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Gk 101 Homework #2 , Fall 2014

John 21:15–17 (SBLGNT)

¹⁴ ¹⁵ Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με πλέον τούτων; λέγει αὐτῷ· Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ· Βόσκει τὰ ἀρνία μου. ¹⁶ λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δευτερον· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, ἀγαπᾷς με; λέγει αὐτῷ· Ναί, κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ· Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου. ¹⁷ λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Σίμων Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Φιλεῖς με; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Κύριε, πάντα σὺ οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά μου.

John 21:15–17 (NIV)

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.” ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

Using your Bible, Reverse interlinear, and Exegetical Dictionary if needed answer the following questions:

- 1) In Jesus’ first question, Jesus asks “Do you love me more than these?” Who or what are “these?”

The concluding pronoun could have three meanings -

- 1) do you love me more than these men love me
- 2) do you love me more than you love these men
- 3) do you love me more than you love all the stuff – fishing gear etc.

There really is NO way to answer which one this is – the Greek is ambiguous.

The context though, and with it following earlier questionings and Peter’s failing I think it is probably not the first where Peter would be saying he is better than all the rest

So that leaves it to does he love Jesus more than Peter loves the disciples or the fishing stuff. The later representing a way of life – fishing and all it brings and the other

representing the security of the other disciples, his family and friends. Looking into several commentaries I think I would have to lean in favor of the earlier “do you love me more than you love the other disciples” but there can not be made a dogmatic case here.

- 2) Jesus asks Peter three times, “do you love me.” What more can you find in the Greek? Is there relevance in this change?

In the first two questions, Jesus asks – “do you ἀγαπάω me”

In the third question, Jesus asks – “do you φιλέω me”

The first represents a strong Godly love, willing to give up their rights or privileges in another’s person’s behalf. This is a love of the WILL.

The second represents a great affection for – a strong loyalty towards the one being loved. This is a love of the emotions.

Many commentators believe that John used these two terms as synonyms. Others believe that after Peter failed to acknowledge an ἀγαπάω love the first 2 times Jesus changed his question to asking if Peter at least loved him with a φιλέω love.

I think several things can be said here, 1st, Jesus will always come and meet us where we are. He may want us working at an ἀγαπάω level but if we are only working at a φιλέω level that is where he will come to meet us.

Peter denied Jesus three times. And Jesus came and addressed him three time – making sure that Peter knew there was still a place for him. He was to feed the sheep.

Let me discuss any relevance further in section 3 below:

- 3) Peter answers three times, “you know that I love you.” What more is expressed in the Greek? Is there relevance to this change.

In the first two responses Peter signifies that the Lord “οἶδα (knows) that he loves him”

In the third response, Peter signifies that the Lord “γινώσκω (knows) that he loves him”

“οἶδα” is a knowledge normally acquired through reflection and thinking.

“γινώσκω” is a knowledge acquired through observation and the senses.

Peter in his response to the third questioning moves from telling Jesus that he knows it all intuitively, to telling Jesus that he knows it all experientially. He has experienced

Peter's love. Peter may have failed as did Judas, but unlike Judas Peter was broken, and repentant and driven by his love back to Jesus and the forgiveness of Jesus.

- 4) In Jesus' response to Peter's answers he uses 2 words: Feed, and Tend. What are the original words, and how do their meanings compare

Βόσκω is the word in the 1st and 3rd command of Jesus. Its meaning includes the sense of a) to feed, b) to eat, c) someone who drives and tends a herd

ποιμαίνω is the word in the 2nd command of Jesus. Its meaning has to do more with the act of shepherding, as of sheep or goats. To rule over the flocks.

Throughout this passage John has used pairs of words (Love, know, feed/tend, and sheep/lamb. I think the biggest thing to see here is not the variance in the words but rather the thrice repeated discussion with Peter – bringing him into reconciliation and a renewed call to ministry in spite of his failure on the night of Jesus' arrest.