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- Charles H. Spurgeon, 1857. Preaching On the basis of John 21:15-17 Jesus says Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? He said unto him, yes, Lord; You know I love you. He said unto him, Feed my lambs. He again tells him the second time, Simon, Jonah's son, loves me? He said unto him, yes, Lord; You know I love you. He said unto him, Feed my sheep. He told him a third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest you me? Peter was upset because he said unto him, Feed my sheep. —John 21:15-17. How much he likes Christ before his crucifixion was Christ after his resurrection! Although he had slept in the tomb and landed in the regions of the dead and had traced his steps to the living land, how amazingly similar he was to his manners and how did not change his dissiption. His passion, his death and his resurrection could not change his character as a man more than they could influence his as God's attributes. He is Jesus forever himself. And when he reappeared unapeared un he was certainly so astute over his mental state, because after he had delivered his bodies with a rich draught from the sea, with fish (which perhaps he had created for the occasion), he would learn for the health and well-being of their soul, starting with who might have been in the most f sickly state, the one who was denied his Master three times and wept bitterly—even Simon Peter. Simon, the son of Jonas, said Jesus, loves you me? Without a foreword, because we will have only a little time this morning—that God can help us use it!, we will mention three things: first, a solemn question—Do you love me? second, discreet answer: yes, Lord, thou knowth that I love thee; and third, a demonstration of fact is required: He said unto him, feed my lambs; or, again, Feed my sheep. I. First, here was the SOLEMN QUESTION that our Redeemer raised to Peter, not about his information, because, as Peter said, you know that I love you, but Peter's exam. It's good, especially after foul sin, that a Christian would be good to probe wounds. It is right that he should examine himself; for sin gives a serious reason to suspect, and it would be wrong for a Christian to live an hour with suspicion of his spiritual property, unless he took that hour of checking himself. Self-representation should be follow sin, although it would be a daily habit for every Christian, and should be practiced by him forever. I say that our Redeemer asked peter this question, that he might ask himself; so we may think that it asked of us this morning that we can put it in our own hearts. Let everyone ask themselves, in the name of the Redeemer? Note what was the matter. It was a question of Peter's love. He didn't say, Simon, the son of Jonah, is afraid you're me. He didn't say, Do you admire me? Do you admire me? but he asked him one more question: Do you love me? I made it, it's because love is the very best proof to forgive. Love is the brightest of all graces; and so it becomes the best evidence. I do not believe that love is superior to faith; I believe that faith is the foundation of our salvation; I think faith is not proof of brightness equal to love. Faith, if we have it, is a sure and sure sign that we are children of God; and it is every other grace sure and sure, but many of them cannot see others. Love is a more sparkling one that any other of God; and it is every other grace sure and sure, but many of them cannot see others. Love is a more sparkling one that any other. If I have a sincere fear of God in my heart, then I am a child of God; but since fear is grace that is more dim and not that halo of glory over the fact that love is, love becomes one of the best evidence and one of the simplest signs of discerning, whether we are the life of the Redeemer. A person who lacks love in a proportion in which he lacks love is little, I believe it is a sign that faith is few; for he that believes in much love. If love is little, fear will be few, and the courage of God will be little; and all that holds grace, though faith is at the root of all of them, yet they hang so fondly in love that if love shall be weak, all the other graces which will be so comforting. Our Lord asked Peter, then the question: Do you love me? And note again that he didn't ask Peter anything about his doing. He did not say, Simon Peter, how much did you cry? How often have you committed sin because of your great sin? How often have you kneel, sought mercy at my hand, for thou hast done unto me, and for the terrible curse and oath by which thou hast broken down your Lord, whom thou would have declared that you would follow even prison and death? No. 1000 it was not referring to his deeds, but to referring to the state of his heart, which Jesus said: Do you love me? Teach us it; that while works do follow after true love, but excelleth works out and works without love is no love for him. We may have some work; but they are not acceptable works if they are not done out of love for their person. We can perform a great deal from the removal of ritual observance of religion; but if love does not lie to the bottom, all these things are futile and meaningless. Question that comes into the heart and in such a way that it raises all the heart to one question; because if love is wrong, everything else is wrong, everything else is wrong. