

# Peter 7 of 10

## *Do You Love Me?*

#0381

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 14, 1969

Let us turn again to John 21. We were noting some things in this scripture the other morning, but there're some more things we want to get this morning—some more about Peter.

They're on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus has given them again that miracle of the miraculous draft of fish. They've come to shore. They've had breakfast.

“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.

Three times the question is, “Do you love Me? Peter, do you love Me? Do you really love Me? Well, if you do, there's something I want you to do for Me. I want you to feed My sheep. Feed My lambs.”

The way we show our love for Jesus is to win souls; that's the way we show it. And this is not something, my dear friends, that we can do without this love. There are things that we can do whether we have love or not. A man can dig a ditch for love, or he can do it for money, or he can do it because there's a bayonet at his side. But soul-winning is something that, to be successful, must be done from love, through love. And this is the way Heaven measures the value of men. It's not how eloquent we are, how learned we are, how skillful we are. No. It's how loving we are. I'm going to read that from the book *Acts of the Apostles*:

“Christian workers who succeed in their efforts must know Christ; and in order to know Him they must know His love. In heaven their fitness as workers is measured by their ability to love” *Acts of the Apostles*, page 551.

Isn't that interesting? What measures your ability as a Christian worker? Your ability to love. Oh, you may be fast with your fingers. You may be quick with your speech. You may be talented and experienced in many lines. But there's one

thing that Jesus asks you. There was only one question that Jesus asked Peter. What was it? "Do you love Me?"

Notice this:

"The question that Christ put to Peter was significant. He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. 'Lovest thou Me?' He said. This is the essential qualification" *The Desire of Ages*, page 815.

What does "essential" mean? Necessary, have to have it. This is the one essential.

"This is the essential qualification. Though Peter might possess every other, yet without the love of Christ he could not be a faithful shepherd over the Lord's flock. Knowledge, benevolence, eloquence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work, but without the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure" *Ibid*.

Oh friends, without love, we're what? We are failures. But on the other hand, *with* love, we cannot fail. Whatever is done out of pure love, we're told, is wholly fruitful. Nothing that love does is ever lost. So Jesus would say to us in this early morning hour as He said to Peter on the beach, "Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you really love Me? Well, if you do, love the ones I love. Love My children. Feed My sheep. Take care of My lambs." Thus we show our love for Him.

In the book *Messages to Young People*, we're told about a certain class of people that have a special opportunity:

"[Satan] well knows that there is no other class that can do as much good as young men and young women who are consecrated to God. The youth, if right, could sway a mighty influence. Preachers, or laymen advanced in years, cannot have one-half the influence upon the young that the youth, devoted to God, can have upon their associates" *Messages to Young People*, page 204.

Think of it! And I know that this is so. See, I have some gray hairs now. Forty years ago, I didn't have them. And there were some people I could reach 40 years ago I can't reach now as well. Of course, there're some people I can reach better now, so I'm not on the shelf. I have something to do. But my dear young friends, you in your teens and twenties, your golden day is *now* as far as reaching other young people is concerned. This is your glorious opportunity. Press in. Win souls.

Oh, I thank God for the souls He helped me to win when I was a young man. And He has souls for you. What do you need? Love.

The next page:

“Who are seen pleading with tender earnestness with their companions to forsake the ways of sin and choose the path of holiness?” *Ibid.*, page 205.

“Oh, but if I would beg somebody to accept Jesus, they might not like it.” No, they might not. That’s true. I’m told that sometimes when people are drowning and somebody tries to rescue them, they fight off the rescuer. Is that the way it is, sometimes? Well, here’s somebody drowning in the lake, but I’d better not plunge in. They might fight me off. What about it, friends? Is that the way? Oh, we wouldn’t do that. We’d plunge in. The more they fought, the more we’d wrestle with them. And once they got to shore and got into their right minds, they would what? They’d thank you, wouldn’t they? They’d appreciate it.

Ah friends, let not the outward actions of an unconverted soul defeat your efforts. If you love them enough, love will seek a way.

“Peter, do you love Me? Peter, do you love Me? Oh, Peter, do you really love Me?”

“Yes, Lord. You know I love You.”

“Very well. I have a work for you to do. I want you to win some souls for Me, and take care of them. Look after them.”

