

John 21:1-25  
*Jesus and Peter*

In this passage, a few things stand out to me. So many issues come up here- Peter's loyalty to Jesus; the question of the depth of Peter's love for Jesus; and the issue of what will happen to those who follow Jesus after he is gone.

We see in this passage Jesus reaching out to Peter who had betrayed Jesus very recently. We also saw that Peter was the one who leaped from the boat to get to Jesus – he couldn't wait to see Jesus. Peter's impulsivity was the thing that both endeared him to people and also got him into trouble. Jesus was asking Peter if he was really in for the long haul. In other words, he was saying, "Peter, can I count on you to care for my people, no matter what?" Jesus made Peter really think about this by asking it three times. I find it interesting that the essence and test of devotion to Jesus is the willingness to "Care for His sheep." Jesus is in the business of restoration, and he, in this very interchange, was restoring Peter to service. In so doing, he was modeling to Peter that he wanted Peter to become a restorer of others. Once again, we see that broken people can use their broken areas to help restore others.

Peter's last response was one I often find in myself. Peter said basically, "Lord, you know my heart and mind better than me, what do you think?" I know that I can't fool Jesus- he is the creator and Master, and he knows me better than I do. I find that my answer to "Do you love me?" is "I really hope so, do I?" You see, I don't know my own heart as well as Jesus does, but I trust that he will take care of it and love me even when I don't know what to say or think.

I also found it fascinating that Peter asked about John's future. Jesus pretty clearly said, "Peter, don't worry about what will become of John- that's my business. You work out your own relationship with me." I wondered if Peter was feeling that if he had to die a martyr's death, would John also have to endure that, or would John "get away" with not having to give his life. Just my speculation here, but it once again shows that Jesus has a way of getting to the heart of the truth with us.

*Prayer: Father, I thank you for sending your son to die for our sins, but also to restore us to service and to bind up the broken areas of our lives. Thanks for your plans, which are so far above our own! Amen.*