

The Mark of a Committed Disciple

John 21:15-25

Following their breakfast on the beach (John 21:1-14), Jesus teaches his disciples about what it means to be a committed disciple. He explains that *as disciples, we should demonstrate our love for Jesus by obeying him in whatever he calls us to do.*

A disciple loves Jesus above all others (15-17)

Peter denied Jesus around a charcoal fire (18:18, 25). Now Jesus will restore him publicly around a similar fire.

Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Jesus more than the other disciples do. The original conversation was in Aramaic but John records it in Greek. Thus, there is a debate on whether or not there is a significance in the different words used for love by Jesus and Peter.

Jesus	Peter
Do you love (agape) me?	Yes, Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you.
Do you love (agape) me?	Yes, Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you.
Do you love (phileo) me?	Lord ... you know that I love (phileo) you.

Rather than compare his love for Jesus to the other disciples, Peter simply appealed to Jesus' knowledge of his heart.

Rather than testing the quality of Peter's love, Jesus was giving him an assignment to demonstrate his love by serving him as a shepherd.

Lambs need to be fed. Sheep need to be guided.

Failure is not fatal. Regardless of one's mistakes in the past, you can still be restored to a relationship with God and serve him in some way.

A disciple understands that a life of service is sometimes difficult (18-19)

Jesus went on to describe the type of death that Peter would die. “Stretch out your hands” was a euphemism for crucifixion. A “death that glorifies God” was a euphemism for martyrdom.

Demonstrate your love for Jesus by serving him in whatever he calls you to do, even if it proves difficult.

A disciple focuses on their story rather than comparing themselves with others (20-23)

Jesus and Peter had apparently left the fire and gone for a walk. John was apparently following behind.

Since he was going to suffer crucifixion, Peter wanted to know what was going to happen to John. Jesus told Peter that was none of his concern.

A rumor started that John was not going to die. John clarified that that was not what Jesus meant.

Rather than play the comparison game and worry about other people’s futures, follow Jesus yourself.

A disciple knows that God’s word is trustworthy (24-25)

John again affirmed that he was an eyewitness of everything he wrote about, and that his testimony was trustworthy.

John closed by stating that the world could not contain all the details of everything that Jesus said and did.

Questions to ponder

What’s your part in God’s redemptive plan for the world?

How much hardship are you willing to endure for the cause of Christ?