

Peter, Do You Love Me?

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Study Given by W.D. Frazee—May 9,

“Jesus is the only true pattern. Everyone must now search the Bible for himself upon his knees before God, with the humble, teachable heart of a child, if he would know what the Lord requires of him. However high any minister may have stood in the favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go into darkness and satanic delusions and will lead others in the same path” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 214.

I have been preaching this message for 54 years. This tells me that unless I humble myself before God, and get down on my knees with the open Bible and search it for myself, that no amount of past blessing from God will preserve me. I will go into darkness and satanic delusions unless I do that.

The Gospel is simple. It isn't complicated. It isn't hard to understand. It is mud that makes water hard to see through. Get the mud out of it and you can see the light shining through.

Three times Jesus asked Peter a question. Three times Peter answered Him.

“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” John 21:15-17.

Jesus loves us. We are all certain of that. Do we love Him? Jesus told the lawyer to love the Lord with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as thyself. We can never keep the second until we keep the first. We do not start by trying to love people. We seek to know the love of Jesus, and enter into an experience of loving Him.

A few days before this experience by the Sea of Galilee Jesus was seated at the table with His disciples. During that discourse He told them what would be the fruit of love.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” John 14:15.

Some translations give it, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” It is the same thought. The great lesson is while there can be obedience without love there can be no love without obedience. This is not a popular doctrine at this time. Love is taken to be permissiveness in the home, in the church, and in society. I was reading something that impressed me very much. It sounded old fashioned. It is. It is as old fashioned as the Bible. It was written to a parent concerning the attitude of a child and the attitude of a parent in response:

“Blind affection, a cheap manifestation of love, goes a long ways with you. To encircle the arms about the neck is easy; but manifestations should not be encouraged by you unless they are proved to be of real value by perfect obedience. Your indulgence, your disregard of God's requirements is the veriest cruelty. You encourage and excuse disobedience by saying, ‘My boy loves me.’ Such love is cheap and deceptive. It is no love at all. The love, the genuine love, to be cultivated in the family is of value because it is verified by obedience.

“If you love the souls of your children, bring them into order. But abundant kisses and tokens of love blind your eyes, and your children know it. Make less of these outward demonstrations of embracing and kissing and go down to the bottom of things and show what constitutes filial love. Refuse these manifestations as a fraud, a deception, unless backed up by obedience and respect for your commands” *Adventist Home*, page 307.

The idea is not to say, Well, I had better run and keep the commandments so God will think I love Him. That isn't the point at all. The point is that I had better get some love from Jesus so I can make Him happy. We cannot manufacture love. We can't put it together. It isn't a do-it-yourself job.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” Galatians 5:22.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” Romans 5:5.

Love is a precious gift from Jesus. The cheap fruit, which is tied on, dries up. But the living fruit, the work of the Spirit in the heart, oh, what a blessing it is.

A kiss is a beautiful thing. All through the Bible we read about the kiss between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends in Christ.

“And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” Luke 22:47-48.

One of the twelve betrayed the Lord with a kiss. Outward expressions of affection and words of endearment are tokens in their place, and should be encouraged when they come from sincere hearts. But Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss, as if to say, Oh, how I love this Man. But in reality he was selling Jesus to His worst enemies.

What does it mean to love Jesus? Love is a sincere desire to please. So Jesus says:

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” 1 John 5:3.

The beloved John was very close to Jesus. He wrote very much about love, and with it he wrote much about obedience. Every chapter of 1 John breathes the spirit of love manifested in obedience.

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 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” 1 John 2:3-5.

When I see apples on a tree I know it is an apple tree. If I see oranges on a tree I know it is an orange tree. Fruit gives evidence concerning the nature of the tree.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”
1 John 4:8.

I want to enter into that experience of love manifested in obedience. What do you say?

Friends, where can I find out what will please Jesus? Suppose I take a nickel and flip it up in the air and say, Lord, if You want me to do this let the nickel come down heads, but if You want me to do something else let it come down tails. I really want to please Him, so I flip the nickel. If I pray about it, is that a good way to find out? No. God has already told me how to please Him. There are sixty-six books full of precious instruction. And concerning every book it is true that Jesus is speaking. He tells me of that.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me” John 5:39.

