

# *Heart to Heart*

Devotional Thoughts for Women

April 2017

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## **Do You Love Me?**

Have you ever found it difficult to look someone in the eye...after you've just broken their heart? When Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus was standing nearby outside of the home of the Jewish high priest. He heard the rooster crow and knew it all – Peter's first denial of knowing Jesus, his second more adamant one accompanied by swearing, and his third and final denial hurled out with curses filling the air. And that's when Jesus turned and looked at Peter. What must Peter have seen in the eyes of Jesus? Disappointment, sorrow, pity, pain? In Luke 22:61, we're told that as Jesus looked at Peter, Peter remembered the words of the Lord, *Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times*. Peter had broken the Lord's heart; no wonder the next thing he did was to go out and weep bitterly. (Luke 22:62)

Fast forward several days...It has now been more than a week since Jesus has been resurrected, and he has made three appearances to his disciples as the resurrected Savior. Peter has seen his risen Lord on all three occasions, but nothing specific has been said about his shameful three-time denial of Jesus prior to the crucifixion...until now. In John 21:15-17, an interesting conversation takes place between Peter and Jesus. On the surface, it appears that Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” to which it appears that Peter responds three times, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Seems pretty cut and dry, if not somewhat repetitious, but let's look a little closer at what was really being said.

We see our English word “love” being used in these three verses by both Jesus and Peter, but they are not conveying the same meaning. There are four Greek words for “love” that make the meaning of the

word much more specific: *Storge* which is primarily family love (love of parents for children), *Eros* which is an intimate love or one of sexual passion, *Phileo* which is an affectionate love, one of friendship, and *Agape* which means to prefer above all else, to love supremely, perfectly. Jesus uses the last two Greek words, while Peter only uses the Greek *phileo*. So the conversation goes something like this...In verse 15, Jesus asks Peter, “Do you *agapeo* Me more than these?” Jesus is asking for the depth of Peter's devotion. After Peter's denial of Christ, did he now prefer Jesus above all else? Was he ready to love Christ supremely? Peter's answer was one of a humbled man who fully realized the depth of what he had done. He responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I *phileo* You.” His answer tells Jesus that he has a true, friendly affection for Him, but he can't honestly say that he loves Jesus better than anyone or anything. Peter's love and sincerity were being questioned when his previous actions had made his love for Christ questionable. His own words must have been ringing in his ears when he had told Jesus back in Matthew 26:33, *Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will **never** be made to stumble.*

In verse 16, Jesus asks him again, “Do you *agapeo* Me?” And Peter is forced to answer honestly in the same way again, “Yes, Lord, you know that I *phileo* You.” Then in verse 17 comes the third and final question, only this time, Jesus will choose a different word. He now asks Peter, “Do you *phileo* Me?” This third question causes Peter sorrow and distress. Peter is being reminded by three questions that he denied his Lord three times. He is also grieved that he cannot answer Jesus in the way that he wants. Peter wants to claim that supreme love for Him that was commanded in Deuteronomy 6:5, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might*, but he doesn't feel that he honestly can after recognizing his own recent weakness and failure.

Through this conversation, we actually see the love and forgiveness of Jesus being extended to Peter. Jesus sees Peter's humility after his recent prideful posture that led to his downfall. He has work for

Peter to do and wants him to re-focus his priorities and ready himself to “feed the sheep” as Jesus has told him. Peter cannot take on the important task of teaching the gospel and loving souls if he isn't ready to *agapeo* the Lord. (Love God supremely and prefer Him above all else.) As we see from a study of the life of Peter, we know that he rises to the challenge. He becomes a great gospel preacher, an elder in the Lord's church, and a writer of two epistles in the New Testament.

Are we willing to honestly answer the same question posed to Peter? Jesus wants to know if we love Him. He wants us to have affection for Him and consider Him a friend, but He wants (and demands) more from us than that. He wants us to love Him supremely, above all others, with all of our heart, soul, and mind.

~Heather Pryor

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**Ladies Bible Class – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 a.m.** Please bring your Bible and a breakfast item to share. We will be studying **Lesson 12.**

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**Answers to Last Month's Quiz**

1. “The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” (John 8:29) \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus \_\_\_\_\_
2. “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9) \_\_\_\_\_ Joseph \_\_\_\_\_
3. “Therefore, we make it our aim...to be well pleasing to Him.” (II Corinthians 5:9) \_\_\_\_\_ Paul \_\_\_\_\_
4. “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38) \_\_\_\_\_ Mary \_\_\_\_\_
5. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10) \_\_\_\_\_ David \_\_\_\_\_

# RECIPE CORNER

*"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15*

## RESURRECTION ROLLS

- 2 (10 oz.) cans of crescent rolls
- 8 large marshmallows
- 2 T. sugar
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 T. cinnamon
- foil cupcake liners

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Separate the crescent rolls into 8 rectangles, pinching seams together. In a small bowl, blend cinnamon and sugar together. The marshmallows are white representing the purity of Jesus. Dip each marshmallow in the melted butter, then roll it in the cinnamon/sugar mixture. Jesus' body was wrapped in linen cloth and covered with oil and spices at his burial. Place each marshmallow in the center of a rectangle of dough. Wrap the dough completely around the marshmallows, pinching seams tightly to seal the marshmallows inside as they bake. Jesus was placed in a tomb that was sealed shut. Place each roll in a liner placed in a muffin tin. Bake in the oven for 13-15 minutes or until golden brown. When you open the rolls, the marshmallow inside will have melted leaving a hollow roll - just like Jesus' empty tomb.

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*Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." ~Matthew 28:1-6*