You see, friends, God could have sent angels to do all this. But there’re two reasons why God doesn’t send angels. In the first place, He wants you and me to have a part in it. And if the angels did it, and we just stood by and watched them, we might clap our hands, but we’d miss much of the joy. There’s a joy in fellowship with Jesus in working for souls. Isn’t there? And as it takes some love to do it, it develops love as we do it.

There’s another reason why Jesus uses us, instead of angels, to talk to people. The people that we are sent to know that we’re just weak, human beings like they are. And that encourages them to believe that the God who has done something for us in our weak, fallen condition, can do something for them. Do you see? This is so important.

I have something to read on this in *Desire of Ages*:

“This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to angels. It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God; and thus we are encouraged to believe that the power which can help others as weak as ourselves can help us” *The Desire of Ages*, page 297.

That’s the thing.

Here's a man that's been a slave to tobacco, but God has delivered him. The power of love has transformed his life. Does he have a witness to bear to other men who are puffing away? Oh, yes.

Here's a fellow who was an alcoholic, but God has delivered him. The power of love has broken the chains of alcohol. Does he have a witness to bear? Yes.

Now, some of us don't have *that* witness to bear. Some of us have never smoked. We've never taken alcohol. But I want to tell you something, friends, *every one* of us who knows Jesus has had a battle that Jesus has given us victory on.

Suppose it's the question of reading. Can a person get drunk with reading, the same as somebody else can with alcohol? Oh yes, it has happened. I know. I remember when I was in my early teens, I got hold of a book, and it was supposed to be a good book, too. It was a religious novel on the life of Christ. But I got drunk on that as much as I could with beer, I'm sure. Oh, yes.

Well, I thank the Lord He gave me the victory over that. Now I can try to help somebody else that's having a battle with reading. And I know by experience that there's power in the love of Jesus to *break* that habit of reading that diverts the mind from God.

Now, there are many other things. Take worldly amusements. I remember when there were certain amusements that would just grip my soul, and I'd rather be in those amusements than I would eat. And I like to eat, too. That competition—to see who could beat, who could win. Oh, that just thrilled me.

Well, I thank the Lord that His love got hold of me, and I found something better than that. When I see people that are just filling their minds with that competitive spirit, I understand how they feel. And I feel like getting my arm around them and helping them, not to condemn them. Not to say, "Oh, what you're doing is wicked." But, "There's something better. There's something more wonderful than that. It's not beating people. It's loving people."

I tell you this, the more you love people, the less interested you are in beating them. That's right. You want to lift them. You want to help them. Instead of leading them to get a low score, you're anxious to help them get a high score. And that would just destroy a lot of forms of amusement because if you're playing a competitive game, and everything you do is to help the other fellow win, you can see what would happen to a lot of these things.

But oh, there are so many things to do in life that we can show our love for people, to help lift them instead of our desire to better ourselves at their expense.

My point is, friends, there're all kinds of things in which you and I have had experience in seeing the love of God change us. And these are avenues to souls.

Were you born with a critical tongue? A fault-finding spirit? Has Jesus given you the victory over it? Then, instead of denouncing and condemning some other poor soul that has a similar trait, you'll be down on your knees praying for them, and

you will watch the opportunity to turn the conversation out of the channel of gossip and criticism onto the high plain of love for Jesus, and appreciation of His goodness.

Or has your problem been with foolishness? Jest and joking? Just telling one silly thing after the other to make people laugh? Ah friends, if Jesus has helped you to see that there's something sweeter than that, something more pleasurable than that—to speak of Jesus and thank Him for all His goodness—then as you come in contact with others who are in a similar place where you were, you will watch for the chance to help them to see that there's a better use for the tongue than folly, a better use for the lips than jesting and joking. And you'll watch, not in a mean way, not in a critical way, but in a kind, loving way, to turn the conversation into the higher channels.

So it is all through life. Jesus says, "Do you love Me? Oh, Peter, do you love Me? Do you really love Me, Peter?"

"Yes, Lord, you know."

"Well then, I have something for you to do. I want you to feed my sheep. I want you to take care of my lambs. I want you to look after folks who need help."

Yes, thank God, Peter was given his job back, again, of being a shepherd, an under-shepherd, and that takes love.

