

**Feed my sheep.**  
**(Joh 21:16-18)**

**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.**

**Joh 21:18** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.

The study tonight is the last of three parts of this particular passage in the book of John which holds some very basic but hidden truths in regard to how we grow in grace and in knowledge ([2Pe 3:18](#)), and how this growth is a gift which is given from God as He nourishes us through Christ working through His body ([1Co 3:6](#)).

**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.**

Christ is very much speaking of things that are not as thou they were ([Rom 4:17](#)), seeing He knows that Peter will ultimately be able to love the sheep the way that Christ has demonstrated already by laying down his life for the brethren ([Joh 10:15](#)). For now Peter is being witnessed to by Christ and he is being judged out of his own mouth telling Christ "**thou knowest that I love <sup>G5368</sup> thee**". Peter is going to say to Christ three times, "**you know that I love you**" to demonstrate to us that this love that Peter has and is expressing to Christ has no root, and it will only be by the judgement of Peter's flesh and ours (number three) that we will obtain that deeper abiding love which is a gift of God.

This is strong delusion for Peter seeing this love that he declares to have for Christ is heartfelt and ready to do whatever is asked of him. It is a spirit that is willing, accompanied with flesh that is weak seeing there is no power yet at this stage to truly be a shepherd to the sheep as Christ was. Peter is yet a hireling and not aware of that ([Mat 26:41](#), [Joh 10:12-13](#)).

When we lay down our life for the brethren we are feeding the sheep, and Christ is making several points for Peter and ourselves, one of the main ones being that even if we do lay down our life, and give our bodies to burn, if we are not found in Christ, it will not have profited us. It is only when we are found in Christ that what we do can be a sacrifice that is acceptable ([Eph 1:6](#)) seeing it is Christ who is working that sacrifice in us, both to will and to do ([1Co 13:3](#), [Rom 8:9](#), [Php 2:13](#)).

Many are called to have a relationship with Christ in this age, but only a few are chosen to have the relationship tried and proven through the fiery trials which are promised to come upon those who will truly love God by being able to keep His commandments ([1Jn 5:2](#)). This keeping of the commandments will separate us from our brothers and cause us to be hated by all men ([Mat 24:9](#)) as God will make the distinction very bright so the world is thoroughly witnessed to by His elect body who is being crucified with Christ and being made a spectacle in this age ([Gal 2:20](#), [1Co 4:9](#)).

The point that Christ is making is that Peter's love is just that, Peter's love, and not the steadfast true

witness of God which can only come by having the hope of glory grow within us ([Col 1:27](#) , [Joh 3:30](#)).

God's gives those who receive His love the ability to do what they would not otherwise do. Peter is simply being used to show us that prior to our conversion we want to do stuff for God, we want to feed the lambs and the sheep, we want to save the world, but we are not ready to acknowledge that we have nothing to offer God and that we bring nothing to the altar until Christ is actually doing the works within us ([Joh 15:4-5](#)). That altar is the cross, and Christ is the one who enables us to be an acceptable sacrifice unto our Father so we can carry that cross ([Joh 14:6](#) , [Php 4:13](#)).

Christ is bringing Peter to say what we all will say out loud in our time and order, and this lesson will repeat itself right up until the second resurrection where we continue to want to declare those good works that we did for God, only to hear our Creator say "I have no knowledge of you or where you come from" Those good works were not accredited to the Creator who was doing them, therefore making us workers of iniquity ([Mat 7:22](#) , [Luk 13:27](#)).

We do live by every word of God and so we can see that as long as we don't continue to completely give God the credit for every single work of righteousness in our life we are simply coming up in the second resurrection in shadow at that very moment to have this spirit burnt up by our loving Father who is not going to let any flesh glory in His sight. Let us therefore not despise His goodness which is continually seeking occasion against our flesh so that we can be judged today and hopefully be used to show that same mercy to others in the second resurrection ([Rom 2:4](#) , [1Pe 4:17](#) , [Rom 11:31](#)).