Peter tells us that it was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets that testified. So when I read what Isaiah wrote, I am listening to the testimony of Jesus. When I read what Peter and John wrote, I am listening to the testimony of my Lord. The faithful and true Witness is testifying, and I want to listen. But it makes a world of difference whether I look upon what I read from Moses and Samuel as they are writing down the development of doctrine, or whether I read it as the voice of Christ to my soul. This is the point.

“Everyone must now search the Bible for himself upon his knees before God, with the humble, teachable heart of a child, if he would know what the Lord requires of him.” And however high any minister may have stood in the favor of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go into darkness. He will lead others in the same path. I wonder how we would know that a man who once stood in the favor of Christ has gone into Satanic delusions. Jesus made it very clear. He said if a man breaks one of these commandments, and teaches other people to do it, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. That doesn't mean he will get in, but in the kingdom of God he is at the bottom of the list. There is something worse than the drunkard in the ditch. It is the man who teaches people that they don't need to keep, and can't keep the commandments of God. And when that is done by the Judas kiss, Jesus says:

“And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” Luke 6:46.

“Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” Mark 7:7.

So if I love my Lord and want to please Him, I will get down and search the Bible. Whenever I find something He tells me to do, I will say, Lord, thank You for telling me what pleases you. Give me love enough to do it. I will put my will on the side of faith in believing what He says, and put my will on the side of obedience to do what He says. What do you say?

John is on the Island of Patmos. He has had these wonderful visions. He is getting near the close of the glorious revelation, and he is so overcome with the glory of the scene that he falls at Gabriel's feet to worship him. Gabriel says, Oh, no, John, don't do that. Don't worship me. I am just an angel. I didn't originate what I am giving you. And if an angel, just because he is one of the links of light is not to be given the credit, certainly no human being is.

“And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” Revelation 19:10.

How does Jesus testify? Through the spirit of prophecy. If I can find the spirit of prophecy then I will have the testimony of Jesus. And if Jesus isn't speaking, it isn't the spirit of prophecy. Don't let anyone confuse you on that. If it is the true gift of prophecy, it is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Therein lies its value. Therein lies its authority.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

Do they love Jesus? Oh, yes. Do they keep His commandments? It says they do. I would rather believe what Jesus says about them than believe what other people say about them. But these people who love Jesus and keep His commandments have something. They have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy.

Jesus is speaking somewhere in this world. What is the Devil doing about it? He is angry with the church and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Christ.

They love Jesus. They love to obey Him. They don't look to find excuses or evade His requirements. They are not looking for some new light which releases them from obedience. Oh, no. They are looking constantly for more power and love that they may more perfectly reflect the divine image and carry out the divine will. And they please the Master. They love Him and keep His commandments. They have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Jesus will guard for me that love which is manifest in keeping His commandments, and hanging on to the testimony of Jesus. Have you found the movement? Have you discovered the people that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ? Oh, if we love Him let's listen when He speaks.

“Those who have been seeking to undermine the confidence of our people in the testimonies of the Spirit of God, and in the leading of providence in our work, will one day will be revealed as having acted a part similar to that of Judas” *Review and Herald*, September 9, 1909.

Is Judas around today? Yes, Judas is around today. But if Judas had died twenty-four hours before he did die, the record would be quite different from what it is. God, in His mercy, allowed that man to expose the lack of love that was in his heart. He chose to express his attitude toward Jesus by betraying Him with a kiss. Oh, what a travesty.

I don't want to be like Judas. Lord, I want to be like Jesus. We are in a solemn hour, but it can be a glad hour for those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. It can be a glorious hour for those who will stand like Caleb when the unfaithful spies bring back the report of doubt and rebellion. It can be a victorious

hour for those who will stand with Christ when all the world join in apostasy and disloyalty.

Peter, do you love Me? Do you really love Me. Yes, Lord. You know all things. You know I love You. I am so glad that Christ is dealing with a choice of the will. Thank God, with Peter I can say, Yes Lord, I love You. Not boasting. Humbly, contritely appeal to the One who knows everything.

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