I've been quite interested in noting the difference between the eastern shepherds that Jesus was talking about and these western sheepherders. Out there in the west, you've seen these great bands of sheep. Well, you don't see a shepherd out there walking along with a band of sheep following him, do you? No. You see men on horseback, and they usually have some dogs. What are they doing? Driving the sheep. Well, that's one way to get sheep from one place to another, but there's not necessarily much love in it.

Sometimes in the work of God, men become sheepherders instead of shepherds. They want to drive. And a sheepherder, to be successful in that, needs some dogs. I would hate to be either a dog or a sheepherder dealing with sheep, friends. But oh, to be a shepherd such as Jesus was, and such as Peter came to be, to lead, to get people to follow because they love you. To know you, and in knowing you, to know Jesus and love Him, *this* is the science of soul-winning.

"Peter, do you love Me? Then I want you to love somebody else, that they may know Me and love Me."

*Desire of Ages*, page 297:

"There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ" *Ibid*.

Isn't that wonderful, friends? Here is Jesus. By His Spirit, He's hovering over people, longing to reveal His love to them. They can't see Him. But oh, they can see you. And if you'll let Jesus use you, He will guide you to that soul that needs help. And *you* can be the connecting link between Jesus, the One they can't see. *You*, the one they can see, can be the connecting link.

You have one hand on Jesus, reaching up into the unseen world. He's real to you. You know Him. You love Him. Now you reach out your hand to somebody that can't grasp the unseen. They can't picture the invisible. They don't know the Master. But they're hungry. They're weary. They're longing for help, and you reach out and help them. *You* are the connecting link. Isn't that wonderful?

Let me read a similar thought:

"As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work!" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5*, page 246.

What do you say? This is indeed a blessed work.

You know, friends, this is one of the great reasons that God gave us the medical missionary work. It's to reveal this love. When a person's in pain, oh, how much he appreciates somebody doing something for him, whether it's putting on a fomentation or giving a rub or something that human skill and divine love may find a way to do.

So, in the medical missionary work, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sad, ministering to the sick, we find ways of revealing this love. That's what it's for—to reveal the love of Jesus that souls may be won to Christ.

"Peter, do you love Me? Do you really love Me, Peter? Oh, then I have something for you to do."

Now I want to ask you something, friends. We don't have very much love. Would it be a good thing to get some before we try to help people? Oh, yes.

There are those who think that their business is to set others right. And there's a lot of setting right that needs to be done. But before we engage in such work, we need to be sure that we have love—*plenty* of love. Without love, we may only make a bad matter worse. Without love, we shall be, what did I read here? A failure. But oh, if we have love, then love will find a way.

"That man only who has unselfish love for his brother has true love for God..."

“Those who have never experience the tender, winning love of Christ cannot lead others to the fountain of life. His love in the heart is a constraining power, which leads men to reveal Him in the conversation, in the tender, pitiful spirit, in the uplifting of the lives of those with whom they associate. Christian workers who succeed in their efforts must know Christ; and in order to know Him they must know His love. In heaven their fitness as workers is measured by their ability to love as Christ loved and to work as He worked” *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 550–551.

Now, how do we get love, anyway? There’s no factory that manufactures it. There’s no store where we can buy it. There’s no tree that we can go and pick it off. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it.

So we come this morning seeking from Jesus the love that will make us efficient workers today. Here in this early morning hour, let us unite together and open the windows of the soul heavenward that the divine love from the mercy seat may come into our hearts. Shall we do that? Wouldn’t you like more love? Oh, I want more. I’ve had some, friends, and I’m like a boy who’s just had a slice of a big, ripe, red watermelon. I know what I want. I want some more of the same. I want some more of this love. Don’t you?

And we can have it. If we’ll come to Jesus with open hearts and give up our selfishness, He will give it to us. We’re told:

“If we would humble our souls before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9*, page 189.

Isn’t that wonderful, friends? How the results can be multiplied if you and I will just become more loving. But this is not a science to be learned, a skill to be mastered. This is an *experience* to be entered into. So we’re going to seek God for that love this morning.

Brother Martin, if you’ll lead and then let others pray as you would like. Let our prayers be short, to the point, so that a number may take part. Jesus will hear our united intercession.

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