

## **Jesus reinstates Peter**

[Read John Chapter 21](#)

After sharing breakfast on the beach Jesus now turns to Peter in order to reinstate him. Jesus does not pick him up, dust him off, refocus him and send him out. He does it by asking three questions about his love for Jesus.

In order to understand the questions Jesus asks Peter we need to understand the different terms for love from the Greek.

In English we only have one word for love 'love', i.e. I love ice cream, I love my wife, it is the same word but very different meanings, I hope.

In the Greek both ancient and modern there are different words for different kinds of love, in this passage both Jesus and Peter are using two different meanings for love:

**Agápe means love in a "spiritual" sense. "True unconditional love"**

**Phileo is "mental" love. It means affectionate regard or friendship.**

In these three questions some commentators believe that Jesus is using Agape, for the first two and Phileo, for the last one.

### **John 21 v 15**

**'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?'**

**'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.'**

In asking the first time Jesus asks Peter if he has an unconditional love for Him (Agape), which is a greater love than perhaps the others that are with him do.

Peter answers that he does but responds with Phileo love, affectionate regard or friendship.

Jesus asks again using Agape

### **John 21 v 16**

**'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'**

Peter answers that he does but responds with Phileo love again.

Jesus's asks again but this time he uses Phileo love

### **John 21 v 17**

**'Simon son of John, do you love me?'**

**'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.'**

Peter answers that he does and responds again with Phileo love.

With all that had gone before, his boasting about dying for Jesus then denying him 3 times, Peter could not bring himself to use agape.

In his past actions he had not demonstrated unconditional love for Jesus. Peter is being humble and honest with Jesus; he knows that Jesus looks on the heart and knows the truth. In response to Peter's answers Jesus reinstates him and commissions him to do three things:

### **John 21 v 15**

**"Feed my lambs"**

### **John 21 v 16**

**"Take care of my sheep"**

### **John 21 v 17**

**"Feed my sheep"**

What has Jesus commissioned Peter to do?

He is given the role of a shepherd to look after his master's flock. To watch over those who are young in the faith and those who are more mature. He is to take care of them, minister to them, guide them and feed them, so that they grow in the faith.

In addition to being a shepherd Peter is given the task of building His church by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ to all those he came into contact with, as we read in:

### **Matthew 16 v 18**

**And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

Peter was helped by Jesus through his difficult situations and reinstated him to build his church. Because of his reinstatement and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are here today as part of Jesus' flock.

What is the application for us as individuals and the church from this passage?

We will all make mistakes and not fulfil all the promises we make to God, however, he never gives up on us and will always give us another chance to put things right.

God knows the potential that is in all of us even if we doubt ourselves. There is a saying that God equips those he calls, rather than calling those who are already equipped. This makes us dependent on God rather than on ourselves.

I am not sure who first said this but it is the truth. This truth and our dependence on God and his faithfulness to us should encourage us, as it did Peter, when we feel inadequate to face today's challenges or when God asks us to do something that that is outside our comfort zone.

The world finds itself in a very difficult situation. These are uncertain times and fears are rising. People who have never felt anxious before are suddenly weighed down with worry about their children's education, money, jobs the future and much more.

At a time like this the world and ourselves needs encouragement, we can find it in the word of God:

### **Philippians 4 v 6 to 7**

**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

This may be a Peter moment where we can share the love and peace of God with those we come into contact with, when we are allowed out of course. Let us believe that we can be used by God to change lives.

*Tony Nelson*