

August 28, 2005

THE LOVE CONNECTION (John 21: 12-25)

INTRODUCTION

Let's summarize last week. Jesus is the supplier of our needs, He is always present, even when it seems He is in the shadows. He is also the supper... the fellowship that goes beyond the meal. Suppose for a minute that you look out into your backyard and there sitting at your barbecue grill is Jesus. He waves and says: "Come out and have a burger, let's eat together, the food is on." Let's just pause for a moment and reflect on what our fellowship would consist of.....Are you thinking "uh-oh" or, "oh...oh...yes... wow...!! Why is it that we have the pre-disposition to think He is going to get on me, knock me down? Maybe, just maybe He is going to give you a picture of what your life is when it is His life that *is the essence* of your life. That's a wow!

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP? 21:15

When He asks the question "do you love me more than these," isn't He really asking if the same love that is flowing in Him is flowing in us? The thing about this "agape" or God's love is that it clears up all motives for doing. This isn't about attention or even our intentions. It is about **relationship**. He is asking MORE than are you and He "tight", He is asking are we loving one another in the same relationship that Jesus has with His Father. This is the first connection. Love is a relationship out of which comes response, not just a feeling. In John 17 Jesus prays constantly that WE, the BODY might be one even as He is with the Father. In fact, He gave a new commandment! Let's read John 13:34-35. So this becomes not only a prayer of Christ but a Commandment! We have talked before but shall repeat the agapao, vs. the phileo matter. Jesus keeps asking about the love that comes from the heart of God, and Peter responds with a good intentioned but different level of love. The ultimate character of God, LOVE, must flow in my life for me to have the life of God flowing out of my life!. You cannot imitate God's love, you must be inhabited by it to be His vessel. Imitation and impersonation are real poor substitutes for INHABITATION. What if the only way to really produce anything of value is not working for it but from working from it? Out of it? Was Jesus working for the Father or was His life flowing from the Father? Is that same life available to you? That same LOVE? That sam ONENESS? Let's read John 17: 21-26. How clear can it be? That same love, that same oneness, that same relationship. Not impersonation, INDWELLING! That is the ONLY thing that will bring the body of believers into what it has to be in these days.

WHAT RULES YOU? 21: 17-22

There is another emphasis, which is absolutely paramount to carrying out tasks. I can feed sheep all day long, all life long, and not have love, not agape love anyway. Sometimes it is possible that I might even be feeding sheep to earn His love. That is bondage!! *The meaning in these passages is significantly different than working for the Lord. Jesus never says first, "feed my sheep if you want to prove your love for me."* That is burnout city for anyone. No, feeding sheep is that **which flows out of something already established**, AGAPE LOVE. When the heart of the Father takes over, and the mind of Christ rules, then the action follows the attitude if you will. It is not the action that proves anything at all. Action without the attitude of His mind breeds bitterness and brings a huge attempt to control things. Let's read I Corinthians 13: 1-3. Doing great things for God, doesn't equal love. It is not a mathematical equation of IF=THEN. Love however does seem to equal a new attitude or MIND. **LOVE is....a new mind-set**. Actually, love is the relinquishing of control and comparison to others. If I maintain control I believe there is safety. If I give

up control, there is risk, in my thinking. Actually, the opposite is true. There is freedom, because my actions are now ruled by AGAPE love. No comparisons to others are needed, because I am not proving myself. I am having what has been proved, lived out in me. And this is not forced.. It is a CHOICE! Greater love has no man than to lay down his or her life. Laying it down is a response to His inhabiting me, for that is what He does, lays down His life.