

# The Disciple Who Loved Jesus and the One Jesus Loved

by Roy Hession

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*The sermon explores the difference between being a disciple who loves Jesus and a disciple whom Jesus loves, highlighting the importance of humility and brokenness in leadership and the depth of God's love and grace.*

**Duration:** 45:33

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:31-35, John 15:9, John 21:15-17

**Topics:** "Disciple"

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## Description

In this sermon, Roy Hession speaks about the concept of being forgiven much or little. He emphasizes that God's forgiveness is available to all, regardless of the magnitude of their sins. Hession highlights the importance of recognizing our own shortcomings and confessing them to God. He also discusses the testimony of John, who identified himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, emphasizing the depth of God's love and grace towards sinners. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to embrace God's forgiveness and experience the transformative power of His love.

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## Transcript

Two messages by Roy Hession. This is the first side of the tape, and it features Roy Hession speaking on the subject The Disciple Who Loved Jesus and The One Jesus Loved. This morning I want to turn you to John's Gospel, chapter 21.

You will remember that the Lord has written again. He's told his disciples to go into Galilee where he's going to meet them. And having got there, Simon Peter didn't know quite what to do, so he said to the other fellows, I go fishing.

And they joined him on that fishing expedition. They caught nothing, and they saw a figure on the seashore who at first they didn't know to be the risen Lord. And when they got to shore he said come and dine.

He'd anticipated their need, and there was fish and the like already cooked and prepared for them. And so with a great awe upon their spirit, they sat down to dine with this Lord whom the last they'd seen of him was on the cross, risen from the dead. And then there followed this conversation around the fire.

Verse 15, So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, son of Jonah, Lovest thou me more than thee? He said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, Feed my lamb. He said to him again the second time, son of Jonah, Lovest thou me? He said unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest I love thee.

He said unto him, Feed my sheep. He said unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, Lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldst. When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hand, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved, following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee, Peter seeth him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he carry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die, but he shall die. if I will that he carry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifies of these things, the one who writes this gospel, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, to which, if they should be written every one, I suppose, that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Well, what a lovely story. Even the reading of these passages has got life in it.

Don't you think so? Especially when we read Hungary to see something more of our Saviour. And I want to bring before you, come to me, these two men, Peter and John. Peter was a man who loved Jesus.

No doubt at all about it. He loved Jesus. But John was a disciple whom Jesus loved.

When Peter gave his testimony, his testimony was that he loved Jesus. Though everybody else would deny him, I wouldn't, I love him. And I'm going to show I love him.

You know how that ended. But John could never make any such proposition. His testimony, I'm a man who's been loved.

That's all he could say. He couldn't speak of any chance of love on his heart for Jesus. He couldn't care of any determination.

He couldn't care of any goals he'd attained or if he had he wouldn't mention them. They didn't bulk large in his mind. His testimony is I'm a man who's been greatly loved.

I've been a man who's picked up, been picked up out of the dead. I've been a man who's been given privileges that I never deserved. And I lean on his bosom.

Three times the writer of this gospel, John, describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. That's all he could say about himself. Peter, the disciple who loved Jesus.

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. I want you to look at this, at all of this as the disciple who loved Jesus. Because I think we are along that line.

We're told we've got to love Jesus. And we've got to express our love in service and loyalty. And we fully intend to love Jesus.

And we fully intend to express our love in service and loyalty. Doesn't seem too hard, quite straightforward. But oh, I tell you this attitude that I'm loving Jesus, I'm going to be a Christian.

You ride for a fall every time. And of course, there's a lot of pride that slips in. And not only a pride that thinks that we do love Jesus, but frankly, it's these other people that don't seem to love him.

And we feel, well they might do this and that, but not my line. I don't do those sort of things. Now that's exactly where Peter was.

Matthew 26, verse 31, Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night. For it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men, you notice men is in italic, that means it's not in the Greek. It's applied for the sake of the English. The American Standard Version says though all these fellows, these other disciples should be offended and stumbled in thee, yet will I never be offended.

Jesus said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee that this night before the cock crows and dawn comes tomorrow, thou shalt deny me three times. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee likewise also said all the disciples. And so here's a man who loved Jesus, fought it, thought he meant it and tried and in turn to express it in his logic.

