

personal relationship with Him: “*do you truly love me...?*”

B. He wants our *supreme love*: “*do you...love me more than these?*”

What did Jesus mean? There are 3 possible meanings:

1. “Do you love me...” *more than these*: *this boat and fishing?* (Things and activities can steal our hearts—familiar things, productive, enjoyable, good things can overshadow our love for Christ.)
 2. “Do you love me...” *more than these other relations?* (Which ones? Companions, coworkers, friends, relatives. . . good relationships unless they interfere with our allegiance to Christ— **Mat 10:37**, Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.)
 3. “Do you love me...” *more than these—more than these others love me?* (If Christ meant this, it was a painful reminder to Peter of his former boast: “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”)
 - a. Peter’s failure began by comparing his loyalty to the predicted failure of others. (This was both *pride* and a *false standard*.)
 - b. *Avoiding poor behavior* is a low standard for measuring our own success—it leads us to live just a little bit above poor:
 - (1) [**Thomas Kinkade** resented his drunken father’s behavior and was set on *doing better with his life*. He did, becoming a great artist, but he ended up being *just a bit better* by also wasting his life with alcohol.]
 - (2) [**Peter** said he’d do better than the others, and he did! He *courageously walked into the place where Jesus was taken after arrest*. But it was just a bit better, because there he *failed as well*, ending up denying Christ.]
- C. Why does Jesus highlight our failures? Because we must first fully acknowledge our failures *before* we can be resurrected from them. (The question He asked Peter 3 times, “Do you love me?”—once for each time he failed, is the same question He asks us when we fail.)

TRANS: In some ways, all of us stumble in our *spiritual journeys*; we fail in our *spiritual resolutions*. But, **Jesus persists in calling us from our failures into greater service**. If we *love* Him, we’ll face our failed loyalty and commit ourselves to try again. And as we do, *Christ gives...*

II. A Resurrection into Sacrificial Service

A. Christ’s 3 questions to Peter were followed by 3 calls that *affirmed Peter’s renewed commitment*; they were 3 affirmations:

1. An affirmation of trust: “*Feed my lambs*.” [**Mark failed** by deserting his mission, but Barnabus gave him another chance; **I myself** left missions work,

but when I returned to the ministry path, God doubly confirmed my return: 1) by raising up VCC as a *place to serve*, and 2) by soon making me its *pastor*.]

2. An affirmation of delegated leadership: “*Take care of my sheep*.” [“take care” **in Gk** = “to shepherd, to lead to pasture, to watch over the care of” -- **the old Latin derivative** for a minister was a *curate*, “one who cared for souls”;] (The *Shepherd’s* commitment of His flock into the care of an under-shepherd is sign of great trust in the delegate.)
 3. An affirmation of expected loyalty: “*Feed my sheep*.”
 - a. Jesus *persisted* calling Peter 3 times to faithful service, to *heal him from his failure of persisting in denying his Lord* 3 times.
 - b. He repeated this call 3 times to *strengthen Peter where he had been weak* (This repetition prophetically affirmed that Peter’s future would be one of unfailing persistence in ministry.)
- B. In **v.18-19**, Jesus predicted Peter’s future death. This was, in a sense, a final confirmation of Peter’s *unfailing loyalty*:
1. [**Tradition** tells of Peter’s death in Rome as an upside-down crucifixion, at his own request, because he felt unworthy to die in the same way Jesus did.]
 2. But Christ’s description of Peter’s death was a picture of both *Peter’s call and our own call to self-denying service— v.18*, *I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.*
 - a. Serving God means you must wear the suit that fits the task.
 - b. Serving God means to go where He sends, not where we want.
- C. Ultimately, *resurrection from failure* is a call to walk the way of the Cross— **v.19**, *Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”* (“Follow Me” means the way of the Cross both for fallen sinners and for failed saints.)

CONCLUSION:

—[A verse in the old hymn “*Christ Receiveth Sinful Men*”: “Sinners Jesus will receive; / Sound this word of grace to all / Who the heav’nly pathway leave, / All who linger, **all who fall**.”] It’s marvelous how Jesus goes after sinners to save them. But just as marvelous is how **Jesus persists in calling us as Christians from our failures into greater service**. His call to us is, “*Follow me*” in self-denying, self-effacing, self-sacrificing service.

43-21-02-Resurrection from Failure

failure, denying Christ, repentance, service, self-denial

John 21:15-19

Jesus persists in calling us from our failures into greater service.

INTRODUCTION:

—**John 21:15-19**, *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”*

—The skeptic **Voltaire** said, *“Men are in general so tricky, so envious, and so cruel, that when we find one who is only weak, we are happy.”* God is happy, too. He delights to find *the weak* and rescue them from their *weaknesses*. He does this in our lives, even as He did it in Peter’s life.

—The angel at the tomb told the women— **Mk 16:7** *“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”* Why did Jesus single out Peter? Maybe Peter had a special need for it. He had sworn allegiance to Christ and then, *in weakness*, had failed his Lord —**Mat 26:31-35**, Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

—**Frederick Farrar** (English scholar of the 1800s) said, *“There is only one real failure in life that is possible, and that is, not to be true to the best one knows. That’s as true for us as it was for Peter. We truly do fail, by failing to stay true to the Lord. However, **HOM.idea**. The risen Christ raised up a failed Peter, and He wants to resurrect us from failure as well. *But there’s...**

I. An Essential Requirement for this Resurrection

A. To raise us up from failure, Jesus requires us to have an intensely