[Joh 21:17](#) He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest<sup>G5368</sup> thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest<sup>G5368</sup> thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love<sup>G5368</sup> thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep**

This pattern of questioning from our Lord is a parable ([Mar 4:33](#)) for his elect who are grieved in spirit when we come to see that we come way short of what is required of us, and that we can't make war with this beast ([Rev 5:2-4](#) , [Rev 13:4](#)). Christ knows just as Peter says out loud, "**thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love<sup>G5368</sup> thee.**" So if our Lord knows that Peter loves<sup>G5368</sup> him why even ask the question is what Peter is thinking. Our Lord asks the question to demonstrate that the love<sup>G5368</sup> that Peter is expressing is not going to "**Feed my sheep**" but is rather a shadow of the much deeper love of God which will enable Peter to feed God's sheep by becoming a living sacrifice with Christ in Him. There is only one true Shepherd and Christ is driving this point home for Peter so that he knows that it is the Lord who going to do this work through him and that Christ is the rock that Peter will be built upon ([Mat 16:18](#)).

We certainly cannot enter into the temple until it goes from being defiled with so many schisms ([1Co 12:25](#)) and false spirits which must be driven out by Christ himself ([Joh 2:15](#)) in order to become the house of prayer ([Luk 19:46](#)) it was always intended to be. This is good news for us to see that Christ is cleansing us and developing within us the patience and faith of the saints through this process ([Rev 13:10](#)) so that we can worship God in spirit and in truth ([Joh 4:23](#)). This is the reason Christ is being very redundant with Peter to show him and ourselves that God's love will grow in us by way of a process which can only be accomplished by the power of the holy spirit. That process as we mentioned last week is why Christ asked Peter three times if he loved him. It is by the judgment of our first man Adam and his destruction that a new loving creation is formed by the hand of the Master Potter ([Jer 18:3-4](#)).

God brings us to see that no man is able to enter into the temple, and this is what grieves us over and over, whether that be for what we have to fight a good fight of faith to let go of within our own life ([1Ti 6:12](#)), or of those things which God calls us to let go of outside of our own personal fleshly battles ([1Co 3:12-15](#), [Mat 10:37-38](#)).

Here is another way God's word explains this process which the Lord is working in so very few today!

[Rev 15:8](#) And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and **no man** was able to **enter** into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

[Rev 14:10](#) The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is **poured out** without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

[Rev 16:2](#) And the first went, and **poured out** his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

[Rev 16:3](#) And the second angel **poured out** his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

[Rev 16:4](#) And the third angel **poured out** his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

[Rev 16:8](#) And the fourth angel **poured out** his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

[Rev 16:10](#) And the fifth angel **poured out** his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

[Rev 16:12](#) And the sixth angel **poured out** his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

[Rev 16:17](#) And the seventh angel **poured out** his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done

*any comments at this point?*

[Joh 21:18](#) **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.**

This next part of scripture is not just a prophecy of the way Peter is going to die but also the way that he will have been dying daily once he has the holy spirit given to him. Christ words are a parable as well as a prophecy and when we're young we cloth ourselves in our supposed state of free moral agency, and therefore we walk where we want to walk, in the way that seems right unto us not knowing that this is all by God's design ([Eph 1:11](#)) as He is seeking an occasion against our flesh right from the get go ([Pro 16:25](#)).

When we mature or become old spiritually we stretch forth our hands, a symbol of prayer and being in submission now to God's will even though the fleshly part of us still does not want to go where our Lord is taking us, just as Christ said in the garden of Gethsemane as a mature Christian, **"My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."** We learn to cry out for nourishment which we receive by God's word through his body, which is a sword that continues to not depart from our house God willing ([2Sa 12:10](#)), and leads our old man where our first Adam does not want to go. This is a

glorious gift to have the hedge down in our life today and to not let the sword depart from our house.

Christ demonstrates in the garden of Gethsemane what it will take for Peter and all mankind to become a true overcomer of our first very worldly understanding of love. Christ overcomes his flesh and leaves us this living example and parable of crying out to our Father three times. The obedient spirit of Christ preceded the obedient actions which were able to be accomplished by having his flesh strengthened by an angel. Christ has obeyed his Father all along being faithful in the little things ([Luk 16:10](#), [1Co 3:10](#)) and building up to this greatest act of love ([Joh 15:12-15](#)).

Christ and the Christ will accomplish this same obedience by being strengthened by an angel ([Mat 20:23](#), [Luk 22:43](#)). We are that angel to each other in times of being sore pressed, by being faithful to one another, in not forsaking our assembling ([Heb 10:25](#)), in coming together often where we can encourage each other ([Mal 3:16](#)). The world may perceive this as small things, but to God our assembling and communion ([1Co 10:16](#)) is where the very building blocks are formed that will enable us to endure the harder trials when the Lord prepares us for those. So we see by Christ's example that we will need to bear each other's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ as this angel is a type of Christ working through His elect body to strengthen them so they can bear each other's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ ([Gal 6:2](#)).