

## Do You Love Me More Than (You Love) These?

**Joh 21:1** After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

**Joh 21:2** There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

**Joh 21:3** Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

**Joh 21:4** But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

**Joh 21:5** Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

**Joh 21:6** And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

**Joh 21:7** Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

**Joh 21:8** And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

**Joh 21:9** As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

**Joh 21:10** Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

**Joh 21:11** Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

**Joh 21:12** Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

**Joh 21:13** Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

**Joh 21:14** This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

**Joh 21:15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

**Joh 21:16** He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

**Joh 21:17** He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Peter seems to have loved fishing. It was what he did and what he was good at. There was nothing wrong with fishing. Jesus knew that Peter loved fishing. He also knew all things, including the fact that Peter loved Him. But Jesus still asks Peter, 'Do you love me, more than (you love) these?' Meaning the catch of fish, probably the best catch in his whole life. One to tell the boys about.

In those days, folks didn't usually go in for a change of profession or trade. Peter was a fisherman and in the normal course of life would probably remain a fisherman until he died.

Jesus was a carpenter. Your trade or profession was bound up with your identity. It is so in many less industrialised societies around the world still.

This was no casual chat. Jesus wanted Peter to know that loving Him more than 'these' would open the way to a new career. A new identity. A new purpose.

This preference for Jesus before all things, including those things that give us our identity, frees us to be what Jesus calls us to be in His body, His flock, His temple.

For some of us, our job may not be something we love. Peter on the other hand had a great job, something many folk in the industrialised world would pay good money for. Days or nights out on the sea, under a Galilean sky, with the uncertainties of going after an illusive prey. Elation after a successful trip, perhaps shrugs of resignation after a fruitless effort. Comradeship with fellow crew members. This was something men could well love.

Where we have less than ideal jobs, many take up a hobby, interest, sport or pastime that they love as compensation and relief. The thing is, most of us have something that we love doing. We are made that way, it's how it should be. We don't find it easy to abandon whatever it is that we love doing.

We are not usually in a position to abandon anything before we have a revelation of just who Jesus is, and what He is to those who believe on Him. The rich young ruler couldn't sell all he had and give to the poor, because he didn't realise just who Jesus was, even though He was standing right in front of him and talking with him. Peter, on the other hand, could walk away from his fishing business, knowing that Jesus was the Christ, the Anointed Saviour, Who would save him.

The day by day life of following Jesus is one of daily looking to Jesus, feeding on Jesus, reveling in Jesus and His present great salvation. Abiding in Jesus, the vine. So we can love Him more than we love our things.

As we walk in this love Jesus gives us jobs to do for Him.

No good beating ourselves up if we feel guilty about loving 'stuff' more than we love Jesus. We do tend to love the stuff we are living in. Rather, if we come to Jesus, spend time with Jesus, He will become the one we love. How can we help but love Him, when we are in His presence?

If you love me – hey – you will keep my commandments. The 'if' is there for a reason. We all who are called have the option daily of loving or not loving Jesus. That's good news because I know I don't always love Jesus more than other things in my life. But every day is a fresh opportunity, a day of grace, where I can choose to love Jesus more than I love those things dear to me.

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