

## Kefa Goes Fishing One More Time ~ Part 3

In my last post, we examined when **Kefa Goes Fishing One More Time ~ Part 2**. In this post, we continue with **Kefa Goes Fishing One More Time ~ Part 3**.

We pick up the story as the fishermen are eating the breakfast that **Yeshua** had prepared for them.

***15** After breakfast, Yeshua said to Shim'on Kefa, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love (agapaô) me more than these?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I'm your friend." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."*

*After breakfast, Yeshua* talked with **Shim'on Kefa**. He asked him, **Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love (agapaô) me more than these?** Why would **Yeshua** ask this? Because when he had predicted that the **emissaries** would fall away, **Kefa** had vowed, **"I will never lose faith in you," Kefa answered, "even if everyone else does."** Matthew 26:33 (CJB). **Kefa** had wanted **Yeshua** to know that though the devotion of the other **emissaries** might waver, he could count on **Kefa** remaining steadfast. He would be the one **talmid** that **Yeshua** could trust. But here, after **Kefa** had shamefully denied **Yeshua** three times, **Yeshua** basically asked **Kefa**, **"Are you still the most committed talmid?"**

I really like how Stern translates **Kefa's** response as **I'm your friend**. Most other English translations have him say, **"You know that I love (phileô) You."** Previously, **Kefa** had claimed that his love for and commitment to **Yeshua** was superior to that of the others. But after his failure and denial, he wasn't willing to proudly say that he loved **Yeshua** with a sacrificial love. In light of this humble response, **Yeshua** told him, **Feed my lambs**. In other words, **"Since you're not thinking so highly of yourself anymore, I can use you to lead and care for my people."**

***16** A second time he said to him, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, do you love (agapaô) me?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I'm your friend." He said to him, "Shepherd my sheep."<sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan, are you, my friend?" Shim'on was hurt that he questioned him a third time: "Are you, my friend?" So he replied, "Lord, you know everything! You know, I'm your friend!" Yeshua said to him, "Feed my sheep!*

Two Greek verbs with related meanings are used in this passage. Greek *agapaô* is selfless, self-giving love, the kind of love God has for his human creations; *phileô* is the love friends or brothers have for each other. Scholars are divided on the degree to which the use of these two different words for "love" affects the sense of this exchange between **Yeshua** and **Kefa**.

The exchange goes like this: **"Do you agapaô me?" "I phileô you." "Feed my lambs. Do you agapaô me?" "I phileô you." "Shepherd my sheep. Do you phileô me?" "You know I phileô you." "Feed my sheep."**

So, seeing **Kefa** humbled, **Yeshua** came down to **Kefa's** level and met him where he was. **Shim'on was hurt**. A question **Yeshua** had now matched his three denials of **Yeshua** repeated three times: "Do you love me?" It broke **Kefa's** heart. All he could do was say, **"Lord, you know everything! You know, I'm your friend!"** When **Kefa** was proudly self-assured about his ability to stand fast at a critical moment, **Yeshua** knew that he would crack under pressure. He knew **Kefa's** heart better than **Kefa** did. The grieving **talmid** understood that now. And since **Yeshua** knew all things, **Kefa** was convinced that **Yeshua** also knew that **Kefa** loved him despite his prior failure.

Again, **Yeshua** told him, **Feed my sheep**. Thus, **Yeshua** was restoring his humbled **talmid** to ministry. **Kefa's** repentance allowed for restoration. Though **Kefa** had previously thought highly of himself, he had come to adopt **Yeshua's** view of leadership in ministry. **Kefa** understood that being a leader of God's people is not about arrogantly exercising power. Therefore, he could later write to other church leaders, "Shepherd God's flock among you . . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet

5:2-3). **Kefa** had taken to heart **Yeshua's** command, "**Shepherd my sheep.**" Sometimes God lets His people fail to develop them spiritually and prepare them for greater usefulness (see Luke 22:31-32).

The books of **Acts, 1 Kefa,** and **2 Kefa** demonstrate that **Kefa** more than rose to the occasion and fulfilled **Yeshua's** calling.

***<sup>18</sup> Yes, indeed! I tell you, when you were younger, you put on your clothes and went where you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.<sup>19</sup> He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Kefa would bring glory to God. Then Yeshua said to him, "Follow me!"***

**Stretch out your hands** refers to crucifixion, where a person's hands and arms are spread out and nailed to the crossbeam. Tradition says **Kefa** chose to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy of dying in the same manner as **Yeshua**. He is believed to have died in Rome in the mid-60's CE.

Despite what was to come, **Yeshua** urged **Kefa, Follow me!** The **Brit Hadashah** shows that **Kefa** did indeed humbly follow his Lord and devote himself to gospel ministry. Are you prepared to follow **Yeshua** in good times and bad, at whatever the cost?

In my next post, we continue with **Kefa Goes Fishing One More Time ~ Part 4.**