

“Do You Love Me?”

I was recently reading one of my favorite authors, Brennan Manning. He writes in his book, *A Glimpse of Jesus: The Stranger to Self-hatred* something that has really sunk into my heart. He writes:

With time slipping away like sand in an hourglass, the church has no more urgent priority than proclaiming the values of Jesus, preparing the way for him, and restraining panic when he appears on the scene. It is neither bogged down in heresy-hunting nor mired in the ecclesiastical morass of theological controversies. Ignoring every issue that is petty and irrelevant, the body of Christ must come together in fraternal love, forgive one another for centuries of malfeasance. Let people hear and respond to the Master’s life-giving question to Peter, “Do you love me?” and allow Jesus’ sovereignty to become a reality in the realm of Christian freedom.

There is so much in this paragraph that my heart is overwhelmingly convicted about the work of the church in the days ahead.

*First, the church doesn’t need to get bogged down in trivial matters.* I have seen it too often where the church gets embroiled in debates of theology or practice and all the while ignoring the call to love God with all its heart, mind, soul and strength and ultimately forgetting the command to love the neighbor as ourselves. O that we would not be so consumed with the trivial that we forget those who are most important to Jesus!

*Second, the church must love as Jesus loved.* We need to be willing to set aside our pettiness and love our fellow believer – whether they are Baptists or not. We need to embrace the love of Christ for all who proudly bear His name as their identity – Christians. Love should be the primary descriptor of our character and our conduct.

*Third, forgiveness needs to be present in our lives.* The historical Christian church must seek forgiveness for the wrongs inflicted upon one another and upon the unbelieving world – but even more, individual believers must be willing to seek forgiveness from one another. If forgiveness is good for Jesus to offer to us, it is good for us to offer it to one another.

*Fourth, we must respond and allow others the freedom to respond to Christ’s most important question, “Do you love me?”* Each of us will answer that in different ways and will express our love for him in a way that is unique to us. We must give each other the freedom to answer that question for ourselves following the dictates of our own conscience and the impulse of God’s Holy Spirit.

All I know today is that I do love Jesus. I try to show it more and more each day, even though I often fail. I love Jesus and want to be more and more like Him in everything I do, everything I think, everything that I say.

I hear Jesus whispering to me this morning, “Do you love me?” and my heart answers “Yes, oh yes I do...help me to show it in every moment!”

I hope that you will say, “I love Jesus too!”