

LOVEST THOU ME?

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This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead. 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 (Jesus) 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.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. **John 21:14-19.**

Some have said the stretching forth of his hands, indicates Peter would be crucified. Some say: the Romans used stocks to torture prisoner's by stretching their hands on the crosspiece.

The bible doesn't declare how Peter actually died. Tradition says that when Peter was put to death, he requested to be crucified upside down; because he had denied the Lord three times; he didn't consider himself worthy to die upright, as the Savior did.

But, these things are **not** the issue here: nor are they significant or relevant; **the point is** that Peter remained faithful; He died in the Lord! And he died well!

When Jesus told Peter of his death; one can only imagine the comfort and joy that Peter had knowing that Jesus told him before the time appointed that he would glorify God in his death.

Peter's love for Jesus, his desire to obey and glorify Him in all things is evident throughout the remainder of Peter's life and ministry. Peter died with all the hope that heaven can offer; what a testimony of this godly man's faith, courage, patience and perseverance; to be counted worthy to die for the name of Jesus and glorify God in the process.

It was by God's grace that we openly confessed before men and angels that Jesus is the Christ. We have openly demonstrated this in our baptism into His death.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **Rom.6:3-4.**

This life is full of choices, and each of us are faced with making **our** choice. There's Right! And there's wrong; and **you** have to choose one or the other. There is Nothing Else. There's Nothing in between. **You alone** have to choose to live for God, which is life and peace; or live for the world, which is death and destruction.

The choices you make "NOW"; and every single day will determine where you spend eternity.Choose you this day whom you will serve. **Joshua24:15**.

Jesus has asked this same question: "Lovest thou Me?" to all those that have called upon His Name. Let's understand this: Jesus does not ask this question **ONCE!** But every day that we are in this world!

Jesus is asking: "Lovest thou Me?" "Lovest thou Me more than everything that's in this world? Father, Mother, wealth, your job, friends, kids at school, loved ones, your children, your own life also?"

Jesus said: if you love these more than me, you are not worthy of me. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters yea and his own life also, he can not be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, can not be my disciple. **Luke 14:26-27**.

For the sake of the children here; hate in this text doesn't mean that you hate or dislike your dad and mom or each other. It means that you can not love them more than you love Jesus. Jesus has to be first, He **MUST** be first in everything. We have to love Jesus more than anyone else and more than anything else.

The reason is: our redemption came at such a great cost. It came through humility, temptations, trial and obedience. Jesus left His heavenly home, was made a little lower than the angels, tempted by satan, in all points as we are; yet without sin. But His **GREATEST TRIAL** of all, was in the garden; when He pleaded with His Father; if it be possible; let this cup pass from Me.

Jesus couldn't bear the thought of being separated from His Father; but in His obedience, He said: not my will but thine by done.

It stands to reason: we will suffer these same things in the measure in which God requires. This so great salvation will **NOT** be fully obtained by **ANYONE** who does not tread the same waters as did our Great High Priest and Savior. If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; **if** so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. **Rom.8:17**.

But! The same power and grace that was given to Jesus to endure these things; will be given to all those that believe. We confess, we desire to be with God and Christ forever; They are simply making sure of **our** intentions; to see if our love for God and Christ is genuine.

An example of this, is the account of Abraham taking his son Issac to the land of Moriah, to give him as a sacrifice. But when Abraham raised the knife to slay his son; the angel of the Lord said: Abraham, Abraham; Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: **for now I know** that thou fearest God; seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son; thine only son from me. **Gen.22:12**.

In Matt.26:35 Peter said: Thou I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.

In John 13:37-38 Peter said: Lord why can not I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Matt. 26:40-41. Jesus cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, what, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

I am so thankful that our Father looks at the heart.; Jesus knows, that our spirit is **indeed willing**; but our flesh is weak. Jesus understands fully the frailty of our flesh and how encumbered we are in it and by it.

His great mercy is demonstrated to Peter, in Mark's account where the women go inside the tomb.

The angel said to them: Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen: He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him.

But go your way, tell His disciples **and Peter** that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as he said unto you. **Mark 16.6-7.** The angel was able to say: **and Peter**, because Peter confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness.

I know these words are not categorically stated in scripture; but I have to reason this out by what is stated in Luke 22: 61-62: And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter weeping bitterly; demonstrates how powerful a look from Jesus can be; it pierced Peter's heart; he sorrowed that he denied the Master; and forgiveness is indicated by the Power Peter received by God the day of Pentecost. **Acts 2.** Further evidence is made known by the declarations of the remainder of his life; even in his death.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:8-9.**

When we falter, When we fail; The word of God is our comfort. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the Righteous. **1 John.2:1.**

So when you find you have been brought low, tempted, tried and pressed sore: **AND YOU WILL!** ...think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. **1 Pet.4:12.** Remember, It's **Jesus asking you: "Lovest thou Me?"**

Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; **that**, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. **1 Pet.4:13.** Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. **1 Pet.4:19.**

I exhort you to watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Live in a faithful manner, that we too can respond as Peter did to Christ question: "Lovest Thou Me?" Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. **Amen.**