John 21:15-17 10/6/2024 AM

A PASTOR’S REPSONSIBILITY TO THE CHURCH:

LOVE JESUS & SHEPHERD HIS SHEEP

**INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever known a pastor who failed in the ministry? We all have and it can be a devastating thing to witness which is what Peter did. He denied Jesus multiple times on the night of His arrest. However, he was forgiven because he truly loved Christ and, as that occurred, Jesus told Peter to do 4 Things as a Leader in the Church After He Fell:

**1). Love Me (verse 15)**

Why?

Because Peter had failed in that department. He had let his love for Christ grow when he denied Him so the Lord told him to stop it and put Him first again. After all, that is where a man’s role as a leader begins. It starts with his relationship to Jesus. That comes first and foremost before anything else. For example, it comes before:

* His ability to preach
* His ability to lead
* His ability to counsel

**2. Tend My Lambs (verse 15)**

Why?

Because you cannot love Jesus without loving His church. A pastor needs to care for the souls that have been entrusted to him. Positively, this involves teaching them the Word of God. Negatively, it involves warning them from danger which is a full-time job. It is a 24-hour-a-day, 7 day a week sort of commitment and Peter was commanded to do it all out of a heart that adored the Savior.

**3. Shepherd My Sheep (verse 16)**

Here Jesus tells Peter to shepherd / tend His sheep again because the other disciples were listening. The context seems to indicate that they were overhearing this conversation and had to be wondering: What was Jesus going to do with Peter now? Was He going to let him have it after he failed the Lord? The answer is “No” because Jesus was going to show mercy to him.

(Discussion Question: Obviously, this needs to be balanced with the fact that some sins do disqualify a man from the ministry. What are some examples of those and how was Peter’s sin different?)

**4. Tend My Sheep (verse 17)**

This final phrase is used to bring this part of the conversation to a close. In doing so, Jesus asks Peter one more time “Do you love Me?” which causes Peter to grieve because he understood what the Lord was doing. He was asking him that question 3 times in order to correspond with each of his 3 denials. Not to embarrass Peter but to show him that His grace covered every sin and now it was Peter’s job to go back to work serving the Lord.

(Discussion Question: Did Peter obey the Jesus’ command here and get back to work serving the Lord? How so? What did the doctrine of God’s sovereignty have to do with it? How should that doctrine be an encouragement for us today?)