

The Revealing

by

Rocky Fleming

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. John 21:17 (ESV)

"The Lord's questions always reveal the true me to myself." Oswald Chambers

What a day and time that must have been to Peter as he stood before Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee? In your mind's eye, can you not see the once proud fisherman hanging his head down in shame, as Jesus spoke these questions to him? Peter was living with a shame that I think he thought would never be removed from him. He had betrayed Jesus when he could have been identified with Him and when Jesus needed his friends to stand with Him the most. *Proud Peter* said he would never desert Jesus, and he would die with Him if necessary. But the *humbled Peter* now knew that the facade that represented his life had been exposed, and his true identity was revealed. But was it? Was the new identity that Peter now lived with, as a betrayer, his true identity, or was there another identity Jesus wanted to reveal to him? If you will look closely at the dialogue between Jesus and Peter, you will see what Jesus was doing in Peter that was deeper than he realized at the time. He was helping Peter, through His piercing questions, to see who he had become and what he really felt about Jesus. It was there that Peter came to see the real Peter ... a man who indeed loved Jesus more than anything in his life, and a man who would spend the rest of his life declaring his love for Jesus by living his life for him. **Peter ... the real Peter ... was revealed.**

As I thought on Chambers' quote in my quiet-time, I had to ask the Lord, and myself, if Jesus was asking me any questions such as He did with Peter. Like Peter who would have remained in his condition of shame and would live a wasted life because of it, any of us could waste our life by avoiding Jesus' questions. But the life of God's man is far too precious to be wasted, and that is why we want Him to ask the tough questions, even if they are ones that reveal a fraud or a hypocrite in us. We need to know if we have limited our self and wasted our life because we fear coming face to face with our shame that may be hidden from others, and especially from our self. A wasted life cannot be regained, so the importance of the issue demands our attention. Do you share this desire with me? Are you willing to allow Jesus' questions to penetrate any shell of avoidance, or evasion that you have put up because you do not want the pain of facing it? Well I have good news. The pain is realized with retaining our shame and avoiding it, not the deliverance from it. If we can learn anything about what Jesus was doing with Peter, we can see that He was not only restoring the closeness with Jesus that Peter once enjoyed, but he was also helping Peter see who he had really become. This is the mission of the Holy Spirit when He discipled His men. It is to help us see who we really are, and

to become the man he wants us to be. It is to bless us, and that is all the more reason why we should cry out, *“Ask me the questions Lord, for I want to be blessed by You!”*

As I journaled through this thought this morning, I thought of questions in the past Jesus had asked me, such as:

“Is there any unforgiveness in you?”

“Are you holding on to the shame of your past and not accepting your new identity?”

“Are you willing to give your life for Me completely? Do you love Me that much?”

“Are there any hindrances in you that keep you from being this man, and do you need My help to remove them?”

“Are you willing to face them now?”

As I thought on those past questions, I realized that with each question there was an opportunity to come to an honest agreement before the Lord with what I really believed about myself, whether it was good or bad, and with both, by dealing with certain issues appropriately, I was blessed by the Lord. Therefore, with all future questions from Jesus I choose the blessing that will come from them, for I want to be the man Jesus wants to emerge in me, even if I have to face changes that I must make. I want to be this man more than I can explain. Do you want this as well?

After many years in this life, I have discovered that a man who is unsure of his personal identity will be easy prey for the influence of a strong personality in someone else. Most often, this man is vulnerable to bad influences around him, for this kind of influence is the strongest force that comes against him. Even though he knows better, the man who does not know who he is, is like a ship without a rudder that can be tossed around and driven in any direction and by any current. But a man whose identity is established by Christ, this man knows who he is, knows who loves him, knows that he is better than what he is asked to join, and this man will stand strong in the face of the enemy of his soul and the influences the enemy brings to him, for he has a rudder. More than this, he is a conqueror. In fact, scripture says that this man is *“more than a conqueror.”* This man is capable of invading the Evil Man’s territory in this world and he is able to set captives free. This is the man who Jesus wants to emerge in His men, and this is why He asks His questions of us. He wants us to become, and then to know without a doubt, who we are in Him.

Like Peter, coming face to face with our shame is a necessary step to becoming the man Jesus wants to make of us. But it doesn’t stop there. Jesus wants to remove this shame and give us a new identity. This is why I say that His questions always lead to blessing us rather than shaming us.

Jesus knew who Peter was. The problem was, Peter didn’t know who Peter had become. Peter thought he was a shameful representative as a friend and servant of Jesus. But through His questions, Jesus helped Peter see who he had become and who he really was. He had become the man who would faithfully serve Jesus all of his life, and he had finally become the man he wanted to be. This is the objective of the Holy Spirit in your life. He wants you to become the man you deep down long to be, for it is what He wants for you.

It is a challenge, but it is one that you must face if you want to become this man. Will you be willing to ask Jesus to ask the hard questions of you? Would you be willing to face any challenge that comes at you that

gets in the way of you becoming the man He wants to make of you? Let it start now, for there is a man in you longing to come to the surface, and we need that man out here. The world needs this man.