

I. Introduction

- A. Title: I would do anything for love, but I won't do that.
 - 1. We tend to speak in absolutes - all or nothing; always or never...
 - 2. Life, however, is lived in degrees.
 - a. It is almost never all or nothing nor is it really ever always or never.
 - b. We like to believe we are characterized by constancy but we are generally not.
- B. Today, we are going to dig deep and I am going to ask some really transparent and tough questions.
 - 1. These are born out of my study of God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit in my life.
 - 2. These questions I'm asking today need to be heard in the context of degrees. I am not saying you do or you don't. I'm asking you to look inward, even those places that you have closed off because you don't want to deal with them.

II. How much do you love ... John 21:15-18. Jesus' love is never in question.

- A. "Do you love me?"
 - 1. Did Peter love Jesus?
 - a. Yes. To a degree (loves to the degree that he is willing to draw his sword or proclaim Jesus, Son of God in controlled environments or leave his occupation; but not so much that he would admit to a slave girl at night that he knew Jesus or to actually obey Jesus when he thought his own plan was better).
 - b. Peter's love was not in question.
 - 1) Jesus wanted to harness Peter's love and steer it toward sacrificial service.
 - 2) This was not about the condition of Peter's heart but converting that passion into action (huge step many of us miss).
 - 2. Peter did not understand how deeply Christ's love needed to be engraved on his heart for him to fulfill his calling.
 - a. No one will persevere in the Christian life unless the love of Christ reigns in his/her heart.

"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;" (2 Corinthians 5:14, ESV)

- b. Your impact will only be as deep as your love for Jesus and your success will reach only as far as your love for Jesus. You may love Jesus, but you love Him only so far as you do what He asks. So, for most of us, we love Jesus with great reservation.

- B. "Feed/tend my sheep/lambs."
 - 1. How could Peter be capable of instructing others in the faith when he had none himself?
 - a. Jesus brings out and destroys the remembrance of Peter's denial.
 - b. Necessary
 - 1) For Peter so he could boldly execute his office and be assured of his calling
 - 2) For others so that the stain attached to him as a person would not detract from the Gospel, and to establish that God is most definitely in the restoration business

**Our usefulness in God's Kingdom is not anchored in what we've done but in Whom we love

- 2. Since you do love Me, as I already know, then take care of the ones I love (both present and future)
 - a. How much, to what degree do you love Me?
 - Enough to care for... family? friends? those who make up my local body (at your church)? co-workers? neighbors? people who hate you?

- b. Do you love me? Yes! But I won't do *that*.
 - 1) My neighbors ...
 - 2) Just don't tell me that it's because I don't love Jesus.
- 3. It's because you don't love Jesus ...
 - a. We prefer other reasons.
 - b. Once we open this door ...
- C. From young to old, and leading to being led
 - 1. You are called to become like Jesus and that will require you to do things you don't want to do.
 - a. Difference between young (immature) and old (mature)
 - b. Maturing modeled in leading and being led
 - 2. Do you love Jesus to the degree that you will give up what you want and let Him lead where you didn't intend to go? You love Jesus, but do you love Him that much?
 - 3. WWII and the Philippine Islands
 - a. The formula for taking each island was the same; establish a beachhead for supplies; move through the jungle with platoons of infantry; then enter the limestone caves that were a part of the geography of each island. These caves were the worst because the Japanese forces had dug themselves in and the only way to get them out was hand-to-hand combat. Any time the caves were left alone, the allies would lose soldiers.
 - b. Your life is like one of the Philippine islands. We've got a foothold by being a "new creation in Christ." The Bible, Church and the believers around us begin the supply line for the mission ahead. We won't be killing others but we will try to keep them from killing us while we are called to love them at the same time. As we enter into the world as a believer, the battle begins. It's the jungle and there are many who thought they loved Jesus but this daily battle is just not worth it. They really didn't love Jesus in the first place and they fade into the darkness. But there are those who love Jesus enough that they've decided this is worth it - that Jesus is worth it and they begin to take new ground. They begin to move through the jungle helping one another survive and grow, picking up new recruits along the way.
 - c. The problem is that many of us have never gotten to the limestone caves. In fact the ones who led us may never even have gotten there themselves. We don't know where they are or even what they look like as we enter the territory. These caves are the stuff that is in ourselves, not the world. This is where we store the things that we end up loving more than Jesus.

**There are two cultures that will hinder you from loving Jesus; the world that you live in, and the world that lives in you. And it's the world that lives in you that you can't hide from.

III. Jesus and you

- A. Jesus asks you this morning, "Do you love Me?"
 - 1. Let me help you with this
 - a. Do you love Jesus more than ... your money? your job? the stuff you want? the girl or guy you are in love with? the girl or guy you are sleeping with? your moral outrage toward people whose sins are just more front and center and less hidden than yours? your children, husband, wife? your reputation? your favorite sins? getting offended by truth? yourself?
 - b. Because that's really what Jesus is asking.
 - B. It's time that this body, the Jesus-centered believers who make up CrossPoint Community Church take seriously one of the most important questions Jesus asked.

1. I have a long way to go. I love Jesus, but He has shown me that I love Him with reservation. I've dismissed this with lots of excuses, but the truth is that the same way Peter was sad that Jesus kept asking, I am too because Jesus knows how much I love Him and how much I don't.
 2. I want to love Jesus so much that I would do anything for Him. And I know that He is growing me. I can tell because I am making more and more decisions that only consider Him. I am doing things I don't really want to do and I'm not doing them because I'm a legalist, it's because I'm in love.
- C. Jesus loves you
1. He proved it when He was led by His Father to give His life for a people who didn't give a rip.
 2. Jesus told His disciples that His body, like the bread He tore, would be broken and His blood, like the wine He poured, would be spilled out because of His love without reservation for them.
 3. We are going to receive communion - it's to remember how much Jesus loves us. It's for those of us who are new creations in Christ.
 - a. Take some time right now to listen as Jesus asks you, "Do you love me?"
 - b. Be honest. The best thing you can do right now is recognize the things that are in the limestone caves holding your love at bay from Jesus. That needs to change, and it may change right now this morning, or it may take a while. But know that Jesus doesn't stop pursuing and loving you.