

of it unreasonably to disturb the company at dinner. He did not go into a discourse with him about his treatment but He forgiven talked to him as a friend. The offense was not only ~~given~~ but was forgotten.

Verse 15. We have the first question asked. He calls Peter by name, it was direct. He wasn't concerned about anyone else except Simon, son of John. He does not call him Sepsus, not does He call him Peter, the name that He had given him but He calls him by his ~~original~~ original name, Simon. He calls him the son of Jonas, or John, to remind him of his extraction. How mean it was and unworthy the honor to which he was advanced.

The question is in 2 parts. First, "Lovest thou Me?", second, "More than these?" We deal first with ~~lovest~~ lowest thou me. This is a ~~supreme~~ question. If there is any doubt in our heart as to whether or not we are Christians we can make this inquiry, Do we love Him. No doubt Jesus puts this question here because of Peter's backside condition and He wanted to know whether or not he loved Him. He does not ask do you hear me, do you honor me, He does not ask do you admire me but do you love? We must recognize also the question is not Peter how much hast thou wept or how often have ye fasted because of your sinful soul? But do you love Me? The word for Love here is agapai. This is for love,

he notes the highest moral regards, the highest devoted love, from the soul. The humbler words for love is phileo, for loves as a friend. We will deal more with this when we come to his answer to this question. More than these, the

second part of the question. At this point Jesus goes just a little deeper into the heart of Peter when He went to the innermost recesses of his heart. More than these. Do you love me more than you love these persons? Don't you love me more than you love John or James your intimate friends, or Andrew your own brother, or your best friends. Another way to look at this Do you love Me more than you love things? Such as your boats, your nets, more than all the pleasures of fishing, the occupation which you have been employed in. Do you love Me more than you love all of these. So Jesus asked him did he love Him more than he loved his secular business and his professions and also other people. I know some people who would have a hard time answering this part of the question. For example, I knew a woman once who loved to work in community affairs more than she did in the church. I knew a man once who was so tied up in secular organizations that he had no time for the church. I knew a woman once to say, I can't take part in the church work because I have to fix big meals for my family on Sunday. I knew a very capable person who gave up her work in church

dealings? And indeed this is one necessary characteristic of a Christian. If you are to have any influence or power with Christ or to truly serve Him and count very much you must have this. I remember a service man by the name of Wingham who came to a Prayer Meeting once and I was teaching the book of Hosea. He told me at the door of the story of his life and how that his wife had sinned and he said, tonight you have told me to love ~~xxxx~~ side of it. Do you love Jesus enough to watch your language. You know many times people talk and it sounds like they were educated in Hell. I remember being in an old country store once where there was a little 4 year old boy running around using profanity. No one tried to correct him. But many of the men just laughed and thought it was cute. But evidently they would be able to see the harvest of Hell if that life. Before he reaches 21 years of age.

Do you love Christ enough to stop your backsliding? Too many times I believe that rededications and consecrations do not mean a great deal to people. When a person comes and rededicats his life to Christ, it ought to mean a change, a definite change, a decided change. It ought to mean more than just a sham, a cover-over. I remember preaching in a ~~xxxx~~ country church once where they had flickering oil lamps hanging around the room for light. There had not been

did she have any time for the Lord and for His church. She was a teacher in one adult Sunday school class of women. She was regular. She was an officer in an adult Union of Training Union. She was there when the church doors were opened Sunday morning, when they opened Sunday night, and she was there Wednesday night for Prayer Meetings. She had time for class meetings. Lovest thou more than these? And I think that she could have said that. She was also a member of the W. M. S. As I see it, it is a test of loyalty to God. I don't see how one could be more obligated to him yet she knew that she was obligated to God first.