He could conceive of the others denying the Lord. That wasn't difficult. He knew but not me.

And you know Peter had suddenly got into the position of a self-appointed leader. He was a shepherd and with the sheep. He felt, of course, it was conceivable they might deny him yet will not I. And yet that was the very thing he did.

And he did it more outrageously than any of the others. And if we are disciples who love Jesus and think we do it and want to do our best for him, you and I will have that experience. We've had it already.

We can understand other people going astray but we don't intend to. We won't. And we've taken the place of shepherds over the sheep.

But I believe you and I will be allowed to fail. You'll be allowed to fall. On what we've always thought was our strongest point in order to become the recipient and to come out of that experience not with a testimony that we are disciples whom Jesus who love Jesus I foremost see he must love me almost more than anybody else for he's forgiven me.

And I think we've got to ask ourselves what is our testimony? What is our life? What is the ground on which we live? Disciples who love Jesus determining to love him though if others might go astray yet will not we. Beware. Again and again God allows men to fall and fail to carry on to answer them to humble them to get them on another ground altogether not the ground of disciples that love Jesus but the ground of disciples whom Jesus loved.

While we were yet while I was yet walling while I failed I found that my failure it anticipated it it provided for it beforehand and when I humbled myself I found that grace had provided redemption precious love and you come out with that testimony I'm a disciple whom Jesus loved I've had experience of it well those two men it's rather interesting isn't it?

John never dared to speak of himself in any other way and that just made nothing of what John was it made everything of grace everything of Jesus everything of his love I don't know what it was that gave him to have that testimony I don't know what it was that gave him to see that he was loved I'm quite sure it was somewhere along the line an experience of sin and failure for the love of God and the grace of God is seen most clearly against the back of sin and failure he saw me ruined by the fall he saw me a failure he saw me having done the wrong thing and involved myself in all thoughts and difficulties he loved me notwithstanding all that his love wasn't a love in words only but in deed he not only gave himself for me but he applied that precious blood to my heart to my situation and

as I repented and gave the chaos to him he'd been bringing order out of chaos how we'd like people to think but what's come is because of us we've been very prayerful we've been very diligent nothing of the sort you've been a failure perhaps you need to see that yet and what's come comes from Calvary some people have sometimes said it's very wonderful for a man and wife to work as a team and be one in ministry and one in heart all I can say it comes from Calvary things come as they come to others but God helps us to repent he helps us to go and save and what comes comes from Calvary a oneness that comes through the blood through being willing to break through willing to say yes Lord you're right and I'm wrong and to say to one another you're right and I'm wrong and there comes something

absolutely from Calvary and God doesn't want us to have anything in our lives which comes other than from Calvary he's asked to blow upon natural goodness and natural ability and even natural affinity if your relationship with your husband or your relationship with your wife is based on a natural affinity it will break down oh we're a wonderful couple we never had anything go wrong since the day of our marriage you're no testament oh we're a couple that love Jesus you make me feel like I'm in Syria but oh when a couple can say we're a couple whom Jesus loved whom Jesus has seen so often in our sin and self-will but we know when he's committed we're a couple whom Jesus loved whom grace that's a testimony we need to ask ourselves what is our testimony is it the Pharisees testimony or the

publicans testimony all of us would like to have the Pharisees testimony we aren't just a bunch of people falling oh no the testament of glorified he says I'm a man whom she God did mercifully what a failure I've been is there any hope and then the great message comes there's good news for bad people when they confess their badness and the good news that doesn't only speak of forgiveness but with that forgiveness there comes the overruling of the very follies and take back some of us felt yes God wants and now the situation is and he knows how to bring something sweet and you end up oh I'm a disciple oh gee how helpless and hopeless we sinners have been have loved us to cleanse from our sins now the interesting thing is of course that Peter ended up as a disciple whom Jesus loved he ended

up on the same line that John had John was he began as a disciple who thought he loved Jesus he ended up as a disciple whom Jesus loved and here you see how he ends up do you know there's a sense in which chapter 20 ends the gospel of John you think it's all finished it goes on to say many other signs Jesus did at the end of chapter 20 in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book but these are written that he might believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that believing he might have life through his name finished and then there's this all important PS chapter 21 and it's all the more

