

DO YOU LOVE ME?

(John 21:15-17)

The essential questions in life that each one of us should always think about are the questions asked by our Lord Jesus Christ. The most personal, the most probing and the most heart-penetrating question that our Lord Jesus has ever asked is the one question he asked his disciple Peter: "Do you love Me?" Love for Christ is the most fundamental and significant issue when it comes to our relationship to God. As Deuteronomy 10:3 reminds us, "The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Reflecting upon Jesus' conversation with Peter, let's consider these two necessary manifestations of one's genuine love for Christ.

1. A sincere and humble _____ for Christ.

The Lord's question to Peter was not, "Why did you deny Me?" His question was all about Peter's love and devotion to Him. The word for love that Jesus used is the supreme and highest form of love reserved exclusively for Almighty God (John 21:15-16). This supreme love for Jesus is a kind of love which cultivates an undivided, unrivaled, unparalleled, all-consuming devotion and affection for the Lord. Peter's reply was marked by a heart that has been grieved by his sinfulness and genuinely humbled by the restoring grace of God. He no longer boasted about his bold claim of superior love to Jesus (Matt. 26:33-35). Instead, he appealed to Jesus' perfect and comprehensive knowledge of his own heart (John 21:15-17). He humbly confessed the deficiency of his own love for Christ. Whenever we recognize the depth of our sinfulness and confess the imperfection of our love for Christ, our Lord Jesus is always ready and ever gracious to forgive us, restore us, affirm us and strengthen us.

2. A sacrificial _____ Christ's Church.

It would have been gracious enough for our Lord Jesus to completely forgive his disciple Peter who denied Him. But the Lord Jesus, whose grace is so rich and generous, did not only extend forgiveness to Peter. He even gave him another opportunity to serve Him. He issued him a blessed commission to take care and tend the precious flock of God, His church which He redeemed with His own blood (John 21:15-17; John 10:14-15; Acts 20:28). By the grace of God, Peter remained obedient to the sacred task of pastoring and caring for the Lord's dearest church for the rest of his life. In fact, Peter served the Lord and His church so faithfully that he, like his Master, sacrificed and suffered martyrdom for the cause of the gospel and the church (John 21:18-19). The necessary manifestation of one's love for Christ is one's love for the church. The extent of your sacrifice and commitment to serve God's people determines the depth and intensity of your love for the Lord Jesus (1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1:22; 4:8-11; 1 John 4:20-21).
