DYING TO LOVE
(JOHN 20 AND 21)

INTRO: John 20 and 21 still speak volumes to me, and in my attempts to leave it, I would like to look at a summary of all we've saturated in these past months. Every page is drenched it seems with incredible emotion. What stops me here? What causes us to gaze at these scriptures as if it is a raging river, a majestic mountain, or a serene sunset? For me at least, it seems there is stark contrast of death and life, hope and despair, doubts and belief, heaven and hell. What a shame if I left this story, this segment of history, and my life were untouched. NO new insights, no decisions had been made, or worse yet, I thought it was just a really nice story! Again, this isn't just some long ago story, this is living water and the bread of life.

I. AVAILABLE SEEKERS

Jn. 20: 1-3 We see Mary, Peter and John, still looking interested, still in the vicinity of their Lord, both geographically and emotionally, as well as spiritually. In Jn. 20: 19, and 26 We see the rest of the disciples still interested. Afraid maybe, but together, staying close. Their joy and pain has merged them. They seem helpless, but there is nor reason to believe they are completely hopeless. Life is fearful to them, but not entirely futile. They still have a spark that can be ignited and it seems they are staying in this thing together. Jn. 21: 1-3 gives the same picture. Peter is jumping in the water, John is shouting, and they all know it is Jesus on that shore.

Defining "available seeker" would go something like this; "available" is defined in the dictionary as "present or ready for immediate use. "Seeker" in the Greek, is endeavor or desire. An available seeker would apparently look like this: Someone with a desire that is ready for immediate use.

II. AGGRESSIVE SAVIOR

Jn. 20: 14-15 Jesus is after Mary. He will make Himself known to her. She has desire and she is ready and Jesus is going to manifest to someone like that. In Jn. 20: 19-22 and 26-28, He shows up again to the others. He won't quit. He won't leave them locked up, inside or out. He really is aggressive about this, to the point of not quitting on them until all of them have seen Him manifest Himself. Again in Jn. 21: 4-6, can you see how intent if not intense He is? It is almost like He is the "seeker". Didn't He say something like that once? That He came to seek and to save? WOW!, He is seeking us out? He is the aggressor and you.... well you have this deep desire and are available for immediate use... what a concept.

III. AFFECTIONATE SACRIFICE

Jn. 21: 15-16 Can we grasp this "love connection?" We maybe can see the kind of affection in this agape love that He is after, but do we really grasp this connection between love and sacrifice? There are a couple of Webster's definitions that interest me on "sacrifice." : 1. An act of offering up to Deity something that is precious, or the killing of a victim upon an altar; And 2. destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else. Imagine your love creating a sacrifice that caused you to allow something "not of Him", that is holding you back, to be surrendered so His life could move in to that space. What if your sacrifice was an offering of a precious gift to the Father, and a destruction of YOUR DESTRUCTION, which created this possibility for the fusing of your life into His life, until people really couldn't see much difference between His life and Yours.

IV. THE ABANDONMENT OF SELFISHNESS (and awakening of the Spirit).

Jn. 21: 17-22 Abandonment is "desertion" and selfishness is to be "unduly devoted to one's self and to be influenced by a private advantage! Where does one see this operating in Jesus' life? What if we were simply deserting our self devotion and having our destruction (control) destroyed so we could really live free? Jesus when tempted in the wilderness refused to take control of His life at the tempting of Satan, so that the Father's life would be in control. Wouldn't it be freeing to love like that, without having to control every event to advantage? The world is dying to see that kind of love.

REFLECTIONS AND APPLICATION

1.) WHO ARE THE LAMBS AND SHEEP IN MY LIFE AND HOW DO I FEED THEM?
(MESSAGE ONLY) (Local missions, world missions, your home, extended family, church and community.)

2. IS THE LOVE I EXPRESS FOR HIM DRIVEN BY FEAR, ATTENTION, PAYOFFS FOR ME (rewards), OR AN INTERNAL AND UNCONTROLLABLE DESIRE FOR HIM?
(MESSAGE ONLY) (Fear, then comfort, then proving something, then obligation, then HIM!).

3. HOW WOULD LIFE CHANGE FOR ME IF I WAS IN OUT OF CONTROL LOVE WITH HIM? (OR HOW HAS IT CHANGED IF I AM?)

4. DO MY FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND OTHERS KNOW THE POSITION HE HOLDS IN ME? HOW?