

## “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” (Jn 21:17)

The final chapter of John’s Gospel takes us to Galilee, along the shore of Lake Tiberias. After Jesus’ death, Peter, John, and the other disciples return to their work as fishermen. However, after fishing all night, they catch nothing. The Risen Lord appears to them for the third time and encourages them to cast their nets once more. This time, they haul in a great number of fish. Then Jesus invites them to come ashore and eat with Him. Peter and the others recognize Him, yet they hesitate to speak. At that moment, Jesus takes the initiative and asks Peter a deeply challenging question: “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” It is a solemn encounter. Three times, Jesus repeats His call for Peter to care for His sheep—the people entrusted to him—just as Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd.

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Peter, however, is painfully aware of his past betrayal. The memory of his failure prevents him from responding with absolute certainty. Instead, he humbly says, “You know that I love you.” Yet, Jesus does not dwell on Peter’s betrayal. He does not reproach him or recall his mistakes. Instead, He reaches out in a way Peter can understand. Jesus gently guides him to confront his painful past and, through this, restores their relationship. He asks for nothing more than for Peter to rebuild their bond on the foundation of trust. Peter responds from the depths of his heart. He acknowledges his weakness, but at the same time, he places complete trust in Jesus’ boundless love. His response bursts forth:

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Jesus asks each of us the same question: “Do you love me? Do you want to be my friend?” He already knows everything about us—our gifts, our struggles, our wounds, and our weaknesses. He places His trust in our willingness to affirm our love for Him. We all experience moments of weakness, frustration, and discouragement. We face hardships, painful situations, illness, loss, spiritual trials, misunderstandings, temptations, and failures. Yet it is precisely when we are unable to overcome certain trials that we are in the perfect position to trust in God. When we place our trust in Him, He intervenes. He responds to our trust. This is when God does great things—made even greater because we are small and powerless.

Each day, we stand before God just as we are. We can seek His healing friendship. In our trusting surrender to His mercy, we can renew our intimate relationship with the Lord and continue walking with Him.

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This Word of Life can also become a personal prayer—a prayer of surrender, gratitude, and trust: “I love you, Lord, because you have loved me unconditionally. You have entered my life in a way that no one else could. Let me be grateful for the love you have poured into my life. This compels me to respond: Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”

Following the example Jesus has given us, we can take the initiative to serve others with humility, patience, and understanding. We can ask for forgiveness and refrain from judgment so we can continue our journey together.

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