important when you would realize that the Acts of the Apostles in which Peter plays such a what would you have thought what would the disciples have thought if the story of

the Acts followed immediately after chapter 20 by the last we saw of Peter was pretending he didn't know the Lord scared of a servant girl and now here he is standing up on the 11th bold preaching the gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost what's happened well something has happened you know when the two on the road to Emmaus came back having met the Lord and they met the disciples in the upper room the disciples had good news too and they said to the two who returned from Emmaus the Lord had risen indeed and it appeared to Peter he hadn't appeared to them yet he'd appeared to Peter because Peter was the man who went out and wept bitterly ashamed and broken oh his appalling denial of the Lord and the first thing the risen Lord did was to have a private interview with Peter we're not told

what went on oh grace reached him he was forgiven he was restored precious blood reconciled him afresh to God but that's not enough no one knows perhaps what's gone on and the next thing you see him standing up there oh no he must be publicly seen to be restored and you know sometimes some people get all wrong and seem to be wrong and maybe they might have a private interview with the Lord and so that's part of they've been restored they've been cleansed they've got that thing put right and away they are up in the front oh no my friends you want to know what happened in that private interview we don't understand it we can be so light about these things I'm speaking of a relative of ours and I forget what the issue was but it was a certain rather uncomfortable telephone call and she fairly

blew up both my wife and myself and she was very angry well she came later to a conference where we were and the Lord was speaking very deeply to many people and my wife and I couldn't help but say I believe the Lord will convict her she'll be repenting very soon but nothing was said she was sweet as sugar to us so nice and so eventually I said to her what happened about that incident has the Lord not spoken to you about it oh she said my what have I got myself into this mess all over oh no no it isn't oh no it isn't and even if you go to Jesus there are those with whom we've been involved who need to know what's happened then you can take it take that old place then they'll be happy for you to take up the reins where you dropped them and thus it was there was some such thing and so you

see er the Lord talking to Peter they're all the disciples the form whom he failed and oh there's been that private interview but they don't know much about it and so the Lord wants to reinstate him before his fellows but it's a very humbling thing to be reinstated on the ground of grace before your fellows but of course they're going to be reinstated only on the ground of grace three times Peter had denied the Lord and three times across the flickering flames of that fire the Lord says now Peter you were a disciple of Simon who loved me do you love me? and listen Peter you said you loved me more than the other fellows did though they might deny you you won't he said Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me more than these other fellows he failed the Lord more than the other fellows he said yea

Lord thou knowest that I love thee thou knowest what went on in that private interview you know but the interesting thing is there are two Greek words used in this verse when the Lord said lovest thou me he used the word my knowledge of Greek by the way is purely second hand his agapeo it's the big word for divine love you love me it's a deep word and Peter just couldn't rise to it he said yea Lord you know I have an affection for thee gone is the old self confident boast he could only use the minor words and then the Lord said a second time you love me using that big full word and once again Peter didn't dare say use the big word only the minor word I have an affection for thee and then the Lord said are you quite sure you've even got that and the third time the Lord dropped down to his

word oh Lord you don't mean to say you're questioning that I am and very feebly you know Lord what went on I wept at your feet and I confessed it all I dare to use that big word and I fancy you even questioning the smaller word you may well question it but you know there was a faint flicker a reflection in me of thy divine love for me and the others and they saw their self appointed leader no he'd only appointed himself humbly in their time not daring to say a thing of what he once said and then the Lord said now feed my sheep this is how leaders are made I put in my bible the re Simon Peter recommissioned I'm afraid I made a mistake he wasn't recommissioned he was never commissioned he was a purely self appointed leader he thought he loved the Lord more than they did and therefore he

took the leadership in vain he'd now seen he's lower he's fallen lower than them and the Lord allows him the privilege of being broken in front of him now you take a look that's how God makes leaders not because we think we love the Lord more and know more about the bible but because he's shown us what we are he's allowed us to fail and then broken as ever and I believe Peter's testimony was simply love when I denied him love when I was a failure love when I was so wrong do you see that in the love of Christ he loved us when we were sinners and he promised to break them grace readers and we end up with a testimony now there is a forgiveness that oh we begin to see grace working for the penitent heart in the very situation so often that he's created for himself I believe that what is meant

