

## **SERMON: A LOADED QUESTION FROM THE LORD**

### **John 21: 15-17**

**(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. (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. (17) He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he saith 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.**

### **Introduction**

February is a saturated month. It is Black History Month and Heart Health Month. It includes Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, the folk lore of Groundhog Day, and the Super Bowl. This year is a leap year and an extra day is added to February. This year Ash Wednesday and Valentine fall on the same day, this coming Wednesday. So, this gives many choices for preaching materials. Therefore, we have to make sure, as always, that we get directions from God as to what to preach. Today, we are going to preach about love. Love comes in many flavors, but the greatest type of love is what the Greeks called agape'. It is unconditional love. It is love that has no gaps. Unconditional love does not mean "uncorrecting" love. True love gives constructive criticism and correction at the appropriate place and time.

Let's look at the context of our text. Peter had denied Jesus three times and had used profane language in his denial. He had warmed his hands by the enemies' fire. Yet, there was something about him that let them know he had been with Jesus. He had a Galilean accent, which he could not deny. If one has been with Jesus in a meaningful way, even in a weak moment, your "Jesus-ness" will shine through.

Peter was under the impression that he was unfit to be a disciple of Jesus. He had buckled under pressure and let Jesus down in the most critical moment – during the events of the crucifixion. He abandoned his calling and went back to his profession, commercial fishing.

Jesus came to Peter and asked a loaded question, “Peter, do you love me?” Jesus posed it three times. Initially, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me more than these?” In the original Greek, the grammar implies that Jesus was pointing to something as he questioned Peter. Jesus could have pointed to the fishing boat with the fishing gear. Jesus could have pointed to the other disciples, his fishing buddies.

Like any loaded question, this question, forced Peter to address issues that he was hesitant to discuss. Loaded questions are rhetorical and are based on the presumption or knowledge of the one posing the question. The question was beneficial to Peter and not beneficial to Jesus. Jesus already knew the answer. It was not to intimidate or embarrass Peter, as is the purpose of some loaded questions. It made Peter think about the important issues that would impact him for the rest of his earthly life. Let’s explore this very familiar passage of Scripture and see why Jesus asked Peter this loaded question.

## **Exposition**

### **1. To Force Peter To Establish Thoughtful Priorities.**

(All Important Things Are Not Equal.)

(Sometimes We Have Not Thought About What’s Really Important.)

### **2. To Force Peter To Renew His Call To His God-Given Purpose.**

(Feed My Lambs – Feed My Sheep.)

### **3. To Force Peter To Express His Love For Jesus In Words.**

(Everybody Needs To Hear The Words, “I Love You.”)

(Feeling It Is Not Enough- Say It Sometime.)

(Love Requires Action And Articulation.)

### **Closing Thoughts**

“I love you more,” is a common response to the phrase, “I love you.” When we sing the hymn, *O How I Love Jesus*, His response could be, “I love you more and I proved it on a hill called Calvary.” Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

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