Lovest Thou Me?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

Lovest Thou Me?

by

Ellis P. Forsman

October 12, 2011

Lovest Thou Me?

John 2:15-17

John 21:15-17, "*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, 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 saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*"

This memorable question addressed by Christ to Simon is a tremendously important one.

Even though 1900 years have passed by since these words were spoken, this inquiry is still searching.

Simon, who had three times denied his Lord, is now three times called upon to express his love for Christ.

Peter had professed a more affectionate attachment to Christ than the rest of the apostles. He had been more forward in making professions of his friendship and love for Jesus than the others.

So Jesus here asks him, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (Vs. 15).

That is, "Peter, *do you love me more that the others do?*"

A genuine Christian has a true feeling of love for Christ.

A true Christian is not a mere baptized man or woman, or boy or girl.

He is not a person who goes only as a matter of habit to worship on the Lord's Day and then lives the rest of the week as if there were no Christ.

A true Christian is one whose religion is in his heart and life — it is felt by him in his heart and seen by others in his life.

A true Christian loves Christ pre-eminently (before others). Eph. 6:24, "*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity...*"

Why?

- Because of all that Christ has done for him.
- Because of all that Christ is still doing for him.

Love is the guiding force of all our service for Christ.

Do we really love the Lord? If so:

We will want to obey Him.

John 14:15, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*"

Some say the Lord didn't place burdens of commandments on His people other than to love Him. They haven't studied their Bible.

- 1 Cor. 14:37, "*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*"
- John 14:21, "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, ...*"
- John 14:23, "*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*"

If we love a person, we want to please that person. We find out what he likes, and seek to do those things. We seek to avoid doing those things that are not pleasing to him.

So it is with the true Christian and Christ. 1 John 2:4-5, "*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*"

Show a true Christian anything in which Christ delights and he will follow after it; show him anything in his daily practice in which Christ hates and he will give it up.

We will want to be in His presence.

- Matt. 18:20, "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*"
- John 12:26, "*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and <u>where I am, there shall also my servant be</u>: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*"

When we really love a person we delight to be in his company. We wish to be continually in association with him and hate to think of bidding him farewell.

So it is with the true Christian and Christ. The devoted Christian looks forward to the coming of each Lord's Day when he can remember his Lord's death.

- 1 Cor. 10:16, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*"
- 1 Cor. 11:26, "*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*"

Why did Paul write Heb. 10:25? "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*" It was directed to Christians whose love for Christ had grown weak. Their neglect of the assembly was one of the first symptoms of their apostasy.

- Heb. 3:12, "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*"
- Heb. 4:1, "*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.*"

The true Christian longs for that blessed day when he will see his Master face to face and be at home forever with the Lord.

- Phil. 3:20, "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*"
- 1 John 3:2, "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

What would your feelings be if Christ were to return today? "I'm not ready yet, Lord!"?

We will want to converse with Him.

We love to talk to those whom we love. We find no difficulty in finding a subject for conversation with a much-loved person.

Likewise, the true Christian loves to talk to the Lord in prayer.

Do we really love to talk to the Lord? 1 Peter 3:12, "*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*"

It is really not a question of do we love to pray, but do we love the Lord? We love to have those talk to us whom we love. Prayer is our talking to God, but God talks to us through His word.

Do we love to hear His word?

- Psalms 1:1-2, "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*"
- Psalms 19:7-10, "*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*"
- Psalms 119:97, "*O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*"

We will be glad to bring Him gifts and offerings. Matt. 2:11, "*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*"

We love to give gifts to those whom we really love.

What kind of giver does the Lord love? 2 Cor. 9:7, "*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*"

The cheerful giver is one who gives because he loves the Lord and delights to give to Him. The grudging giver is not acceptable for he shows no fruits of love.

We will be willing to sacrifice for His cause.

- John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

- Gal. 1:4, "*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*"
- Eph. 5:1-2, "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*"

We must be willing to "*... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*" (Rom. 12:1).

Reasonable – belonging to reason. That is, a rational service.

We will be willing to avoid anything that will bring reflection upon the name of Christ.

If we love a person, we will deny ourselves anything to please him; we will abstain from those things that we know he would dislike.

So it is with the true Christian and Christ. He will avoid anything that would bring reflection upon Christ. 1 Cor. 10:31-32, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*"

The occasion of the text.

On the evening of the Savior's betrayal, Jesus told the apostles that they would that night be offended because of Him. Matt. 26:31, "*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.*"

Peter promised the Lord that he would never deny Him. Matt. 26:33-35, "*Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*"

Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times.

Peter's denial of the Lord. Matt. 26:69-75, "*Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And*

after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."

After the Lord's resurrection, Jesus calls upon Peter to three times express his love for Him (text).

"Love" on these places represent two different Greek words. What are they?

- **"Agapas"** – A love that rises out of deep devotion; to love devotedly, affectionately, ardently; prompted by devotion." – obedient love.
- **"Phileo"** – To befriend; to like; prompted by emotion." – to love with feeling.

In Jesus' first two questions to Peter, He used the stronger term for love – "agapas".

Peter's reply each time was with the weaker term for love – "phileo".

But the third time Jesus came down to the level of Peter's word for love – "phileo".

Naturally, "*… Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest (phileis) thou me? …*" (John 21:17).

Then Peter replied again, "*…Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee…*" (John 21:17).

The Lord knew that Peter loved Him from the heart, but Peter sometimes did not do what the Lord wanted him to do, thus did not love Him obediently.

He was impulsive:

- He wanted to build a tabernacle for Moses, Elias, & Christ (Matt. 17:4).
- He wanted to walk on the water to Christ, but his faith was too weak to trust in Jesus (Matt. 14:28-31).
- He didn't want Jesus to wash his feet, and then wanted Jesus to wash the rest of his body (John 13:6-9).
- He tried to defend Jesus with the sword (John 18:10).
- He let Jewish Christians influence his actions and had to be corrected by Paul (Gal. 2:11-14).

The child of God who:

Lets something else keep him away from the worship loves Christ with "phileo" instead of "agapas".

Allows something else to keep him from serving the Lord loves Christ with "phileo" instead of "agapas".

Conclusion.

Do you really love the Lord?

The beloved disciple said, "*We love him, because he first loved us.*" (1 John 4:19).

James 1:12, "*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*"