perhaps I'm stretching it a bit when it says that the wicked forsaken way do you think the difference between being pardoned and being abundantly pardoned well I think that rightly to be pardoned is to have the sin that's laid at the bottom of things and the recovery of the very next oh what wonderful things grace does to men David was a man who was abundantly pardoned he was not only forgiven his sin with regard to Bathsheba but having been allowed to go through some of the disciplines involved in it and having to flee before he went and now a word about the life oh by the way before we pass on to that you see the key for a moment of John 21 that interview in the gospels before he was a shepherd among the sheep he broke it he huddled it and there he was a sheep among the sheep and when

you're really a sheep among the sheep the Lord can entrust you with some leadership he could begin to use you to tie up that incident now this bit to close with and my wife I'm sure has something to add Ephesians 3 for praise for them that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith that he being rooted and grounded in love may be able and lay and get and hide and to know the love of Christ the four dimensions of the love of Christ and God and ultimately Peter were men whom Jesus loved as they came to know something in all form I wonder which of those dimensions of that love have you had he says first of all the breath of the love of Christ oh Peter saw something of the

breath of it he put himself way out away from God he said I am finished there was another man who did almost the same Judas Iscariot but somehow or other he never saw it he never saw grace he said I am finished what these are going on with me and he when he committed suicide Peter might well have done the same had not Jesus looked at him and broken him and then gone to him in that private interview he was way outside the breath of it our sin does not exclude us from grace for grace is for the sinner that is the whole meaning of grace grace is for the guilty it is for the undeserved that I have been brought back to God and given the solution of the things all wrong in my heart oh the breath of it Charles Wesley singing of the love of Christ said so wide it never passed by one or it had

passed then there is the length the length to which that love goes maybe you will have a testimony on the length of the love of Christ how long with our stiff neck well a long time it took us to break in the patience

and the persistence of the love of Christ oh I know something of the length of the love of Christ I can get so hard and so stiff to justify myself grace can only meet me when I break but he doesn't give up he loves us even when we got our stiff neck he reconciled us to God by the death of his cross even while we were enemies gently and long did he plead with my soul calling for me and maybe in these days together the culmination is going to come and you're going to look back and see how long before you would confess and get right and you'll be amazed at the length of the love

of Christ and then there's the death oh I tell you you can't shock the Lord Jesus with sin he's not shocked and all I can say is that if you get shocked when you hear of somebody else's sin it's probably because you don't know your heart you're capable of that very thing that we all think ourselves so much better if you hear some shameful thing and you're shocked the blood of Christ reaches me even there where sinner bound grace does much more about Jesus is at home in the realm of shame he's not defeated he's ready himself he's ready to get his greatest name what gives glory to God most and oh dear one there may be something about which you're so well it doesn't shock Jesus he took the shock of it years ago on the cross the only thing that's needed is your willingness to bring it out and

get it in the light with Jesus the privileges in which into which this grace brings such gravely defeat do you know sometimes I've been sometimes before we go to a meeting I've had to put and I would have thought well I've got to be stood in the it's hardly right it's hardly oh the height of well there it is and uh we must decide and failing so hopelessly quit the effort do you know there's a verse I noted in John 15 as the father has loved me so have I and there's a great thank you hymn that may not be in our book at all there's a lovely verse that just I am an empty vessel not one thought or look of love I ever with this the end not one thought or look of love I ever this is tapes to live by tape number one hundred fourteen side two Roy Hessian speaking on the subject forgiven much or

little I feel on occasion like this one only really needs perhaps to indicate as one sees it the direction in which the Holy Spirit is likely to lead us in these days it's a good thing if we really have some understanding of the direction otherwise you may be expecting one thing and all the way through you may find that he's leading you in another direction from what you expected now I'm going to turn you to a familiar passage Luke chapter seven verse thirty six and one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him and he went into the Pharisees house and sat down to meet and behold a woman in the city which was a sinner when she knew that Jesus sat at meet in the Pharisees house brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his

feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment and when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it he spake within himself saying this man if he were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him for she is a sinner and Jesus answering said unto him Simon I have somewhat to say unto thee and he says master say on there was a certain creditor which had two debtors the one owed five hundred pence and that was quite a sum pence meant something different from what it means to us the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty and when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both tell me therefore which of them will love him most Simon answered and said I suppose that he to whom he

