

II. THE ONLY TRUE MOTIVE FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE – LOVE (John 21:15-25)

A. The Example of Peter (John 21:15-19)

1. His love questioned (John 21:15-17)
 - a. Peter's threefold denial (Luke 22:54-62)
 - b. Christ's threefold rebuke (John 21:15-17)
 - 1) First request: "Lovest thou me more than these?" (John 21:15; Matthew 26:31-35). Christ is asking Peter if he still claims to love Him more than the other disciples love Him (1 Corinthians 10:12); He is looking for humility.
 - 2) Second request: "Lovest thou me?" (John 21:16). That is, do you love me for my own sake without any comparison with others?
 - 3) Third request: "Lovest thou me?" (John 21:17). That is, will you keep loving me? Will you love me as much as you denied me?
 - c. Peter's threefold assurance (John 21:15-17)
 - 1) "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:15)
 - 2) "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:16)
 - 3) "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." (John 21:17)
 - a) Not according to Peter's confidence
 - b) But according to Christ's knowledge – "thou knowest"
 - d. Christ's threefold commission (John 21:15-17)
 - 1) Feed my lambs (John 21:15; Isaiah 40:11); lambs are young sheep.
 - 2) Feed my sheep (John 21:16; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - 3) Feed my sheep (John 21:17; Acts 20:28-32); keep feeding them.
2. Our love for Christ: The Bible states in no uncertain terms that if God is our Father, then we will love Christ (John 8:42). Therefore, a lack of love for Christ is a proof of a lost condition. This truth is backed up by Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:22 where he states, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." That is, let him be accursed. Your love for Christ, therefore, is a very serious thing. We should love Him:
 - a. Responsively (1 John 4:19; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)
 - b. Believingly (1 Peter 1:7-8)
 - c. Sincerely (Ephesians 6:24; 2 Corinthians 8:8; 2 Corinthians 6:6)
 - d. Supremely (Matthew 10:37; Colossians 1:18)
 - e. Obediently (John 14:15, 21-24)
 - f. Humbly (John 21:15-17)
 - 1) Peter had bragged about his devotion and had failed (Matthew 26:33-35, 73-75).
 - 2) Peter is now grieved that Christ asks him three times about his love.

- g. Faithfully (John 21:15-17); three requests of Christ and three commands to feed His sheep point to the importance of faithfulness in our love for Christ.
 - 3. His death prophesied (John 21:18-19)
 - a. His time of death (John 21:18)
 - 1) In youth
 - a) You clothed yourself.
 - b) You went where you wanted to go.
 - 2) In old age
 - a) He will stretch forth his hands.
 - b) Another will clothe him.
 - c) He will be carried where he would not go.
 - d) Note: this indicates that Peter will get to old age. Some have taught that this explained his ease of mind (“sleeping”) when he was imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12:6). He was not yet old, and therefore had nothing to worry about.
 - b. His mode of death (John 21:19; 2 Peter 1:13-14)
 - 1) The description of John 21:18 indicated “by what death” he should die.
 - a) According to tradition, it was by crucifixion – though upside down at his own request.
 - b) Crucifixion would agree with the phrase, “shalt stretch forth thy hands.”
 - 2) His death would be one that glorified God.
 - 3) But the present instructions are still the simple, Follow me.
 - a) The call of the sheep (John 10:3-4, 27)
 - b) The call of the student-disciple (Luke 5:27; John 1:43)
 - c) The call of the servant (John 12:26)
 - d) The call of the soul-winner (Matthew 4:19)
 - e) The call of the sold-out (Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23)
- B. The Example of John (John 21:20-25)
- 1. His responsibility to the Lord (John 21:20-23)
 - a. Peter’s unrestrained curiosity (John 21:20-21)
 - 1) Peter looked at John (John 21:20).
 - a) The disciple whom Jesus loved
 - b) The disciple who leaned on His breast
 - c) The disciple who asked who the betrayer was
 - d) He was following Jesus.
 - 2) Peter asked what John would do (John 21:21).
 - 3) Note: Peter had the same problem of keeping his eyes on Jesus when he sunk in the waves of the storm when he walked on the water (Matthew 14:29-31).

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- b. Christ's stern rebuke (John 21:22; compare Romans 14:12)
 - 1) John might tarry till the return of Christ.
 - 2) But what is that to Peter?
 - 3) That is, mind your own business.

 - c. John's death revealed (John 21:23)
 - 1) The rumor: that John would not die
 - 2) The fact: Christ was telling Peter that He would do with John as He pleased.
 - a) John did die, but not until he saw the coming of Christ (Revelation 19:11-16).
 - b) The typology of Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24)
 2. His testimony of the Lord (John 21:24-25)
 - a. The faithful witness of John (John 21:24)
 - 1) John identifies himself as the unnamed disciple.
 - 2) John is the human author of this book.
 - 3) The testimony of the Apostle John is true (1 John 1:1-3).
 - b. The limited witness of John (John 21:25; John 20:30)
 - 1) The many other works of Jesus
 - 2) The books of the world not able to contain them.