



Part 2: Loving Jesus

John 21:1-19

Our highest calling is to love Jesus.

I. An Uncomfortable Question: “Do you love me?”

Belief is important and even necessary. At a key moment in the disciples’ relationship with Jesus, he asked them: “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15). The journey of growing as disciples starts with belief, but it never stays there.

“To be human is to have a heart. You can’t not love. So, the question isn’t whether you will love something as ultimate; the question is what you will love as ultimate. And you are what you love... Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.”
—James Smith, *You Are What You Love*

II. From Belief to Love

A. Our Response to Failure and Fatigue (John 21:1-3)

Context: Peter’s denial of Jesus, Jesus’ crucifixion, Jesus’ resurrection. Peter and his companions have returned to their old patterns (what they know and can control).

Jesus uses our failures to bring us to an end of ourselves so we can come to him: “Come to me...” (Matthew 11:28).

B. The God of Second Chances and New Beginnings (John 21:4-14)

Jesus reveals to us the God of second chances and new beginnings.

Jesus is serving these men who abandoned him at his arrest. Jesus is taking Peter back to key moments in their relationship.

Jesus is telling Peter we can start over. Jesus always deals with us personally according to our story, not someone else's story (John 21:20-23).

C. **Healing Our Shame and Recalibrating Our Love** (John 21:15-19)

Jesus asks Peter the same question 3X because Peter denied Jesus 3X (Luke 22:31-33, 54-62). Having paid for Peter's guilt on the cross, Jesus is now healing Peter's shame.

Fear and shame are poor motivators for faithfulness and obedience. Will power only takes us so far.

We must taste and experience God's steadfast love (*hesed*) in Jesus before we can love him very deeply. God's love in Jesus precedes him asking us to love him.

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

"God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." Romans 5:5

Jesus knows that his love is the only power that will motivate us to costly obedience. Our attachment to Jesus produces obedience (We need community!).

"If you love me, you will obey me." John 14:5

"Your inadequacy is your first qualification." – John Gaynor Banks

III. **Follow Me** (John 21:19)

Forming disciples who love Jesus and follow his Way.

“We are not meant to merely love His teaching, or His morals, or His kindness, or His social reforms. We are meant to love the man Himself, know Him intimately; keep this as the first and foremost practice of our life. First things first. Love Jesus.”

—John Eldredge, *Beautiful Outlaw*

Discussion Questions:

1. Compare this story in John to the stories in Luke of Peter’s first call (Luke 5:1-11) and Peter’s denial of Jesus (Luke 22:31-34, 54-62). What do you see?
2. What do you think Jesus is doing with Peter? Why is this so important?
3. Jesus asked his disciples two key questions in their faith journey: “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15) and “Do you love me?” What is the difference between those two questions?
4. Describe your faith journey and where you are in moving from belief to love?