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest you me? Ah! dear beloved, we have a great reason to ask ourselves this question. If our Redeemer were no more than a man like us, he could often doubt whether we love him at all. Let me just remind you of the adept things that give us a great reason to ask this question: Do you love me? I only met last week. Come on, my Christian brother, look at your actions. Do your sins doubt that you love your Master? Come, look over the sins of this week: when thou hast spoken with an angry word, and with a gloomy look, that thy Lord may not touch you, and say, Love the thy me? When you did one that you knew well in your conscience, was not in accordance with his ordinance, would he not have said, Love me? Can't you remember the murmuring word because something had gone wrong with you in business this week, and you were talking badly about God providence about it? Oh, might not be a loving Redeemer, with pity in his gurids eye, have said to you: What, speak as follows? Do you love me? I do not have to stop to mention the various sins for which you are guilty. I am convinced that you have sinned to give a good basis to your discipleship. Oh, don't you think in yourself: If I had loved him more, would I have sinned so much? And o can I love him when I have broken so many of his commandments! Have I reflected his wonderful image of the world, as I should have done? Haven't I wasted many hours this week that I might have spent winning souls for him? Have I not cast many precious moments in a light and light conversation that I may have spent in fervent prayer? Oh! how many words have I pronounced, which if they are not dirty (as I believe they are not) are not yet as have I covered more of this? How many words have I made My Redeemer's heart bleed? As I have done his cause? How have I been to some extent a way of being a u.s. love for me? Oh, ask these questions about yourself, beloved, and say, Is it your kindness to thy friend? But I hope that this week there is one in which you have sinned a little openly about the world, or even the fragrant own estimate, of open crime. But now let me ask another question to you, isn't your worldliness making you doubt? How have you been busy with the world from Monday morning to the last hours of Saturday night? You have a scant time to think about him. What corners have you pushed your book or your diary? How little time have you given him! You've been busy in the store with the exchange and the courtyard; and you have little time to communicate with passionate desires for him? Do you gass like your Redeemer's Charter in a week. No, maybe there was a whole day went by, and you almost thought of him until winding up from it; and then thou mightt resaminate yourself: How have I forgotten Christ until the day? I have not covered his person; I have not gone with him; I haven't done as Enoch did! I knew he would come to the store with me; I knew he was so blessed by Christ that he would stand behind me; I knew he was such a joyous Lord Jesus that he could walk through the market with me! but I left him at home and forgot him all day. Of course, of course, beloved, when you remember your world, you must say about yourself: O Lord, you might ask, Love me? I'll think again, I'll see how cold you've been in the grace chair this week. You have been there because you cannot live without it; thou hast raised your heart in prayer, for you are a Christian, and you need prayer as your breathed? Don't you remember how rushed your prayer on Monday morning, how are you going to study Tuesday night? Can't you remember how tired your heart was when you otherwise believe in your knees? You've had little fights, mayhap, this week; little agonising; thou hast leen standing in the distance and seen smoke at the altar, but thou hast not put down its horns. Come, ask yourself, are your prayers in doubt? I say, honestly before you all, my prayers often make me doubt; and I do not know anything to inject to take me out of prayer; and when I will and i ask, o how is this burning desire not; and when I cometh exactly close unto God, when I will weep my eyes with sin, and believe and take a blessing, o how little faith and what is the little tendency! Indeed, I think prayer has made me more incredulous than anything else. I might believe over the tops of my prayers- for oh! how cold is prayer when it's cold! Of all the things that are bad when cold, I think prayer is the worst because it becomes like a very mockery, and instead of warming the heart, it makes it colder than it was before, and accepted Christ. Oh! Look at your cold prayers, Christian, and say that your Redeemer has no right to ask this question very solemnly: Simon, the son of Jonah, love you? But stop, again; just one word for you to think about. Maybe you've had a great prayer, and this has been a time when it is refreshed from the presence of the Lord. But still, mayhap, you know, you haven't gone as far this week as you could do, another use of godliness that is even better than prayer, I mean commonality and fellowship. Oh! beloved, you had this week, but a few sit under the apple tree, and find your shadow a great joy for you. You have seen your Lord this week! Maybe he's been present most of the time; and have you not moaned? don't you cry? haven't you sued after him? Of course, then you cannot love him the way you would not have liked, otherwise you would not have taken your Lord. You're going to visit him for one sweet visit in a week, and why did you let him go? Why didn't you make him stay with you? Why don't you put his garments in your hands and tarrieth for the night? Oh! my lord, you will live with me; I'm going to hold you; I'm going to keep you in my company; I can't let you go; I love you, and I limit you to dwell with me tonight and the next day; as long as I can keep you, or I'll hold you. But thou made him so weak, thou sufferth, that he should leave