You remember that there are four class of church goers. Spasmodic, who go when they feel like it, and that is not too often, periodic, who go a Easter and Christmas, occasional, during a wedding or a funeral, loyal, who have no excuses and are there always. I once heard Brother Suttle, who pastored in N. C. tell of a story of an incident that happened in his life. One day he was on the street and a man came up to him and said, "Some of us don't like you". He said I told him there is a few but I don't think much of. He says I doubt the Lord loves some of you and he says one further, I doubt if the devil is pleased with ~~xxx~~ some of you. He ~~xxx~~ said, I was ready to duck. He says, further more I can preach better

persons when I don't have to look in your old mean faces sitting in the pews. The next week that man came back to him and said, You know, you started me to thinking. I went home and fell on my knees by my bed and confessed my sins. Brother Suttle said he turned out to be a good member. You know this business of love goes a little deeper than the surface. It goes down to the heart.

Jesus said to Peter, Feed my lambs. Feed my lambs. That means to feed as a herdsman, feed those that are weak. It is feeding rather than controlling. These words were assigned to Peter the work of a Christian shepherd whose call is to lead the lambs of the flock into green pastures and the word lamb may be understood to refer to the still weak and immature members of Christ's flock., feeding rather than controlling is the idea of the verb. Verse 16. He comes to the second question, where Jesus challenges Peter's own statement. He calls him by name again and He challenges Peter's statement by saying Lovest thou me?

I remember hearing Dr. Clyde Turner once tell the story of a little quaker girl's dream. On her way to school she was peep assuring themselves by goldenrod in the earth. And as they stood by, this rod, they were touched by an angel with a wand, they were grown or diminished in stature as a Sunday school teacher, stepped up, she noticed that she

diminished. A social woman stepped up, she diminished. But an old seamstress stepped up by the golden rod grew. The little girls stood to be measured and she began to shrink. She cried out O, angel, recording angel, don't write that down, I can do better. Afterwards she discovered that all of this happened while she was in a sleep, and it was only a dream. But how true this is and Jesus says, Lovest thou me? I wonder if we really measure up to the love that He expects of us. Again he says to Peter, feed my sheep, this time. We know the last time He told him to feed the lambs. And the lambs represent the young converts. Now He comes to tell him to feed the sheep and we know that sheep in the New Testament is symbolic of the Christian. And so this is an experienced Christian, this is a shepherding process, a little more authority is given here.

Verse 17. We discover that He repeats His name and when He uses the word love to question Peter this time, He uses the same verb as used by Peter. Peter had answered I love you as a friend. Phele, denoting warm, personal affection. Now Jesus challenges that.

As often as this has been repeated, I wonder, as we pause now to ask how much do you love Christ? Do you love Christ enough to be concerned for the wicked and promote His kingdom. Do you love Christ enough to be honest in all

I wonder how it feels in your heart just now as Jesus puts the question to you, Lovest thou Me? Does not there come before you some sin which grieves your heart? Is there not some evil that disturbs your conscience? Is there not the thought of a failure here or there; that distresses you?

The answer. Now Peter gives the answer. He appeals to Christ himself for the proof of it. He said, Lord, you know all about me. You know if I am truthful. He does not ask his fellow-disciples to vouch for his love. Peter was sure that Christ knew all things and particularly that He knew his heart, that He knew the intent of it. Peter was satisfied with this. That Christ ~~knows~~ things know the sincerity of his love to Him.

It is a terror to a hypocrite to think that Christ knows all things.

But it is a comfort to His sincere Christians that He has Christ to appeal to. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves. When He speaks that God knows all about him, he remembers that experience back on the mountain when he suggested that three tabernacles be built that they might reside there with Him and now he says, He knows, whether you love Him or not and that that is exactly the position of our Lord.

