

## HOW RESTORATION HAPPENS

John 21:15-19

Often times in our lives, we find ourselves in the same place spiritually as a scratched, cracked, and stained piece of antique furniture is physically. Rubbing up against the reality of a fallen world and making wrong decisions make us feel like damaged goods without a sense of dignity, self, and feeling valuable and useful as we lose not our salvation, but the *joy* or our salvation. The story of Simon Peter's denial and restoration is a window through which we see ourselves. We *deny* the Lord when we try to establish our sense of self, significance, purpose, and identity apart from Him. Simon Peter denied his true identity, and through our words and misdeeds, so do we. We *need* to be restored. But how? *We are restored in our relationship with the Lord when we answer Christ's challenging question "Do you love Me?"*

### 1. THE QUESTION "DO YOU LOVE ME?" IS A *PRIORITY* QUESTION.

In Vs 15, the phrase ". . . more than these?" refers to the boats, the nets, the successful career, steady job, comfort, and identity of being a successful person. For us, we need to ask: What's going to be the *main thing* in your life? Are you going to define yourself in terms of what you *do* or are you going to define yourself in terms of your relationship with Jesus? Sin is more than just doing *bad* things. Sin is also the making of *good* things into *ultimate* things. It's trying to establish a sense of self and significance and purpose and identity *apart from* Jesus. Whatever it is that defines you and gives meaning to your life is your lord and savior. For restoration to happen, you must define your life in terms of your relationship with Jesus.

### 2. THE QUESTION "DO YOU LOVE ME?" IS A *PERSISTENT* QUESTION.

Three times Jesus asks the question (probably to remind Simon Peter of his three fold denial of the Lord) "Do you love (AGAPE) Me? Is your love for me a 100% love? Three times, with great honesty, Simon Peter affirms his lesser love (PHILEO) for the Lord. And, Jesus even questions if Peter is His friend! After all, what friend abandons, denies, and disowns his friends? Peter got the point: God's grace in Christ comes not to those who pridefully boast of out performing others but to those who admit their failure to love as they should and acknowledge their need for a Savior. As D. L. Moody observed, "God sends no one away but those who are full of themselves."

### 3. THE QUESTION "DO YOU LOVE ME?" IS A *PRACTICAL* QUESTION.

It's easy to say "I love you." What's difficult is to *do* "I love you." Jesus challenges Simon Peter and us to put into practice the love we profess to have for the Lord by taking care of, watching over, protecting, feeding, and nurturing the Shepherd's sheep – even though sometimes those sheep are stupid, stubborn, and stinking! God calls *us all* sheep – sheep who need nurturing, guidance, and restoration when they leave the path of righteousness, slide into the ditch of disobedience, and get mud on ourselves because of the bad decisions we make. The Lord wants us sheep (that's us) to show our love for the Shepherd by taking care of each other.

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