so quickly, he might have turned and said unto you, as he said unto Simon, Simon, love you me? Now I ask you all these questions, because I have asked them to myself. I feel that I have to answer almost every one of them: Lord, I have great reason to ask myself this question; and I never doubt it; for we often have reason to doubt ourselves; a believer's strong faith is not a strong faith in his love for Christ—it is a strong faith has conflicts; and a true believer will often struggle with the very teeth of his own feelings. Lord, if I never lovee you, however, if I am not a saint, I am a sinner. Sir, I still believe; help you my infidelity. The disciple can believe when he does not feel love; for he may believe that Christ, and lay, hold him, even as he is, with naked faith, and still cing to him quickly. Although he sees no signs, although he walks in darkness and has no light, he can still trust the Lord and remain in His God, but to always be sure that we love the Lord is a completely different matter; for this we must continually question ourselves, and most scrutinize, to examine both the nature and extent of our evidence. II. And now I come to the second thing, which is a discreet answer. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest you me? Simon gave a very good answer. Jesus asked him first whether he loved her better than others. Simon did not say that: he was once a little proud—more than a little—and thought he was better than others. And I'm sure there is no loving heart who will think it loves even better than the least of God's children. I believe that the higher man is mercy, the lower he will be to his own dignity; and he shall be the last man to demand any supremacy over others in the grace of divine love against Jesus. But a sign, as Simon Peter replied: he did not answer for quantity, but for the quality of his love. He aver that he loved Christ, but not that he loved Christ, but not that he loved Christ better than others. Sir, I cannot tell you how much I love you; but thou know all that; You know I love you, so far I can aver: in terms of the amount of my love, I can't say much about it. But just notice, again, the discreet way in which Peter responded. Some of us would have been foolish to answer this question if we were asked. We should have said, Lord, I have preached uneasily many times this week; Sir, I have broken my substance to the poor this week. Blessed is your You have given me grace to walk humbly, faithfully, and honestly, and therefore, Lord, I think I can say, I love you. We should have put our good deeds before our Director as evidence of our love; we should have said, A LORD, thou hast seen me this week; as Nehememia did from the old: Forget not my good deeds. O Lord, I thank you; I know it's your gifts, but I think it's proof of my love. It would have been a very good answer if we had been questioned by our co-man, and he said, You do not always love your Redeemer, but it would be foolish if we told Our Master. Peter's response was wise; Sir, you know I love you. Ye know that the Lord could have said to Peter if he had turned to his works: yes, thou mayt preach and still not love me; You can pray for fashion and still don't love Me; You can do all these things, and yet there is no love for me. I didn't ask you what the evidence of your love is, I asked you that. Very likely, all my dear friends here would not have responded to the fashion I should have; but they would have said: Love thee lord? Why, my heart is ravished with bliss; and when thou art away, O Lord, I vain and cried like doths which have lost their mate. Yes, I feel like I love you, O my Christ. But it would have been very foolish, because although we can often rejoice in our feelings—these are joyful things—it should not be done to pray with our Lord, for He might answer: Ah! you are glad to mention my Name. So, no doubt, there is a more deceiving one, because he had a fictitious faith, and fancied hope in Christ; wherefore, the word of Christ seemed to please him. You say, I've felt dull when you've been there. This could be taken into account from natural conditions; You had a headache, maybe, or some other illness. But, says you, I felt so happy when he was present that I thought I could die. Ah! in this way Peter had spoken much time before; but pity the chaos he made about when he trusted his feelings; for he be immersed in the sea, but for Christ; and forever cursed his frames and feelings, nor brought his evidence: although they were good in themselves, he did not bring them before Christ. But as if he were saying, Lord, I call upon my omnimity. I will not tell you that there should be such an issue in the volume of my heart, because there is such a sign on its cover; for, Lord, thou mayt read inside it; and so I do not need to tell you what the name is, not read over to you content index. Sir, you know I love you. Could we give that answer to the question this morning, dear friends? If Christ would come here, if he would now walk through these walks, and on the benches, could we appeal to his divine Omniscience, his unmistakable knowledge of our hearts that we all love him? There is a test point between a hypocrite and a real Christian. If thou art a hypocrite, thou might say, Lord, my minister knowth that I love you; Lord, the deacons know that I love you; they think I do because they often hear me talk about you. But thou cannot say, Lord, thou knowth that I love thee; th heart is to testify that thy secret works are thy confessions, for thou art without prayer in secret; and you can preach twenty-minute prayer in public. You are screaming and parsimonious in giving