon, do you trust me?”
 - Why not obedience? “Simon, will you obey me?”
 - Why not identity? “Simon, will you confess me?” or “Simon do you still deny me?”
 - Why love?
 - Because of what Jesus has already taught – Love is fundamental to obedience.
 - John 14:15 – *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”*
 - John 14:23 – *“...If anyone loves me, he will keep my Word.”*
 - Love keeps obedience from being superficial...heartless...or robotic.
 - agape and phileo

2 – Serve

- Having asked Peter to confess his love, Jesus then calls him to minister-
 - v. 15 – *“...Feed my lambs.”*
 - v. 16 – *“...Tend my sheep.”*
 - v. 17 – *“...Feed my sheep.”*
- Jesus calls those who follow Him to feed (teach) and tend (care for) His people.
 - This is shepherd imagery which John and the rest of Scripture is filled with!

- How extensive is the service of teaching and caring to be?
 - v. 18 – *“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.”*
 - What does that mean?
 - v. 19 – *“(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.)”*
 - According to tradition Peter was crucified as was Jesus – only upside down in order to be unlike Jesus.
 - This is an all-in type thing here!
 - Discipleship ministry – whether it be parenting, mentorship, counseling or whatever – discipleship ministry is an all-in matter.
 - 2 Cor. 4:7-12
- Discipleship is an investment in your own death –
 - But this is how you will glorify God!

3 – Follow

- v. 19b – *“And after saying this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’”*
- “Following” is both challenging and hopeful –
 - Following doesn’t sound easy nor does it sound impossible.
 - It is both hard and doable
 - Following involves –
 - Submission and obedience
 - Following is active not passive; progress not perfection; it’s real not theoretical.
 - It is faith and faithfulness
 - It is attainable for anyone yet mastered by no one
 - “Follow Me”
- How do you follow Christ now?
- When we follow we must keep our focus on Christ and only Christ!
 - Read verses 20-24

Application