

RESTORE
IDENTITY CRISIS

Monday, May 18

Reading: John 21

***John 21:15** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love You." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."*

We all have a picture in our heads of who we are. This picture is developed from many sources. Often it comes from what others say about us – whether good or bad. Whether it is a parent or a teacher or our friends, they shape what we think of ourselves. We can get our self-identity from our jobs or our relationships. Sometimes it is shaped by that sin or habit that we just can't seem to break. Most of the time we base our self-identity on the wrong thing and this sets us up for a fall – for an identity crisis.

An identity crisis "...involves a person questioning their sense of self or place in the world...A person going through an identity crisis may find themselves preoccupied with certain questions: [1] What am I passionate about? [2] What are my spiritual beliefs? [3] What are my values? [4] What is my role in society or purpose in life? [5] Who am I?"¹ Our self-identity is often shaped by what others say. We question who we are based on what other people think about us.

Simon Peter is good example. He was the first among Jesus' twelve disciples. He experienced things with Jesus that the others did not. His self-identity was based on his courage and loyalty. In fact, he was so loyal to Jesus that one time he rebuked the Savior after He had spoken about His upcoming death (Matthew 16:21-23)! At the Last Supper, Peter boasted that "even if all fall away, I will not...Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You" (Mark 14:27-31). In the garden, Peter drew his sword and attacked the mob that had come to arrest Jesus. But his bravery and loyalty soon fell apart. Peter's identity crisis occurred when he denied knowing Jesus three times, just as the Lord had predicted.

Jesus' appearance on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection would jolt Peter out of his identity crisis and show him who he really was. It had been on this same lake after another miraculous catch of fish that Jesus had called him to "Follow Me and I will make you a fisher of men" (Luke 5:1-11). But Peter had failed! As Peter sat by the fire that morning, I wonder if he thought of that fire in the high priest's courtyard only a few short weeks earlier where he had denied Jesus. Did Jesus' question, "Do you love Me more than these?" remind Peter of his boast in the upper room that even if all these fall away, he would not! Surely Jesus asking three times "Do you love Me?" showed Peter the folly of basing his self-identity on his own strength or faithfulness because he had denied this love three times! Jesus was calling Peter to base his worth on the love of Christ. This love would make him worthy to "feed My sheep." And based on Christ's love, he would not fail. One day, he would give his life for Jesus.

What is your self-identity (self-worth) based on? Is it in your political affiliations? Your good character? Your reputation? Your 'rule following'? When we base our identity on anything other than the love of God we are bound to fall. Like Peter, we will have an identity crisis when it all comes crashing down. But there is hope! Tomorrow we will look at what God says about who we are in Christ.

¹ <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-an-identity-crisis-2795948#:~:text=An%20identity%20crisis%20is%20a,important%20conflicts%20that%20people%20face>.