the matter of Christ; But you can sport to see your name. You are screaming and parsimonious in giving the matter of Christ; But you can sport to see your name. like a warbeath hypocrite, as if you were a very gentlemanly man and never pure angry. You can accept the name of Your Creator in vain; but if thou heart any more, thou shall you be mighty harsh over him. You are influenced to be very overstemed, and yet if people knew that the widow's house that is sticking in your throat, and that orphan's patrimony, which you've taken from him, you could leave off trumpeting your good deeds. Your heart tells you that you are a liar before God. But you, O sincere Christian, you can welcome this question was never asked to Judah. The Lord loved Peter so much that he was jealous of him, or he would never have so challenged his arrest. And of this kind he often turns to what he loves very much, affections. The answer is also written to you, Lord, you know everything. Can you not look, even though you even rejected your minister, even though it was held back by deacons, and with the disesthesema looked at someone, can you not look up and say, Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you? Doesn't boast and bravado; but if ye can do it truly, be happy, bless God, that he has given you true love for the Redeemer, and ask him to increase it from spark to flame and from grain to hill. Simon, son of Jonas, lovet you me? yes, Lord, thou know all that; You know I love you. III. And now here's a demonstration needed- Feed my sheep. It was Peter's demonstration. No need to be our way our love. There are different ways for different apprentices. There are some who could not feed the sheep because they currently can not see far; they are weak in faith and are not qualified to teach at all. However, they have other means to show their love for the Redeemer. Let us offer a few words on this. Love you me? Then one of the best evidence you can give is to feed my lambs. Do I have two or three children who love and are afraid of my name? If you want to do a job that will show that you are a real lover, not a proud applicant; go and feed them. Are there some small ones I have purchased with my blood in the temple; I did that myself; but go and sit down with the young orphans, and teach them the way to the kingdom. Feed my lambs. Dear beloved, I've been late perplexing myself with one thought: that our church government is not virtual. It is the scriptures as far as it happens; but it is not according to all scriptures; we also do not practice many great things that should be practiced in our churches. We have received a large number of young people among us; in the ancient churches was what was called the class of catechism— I believe that there should now be such a class. The Sabbath afternoon, a class of youth of this church that are already members of the Church, to be taught to some members of the Elder Church. Now-a-days when we lambs, we just turn them adrift into a meadow, and there we leave them. There are more than a hundred young people in this church who are positive, even though they are members of the Church, cannot be left alone; but some of our elders, if we have elders, and some who should be ordained elders, should make their business to teach them forth, give them directions in faith, and thus keep them solid and quick with the truth of Jesus Christ. If we had elders, as were the case in all the apostolic churches, it could be visited to some extent. But now our deacons hands are full, they are doing a lot of work in the eldership, but they can't do more than they do because they are toiling hard already. I would like some here whom God has gifted and who have time to spend their afternoons taking classes for those who live around them, from their younger brothers, asking them to their homes for prayer and for godly instruction so that the lamb herd can be fed. With god's help, I will take care of the sheep; I will try according to God to feed them as well as I can, and preach the gospel to them. You are older and stronger in it, there is no need for careful prudent feeding that is necessary for lambs. But there are many among us, good dhemish souls who love the Redeemer as much as sheep do; but one of their complaints, which I have often heard, is: O, My lord, I join your church, I think they will be all brothers and sisters un me, and that I may speak to them, and they would teach me and be kind to me. Oh! Sir, I came here, and no one spoke to me. I say, Why didn't you talk to them first? Oh! they answer: I didn't like it. Well, they would have liked, I am well aware; but if we had some way to feed the lambs, it would be a good way to prove to our Savior and to the world that we are really trying to follow him. I hope some of my friends will take this hint; and if, emoti with me, my brethren who are in office will try to do something this way, I think it will not be proof of their love for Christ. Feeding my lambs is a great duty; let us try to practice it as much as we can. But, beloved, we cannot all do it; lambs cannot feed lambs; sheep cannot feed the sheep accurately. These offices have to be appointed for some. And that is why, on behalf of the Redeemer, let me tell some of you that you have to provide different evidence. Simon's son Jonas, lovest you me? He said unto him, yes, Lord; You know I love you. Then keep it a prayer meeting to attend; see that it keeps happening and that it doesn't fall to the ground. Simon's son Jonas lovest you me? To thy servant; see that they go to the house of God, and ask them in faith. There is a sister: Do you love Christ? Yes, Lord. Perhaps it is as much