

RUSSELL SANDERS

5-16-2022

## JESUS QUESTIONS PETER'S LOVE – LESSON 2

Saturday (5-14) we introduced the story in John 21:15-17 where Jesus was asking Simon Peter of his love for Jesus.

It is noteworthy that Jesus addressed him by his secular birth name of Simon rather than the new name Jesus had given him Peter meaning “rock” upon calling him as a disciple. He took the name from the spiritual plane (Peter) to the natural plane (Simon) where Jesus (**who** **“knowest all things”** – vs. 17) knew that Peter was still living in.

Jesus' first two questions addressed Simon Peter on the spiritual plane. Peter's response was on the natural plane, not from the spiritual plane.

Jesus' third question then addressed Peter on the natural plane where he was yet still living. To understand this, we must look at the original Greek word used for “love” in these three verses.

The first two times Jesus used the word “love” it comes from the Greek word “agapao” (ag-ap-ah'o) from which we also get “agape.” We call it a “God-given love.” It is love in a deep moral sense uncommon to mankind in general. It is the kind of love God has for us. It is the love Jesus had for his disciples.

The third time Jesus used the word “love” is the Greek word “phileo” (fil-eh'o) which we generally refer to as “brotherly love.” It is the common type of camaraderie that we have with other people. It means that we “like” them.

Jesus' first two questions were of the “agapao” kind of love. Simon was unable to respond in kind. His response was “phileo,” as in “I like and respect you.”

In Jesus' third question of Peter's love, he shifted to Peter's human level in asking if Peter's love was “phileo.” In other words, Jesus was asking him (my paraphrase), *“Simon, do you really even like me?”* That is the question that broke Peter's heart.

What about you? Do you have an appreciation for who Jesus is (phileo), a respectful relationship with Jesus as your friend? Or do you have the keen sense in your spirit that you have a deep heart-felt love and closeness to him that far transcends a friend relationship?

Yes, Jesus is a friend, the dearest of all kinds. But we must also sense the awesome fullness of his love and position as our God and Savior. That is the agapao (agape) love.