There is a story of fiction concerning Tony from Italy.

a soul saved in that church in over 2 years. They had not baptized an individual in that length of time. And one night a man came to rededicate his life and he said that he had been a Christian for 37 years and that was the first time that he felt like rededicating his life to Christ and I tell you it made a change in his life because there were some people in the church that he had not spoken to in a long time and he was not friendly towards and certainly revival came to that church because of that incident. Do you love Christ enough to consecrate your life to Him? Are you willing to do that? They will be in a position to plea for the lost. Or will you be like Pholix who said, Go thy way and when there is a more convenient season then I will give attention to this important. You remember Aaron Burr who said I'm almost persuaded to become a Christian but after talking it over with the president of the college he says, I will wait until the excitement is over and one night he pulled down the shade in his bedroom and told God good-by. And he said after that he never had a desire again to become a Christian.

Do you love Christ enough to let people know about it, to witness, to other people and to let them know that you love Him? I remember at Zion church on eastern shore how I suggested one night that the people let each other know whether

ornot they loved each other and there was a gray-headed woman that it seemed that over half the people in the house went to shake hands with. She had been a nurse in that community, she had taught a Sunday school class for 40 years. I also saw in that service a woman who came to the pastor, her husband followed her and she thought that he wanted to get by and talk to the pastor but he planted a big kiss on her cheek with the tears rolling down his sun-tanned face. That old farmer suddenly wanted to let her know concerning his love. Jesus told Peter this time, feed my sheep. My little is really what He meant to say and He refers to the weak, immature Christians. These little sheep referred to the Christians who had been converted long enough to be mature but they were still in their rustic state of undevelopment. What you would call a "rut". The majority of Christian people that I know are little sheep, as Paul says, "For when my reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that someone teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the articles of God and are become such as are have need of milk, and not of solid food," Hebrews 5:12. It is something like trying to feed them with a spoon just as if they were babies. They have not moved up any, they can go back and tell you when they were converted, but they do not grow. Paul refers to little women of which our

translators call silly women when he what he means by little woman is not the little women that Louisa May Alcott writes about in her book Little Women, girls that soon will be wiled women. Paul does not mean little in stature but a woman with a little soul. Her soul is so small that she loves pleasure more than God, the world is bigger to her than heaven, the pleasures of gaiety of this world are more to her than God's service. The ball room fashionable parties and so on that she seldom gets in touch with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Now this is manifest in the church. Little women, quite small, they may be worth one million dollars, they may be leaders in society, but such are little women and this causes a pastor's heart to be heavy because the ~~xxx~~ sheep do not grow up, they remain little. Therefore he is to feed the lambs with the proper food and also the sheep with the spiritual food and to lead them in the green pastures.

Peter was grieved. "If Christ had asked you 3 times if you loved Him, I wonder how you would have felt." It reminded him first of all of John 13:37, when he had made a boast that though all men should deny Him that yet will not I, and then in a second place it reminded him of the time when he denied 3 times. There was a threefold denial and now Jesus comes with three questions to ask him three times whether or not he loves Him. Matt. 26:6-9

He worked hard in this country. He bought a jewel of all of his earnings, put all of them into ~~the~~ precious jewel, bought a ticket back to Italy. There was a boy who passed by on deck ~~xxxx~~ with some apples, he took 2 or 3 and soon he had 7 in the air at once. As the crowd watched him juggle the apples. He said if you want to see something, let me show you something ~~of~~ my real skill and art. He brought the jewel up from his room, he tossed it, he caught it, leaned over the side a little farther, 3 times a woman said, let me hold the jewel and you use this apple because you might miss. But he says the eye never fails for the hand is strong and so he tossed it higher and higher and at last the ship lurched. He dropped the jewel over the side. He turned and he said, What a fool. These people mean nothing to me and that jewel meant everything. Today as you look at your heart you know that the world means nothing to you really. Do you know what God means to you and you don't need to delay about it, but you need to come now and pledge your allegiance, the allegiance of your heart to Him.

Is it a secret? Why of course, we should not keep it a secret. If we love Jesus Christ, we ought to let Him know. You remember there is an old hymn which says, O love that will not let us go. Your life is very much like a man on a big island with the tide rising and a life boat comes

(Pain - good)
Fr. May, Jan 31, 60 P.M.