as you can do, perhaps it is as much as you should do to train your children in fear of the Lord. There is no point in not disturbing yourself for responsibilities, which God has never meant that you do, and leave your vineyard at home for yourself. Just take care of your children; perhaps this is as good proof as Christ wants of you that you feed your lambs. You have your own office to which Christ has appointed you: try to run away from it, but try to do your best to serve your Master. But, I ask you to do something to prove your love; not sitting down doing nothing. Do not bend hands and hands, because such people distracted the minister the most, and give the most ruin to the church, for example, do nothing. You always readiest find fault. I have noted here that these are the very people who argue with everything, there are people who do nothing or are good at anything. They are sure to argue with everything else, because they do nothing for him. Doing is a good sign living conditions; and he may be alive in God, which do not do anything for God' s sake. We must allow our deeds to prove the sincer way of our love for our Master. Oh! tells you, but we do little. Can you do more? If you can, then do it. If you can not do more, for ye hold back any part of what you can do, to that extent you give cause for yourself not to trust your love for Christ. Is everything possible is very everything; to serve him abundantly; Ay, and Superabundantly: Try to increase your name; and if ye shall ever do too much for Christ, come and tell me of it; if you ever do too much about Christ, tell the angels about it, but you will never do so. He gave himself to you; to give himself to him. You see, my friends, as I'm leading you to look into your hearts, and I'm almost afraid that some of you will mistake my intentions. Do I have a poor soul here who really regrets the loathe of her affection for the tapes? Perhaps you have decided to ask yourself as many guestions as you can to revive the weedy spark of love. Let me tell you then that the flame of pure love must always be fed where it was first lit. When I admonished you to look at yourself it was just to discover evil; whether you will find this remedy, you must turn your eyes, not to your heart, but to the blessed heart of Jesus—to my kind lord and lord. And do you ever realize the sweet swelling of your heart against him; You can only prove it with a constant sense of your gentle love for you. I am glad to know that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Love, and the Spirit's ministry to me has endeared nothing as much as the fact that he takes the things of Jesus, and shows them to me, spreading abroad the Savior's love in my heart until it limits all my passions, awakens the gentle emotions of all competition, reveals my union to him, and sometimes my strong desire to serve him. May love seems to you to be a harsh duty or a arouse work; rather look at Jesus, harvest yourself up to his gracious trinkets until you're ravished with his beauty and preciousness. But ah! if thou art the slack in the evidence you give, I will know that you are not going with Him in holy cohabitation. And let me suggest one cost-effective way to improve the Lord's dinner ordinance. That is: while you're partaking out of it, my friends, renew your dedication to Christ. Look for this morning to give yourself back to your Master. Say with your hearts what I now say with my lips: O I my dear Lord Jesus, I love thee; You know I've given you some money up to this time, thanks to your grace! Blessed is thy name that I have not devoted myself to you as I should; I know that in many things I have come short. I won't make any decision to live better to your honor, but I will offer a prayer that you help me do. Sir, I give you my health, my life, my talent, my strength and all that I have! Thou hast bought me and bought me completely: then, Lord, take me this morning, baptize me in the Spirit; Let me now feel all the love for your blessed man. May I have the love that conquers sin and cleanses the soul—the love that can dare to danger and face difficulties for you. Why did I dedicated the ship of grace in the future and forever, which chose you before the foundation of the world! Help me to hold on to the fact that his ministry is solemn and which I desire this morning to renew your grace. And when you drink the blood of Christ and eat his body spiritually in such a box and emblem, I ask you that his torment and suffering inspire you with more love, that you may be more devoted to His ministry than ever before. If this is done, I will have the best churches; if we do this, the Holy Ghost that helps us to implement it, we will all be good people and truly, holding him fast, and we will not have to melt on a terrible day. As for you who have never given yourself to Christ, I do not dare tell you to renew an oath that you have never sworn, nor dare you ask you to take an oath that you will never keep. I can only pray for you that God the Redeemer would be glad to reveal to yourself to him, knowing that if you have done so, you have the best evidence that he has given himself for you. May God Bless you: those of you who go, let him let go with his blessing, and those who remain that ye may receive his grace for Christ's sake. Amen. See also: More Sermons and Essays | Articles by | eBooks | Our Faith | Prayers | Library - Home | Baselios Church Home ------ Malankara World service at St. Basil's Slag Orthodox Church, Ohio Copyright © 2009-2020 – ICBS Group. All rights reserved. Disclaimer Website designed, built, and hosted by International Cyber Business Services, Inc. hudson, Ohio Ohio