forgave most and he said unto him thou hast rightly judged and he turned to the woman and said unto Simon seest thou this woman I entered into thine house thou gavest me no water for my feet but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head thou gavest me no kiss but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet my head with oil thou didst not anoint but

this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment wherefore I say unto thee her sins which are many are forgiven therefore this is what it really means not for therefore she loved much but to whom little is forgiven the same love is little the verse I want to bring to you is that last one her sins which are many are forgiven therefore she loved much and that was evidenced in the way she

treated the Lord Jesus but to whom little is forgiven like you Simon the same love is little and that has been evidenced in your attitude to me it seems to me from that passage that there are two sorts of Christians two classes of Christians the one class is the class who is forgiven little represented by Simon the Pharisee and the other class of Christians is the one to whom who is forgiven much as represented by this woman just two classes those who are forgiven little and those who are forgiven much and if there is a division in our meeting it is simply that division those who have been forgiven little those who have been forgiven much and I believe the direction in which God is going to lead us is simply this He is going to lead those who have been forgiven little to be forgiven much

I don't think your halo is going to grow as a result of being here I don't think you are going to feel you have attained new goals it is going to be a very simple progress simply the progress from being forgiven only a little to being forgiven much and if you have been forgiven much then the progress for you is going to be from being forgiven much to being forgiven more now which class of person do you think is most acceptable to God or if you like to use an awkward phrase which class of person is the better Christian the one who has been forgiven little or the one who has been forgiven much if you ask an ordinary man of the world I know the answer that he would give and I believe many of us if we didn't think deeply would give the same answer why obviously the one who is most acceptable

to God is the one who has been forgiven little he hasn't done so much sin he hasn't kicked over the traces he has walked very largely in a straight and narrow way since his conversion he has been a consistent Christian his life hasn't been marked with much failure therefore in the nature of the case he only needs to be forgiven a little and obviously says somebody that man is infinitely preferred to the one whose sins are many and who has been forgiven much but not so with God in the school of grace everything is upside down the bottom is in the top and the back is in the front God is standing on the ground of grace and on that ground he says there is no difference for all of sin the idea that one is a better man than another doesn't come into it on the ground of grace God says there is

no difference the whole lot are a bunch of failures and sinners and that goes for converted persons as well as for unconverted persons but there is a difference on the ground of grace but it's not the difference between much sin and little sin it's simply the difference between the forgiven and the unforgiven and amongst the forgiven the further distinction between the forgiven those who have been forgiven little and those who have been forgiven much God judges you and me by entirely different norms from which the world would normally judge men he's not looking at your consistencies or inconsistencies firstly the final thing is are you forgiven little or are you forgiven much you might be perhaps forgiven not at all but what the things are is not so important for he says there is no

difference I mean the man at the top of the Himalayas is virtually no nearer at all to the stars than the man at the bottom of the coal pit they're infinitely far away there's no difference for all of sin but the difference is how do we stand with regard to the forgiveness of God and our sins are we forgiven at all yes you say well alright then are you a man who's only been forgiven a little or are you a man who's been forgiven much and those that are acceptable to God over which he joys and finds infinite delight are those who have been forgiven oh if we're going to use that word better Christian they are the better Christians of God's

season look in the story the man who was forgiven little because he didn't think he was very bad and had little to be forgiven he found no debt of love in

his heart to Jesus and he manifested it by his attitude and behavior towards Jesus he gave him not even the ordinary common courtesies someone to wash his feet and to anoint his head being forgiven little to love little and I wonder what his relationship would be to other people I wouldn't like to cross Simon the Pharisee he wouldn't make allowances he would be quick to condemn quick to blame and insist on his pound of flesh you see being forgiven little himself he would forgive others only a little and I want to tell you the Christian who only sees himself as forgiven little is going to be a Christian who loves Jesus little in the nature of the case he's obligated to the Lord Jesus to a less extent there's no death of love to the man who's forgiven a little the consistent Christian the

one who's always been victorious who never needs to repent can't understand Christians repenting he's had not a victorious life my dear friend I want to Christian who he's obligated he's obligated death of who's nature of

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