

“Lovest Thou Me More Than These?”

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What things can you do within your own life to show that you love the Lord first?

In November 2019, my friend and I visited the Holy Land. While there, we reviewed and studied scriptures about Jesus Christ’s life. One morning we stood on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee at a place that may have been where Jesus met His disciples following His Resurrection.

After Jesus’s Resurrection, as we read in John chapter 21, Peter and the other disciples fished all night without success.¹ In the morning, they saw a man standing on the shore who told them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. To their astonishment, the net was filled miraculously.²

They immediately recognized that the man was the Lord, and they rushed to greet Him.

As they dragged the net to shore, full of fish, Jesus said, “Come and dine.”³ John reports that “when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou me more than these?*”⁴

While I was standing on that same seashore, I realized that the Savior’s question was one of the most important questions that He might someday ask me. I could almost hear His voice asking, “Russell, lovest thou me more than these?”

Do you wonder what Jesus was referring to when He asked Peter, “Lovest thou me more than these?”

Relating this question to ourselves in our day, the Lord may be asking us about how busy we are and about the many positive and negative influences competing for our attention and our time. He may be asking each of us if we love Him more than the things of this world. This may be a question about what we really value in life, who we follow, and how we view our relationships with family members and neighbors. Or maybe He is asking what really brings us joy and happiness.

Do the things of this world bring us the joy, happiness, and peace that the Savior

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When we discover a fuller meaning of this question, we can become better family members, neighbors, citizens, members of the Church, and sons and daughters of God.

At my age, I have attended many funerals. I am sure many of you have noticed what I have noticed. When celebrating the life of a deceased family member or a friend, it is rare for the speaker to talk about the size of the person's home, the number of cars, or the bank account balances. They usually don't speak about social media posts. At most of the funerals that I have attended, they focus on their loved one's relationships, service to others, life lessons and experiences, and their love for Jesus Christ.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that having a nice home or a nice car is wrong or that using social media is bad. What I *am* saying is that in the end, those things matter very little compared to loving the Savior.

When we love and follow Him, we have faith in Him. We repent. We follow His example and are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. We endure to the end and stay on the covenant path. We forgive family members and neighbors by letting go of grudges we may be holding. We earnestly strive to keep God's commandments. We strive to be obedient. We make and keep covenants. We honor our fathers and mothers. We set aside negative worldly influences. We prepare ourselves for His Second Coming.

In "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," we read: "[Jesus] will someday return to earth. ... He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts."⁵

As one of the Apostles who signed "The Living Christ" document, I can say that knowing that Jesus "is the light, the life, and the hope of the world"⁶ gives me a greater desire to love Him more every day.

I testify that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live. I testify that They love us. The scriptures teach that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."⁷ The scriptures also teach that Jesus "so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons [and daughters] of God."⁸

Heavenly Father so loved us that He prepared His plan of salvation with a Savior as the central figure. And Jesus so loved us that in the great Council in Heaven, when Heavenly Father asked, "Whom shall I send?" Jesus, who was the firstborn of all

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follow our Savior and keep the commandments, even in the midst of trials and strife.

Today's world is unsettled. There are disappointments, disagreements, distress, and distractions.

President Dallin H. Oaks, speaking in 2017, noted the following: "These are challenging times, filled with big worries: wars and rumors of wars, possible epidemics of infectious diseases, droughts, floods, and global warming."¹¹

We cannot lose our love for and hope in Jesus, even if we face seemingly overwhelming challenges. Heavenly Father and Jesus will never forget us. They love us.

Last October, President Russell M. Nelson taught us the importance of putting Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ first in our lives. President Nelson taught us that one meaning of the word *Israel* is "let God prevail."¹²

He asked each of us these questions: "Are *you* willing to let God prevail in your life? Are *you* willing to let God be the most important influence in your life? Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day? Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other? Are you *willing* to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition? Are you *willing* to have your will swallowed up in His?"¹³

We must always remember that our true happiness depends upon our relationship with God, with Jesus Christ, and with each other.

One way to demonstrate our love is by joining family, friends, and neighbors in doing some small things to better serve each other. Do things that make this world a better place.

What things can you do within your own life to show that you love the Lord first?

As we focus on loving our neighbors as He loves them, we start to truly love those around us.¹⁴

I ask again, how would you respond to the Savior's question "Lovest thou me more than these?"

As you consider this question, as I have done, I pray that you may answer as Peter did so long ago, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee,"¹⁵ and then show it by loving and serving God and all those around you.

I testify that we are blessed to have the gospel of Jesus Christ to guide us in the way we live and treat each other. In Him, we discover that every daughter and son of

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1. 1. See John 21:3.
2. 2. See John 21:11.
3. 3. John 21:12.
4. 4. John 21:15; emphasis added.
5. 5. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
6. 6. "The Living Christ," ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
7. 7. John 3:16.
8. 8. Doctrine and Covenants 34:3.
9. 9. Abraham 3:27.
10. 10. Moses 4:2.
11. 11. Dallin H. Oaks, "Push Back against the World" (Brigham Young University–Hawaii commencement address, Feb. 25, 2017), speeches.byuh.edu.
12. 12. Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92; see also Bible Dictionary, "Israel."
13. 13. Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," 94.
14. 14. See John 15:12–13; Ephesians 5:1–2; 1 John 3:2–3, 16–18, 23–24; 4:7, 9–11, 20–21; Moses 1:39.
15. 15. John 21:15.

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