

Luke 22:54-62

Peter Denies The King

Good morning church!

I am so happy you can join us on our Live Stream.

I must admit, I miss you all greatly, church without the church is not anything I can get used too.

And I hope we never take for granted the value and spiritual health that comes from gathering together as the Body of Christ.

Although I am thankful for technology, I am anxious to get back to the Old format, of gathering together to worship our Lord Jesus.

There is no doubt that our world is changing radically, day by day... and perhaps this is not such a bad thing,

Perhaps what we will have, is a reset, now that we have been taken away from our mundane, familiar and even predictable way of life that we had just last month.

Our Elder Steve Dwiggin sent me an article from the Wall Street Journal this week, and it talked about what happens after crisis. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-coronavirus-great-awakening-11585262324>

It really presented a great reality, so many today are super concerned about their financial wellbeing, and rightfully so...

But the author pointed out that after every major crisis in the US, the gruesome conflicts of the World Wars, Great Depressions, and the likes, that Americans turned to faith in Great numbers.

After plagues, after recessions and depressions, the people come flooding back to churches.

When people's comfortable lives are interrupted with disorienting and uncertain conflicts, they turn to God, who is above all of the mayhem.

These things remind us of our mortality, and we turn to the One who can assure our eternity.

Perhaps a Revival will come off this crisis, another Great Awakening, perhaps this is a Great Humbling period.

And my hope is that we will see the church's pews full, and not just for a couple weeks, but sustainably full.

Pray that the men and women of our country turn back to their God through all of this.

Of course we pray for healing, we pray for those who are suffering as well.

And we too, must use this crisis as an opportunity to reach others for Christ.

Understand as the days drag on, and things perhaps get worse before they get better, people will be more open to hear about your God, they will want to know

why you are not shaken, and they will want the stability you are showing them in these times.

Bring them to Jesus, as the Lord opens doors of opportunity share His Love and Grace with them.

Our mandate as Christians does not change, under any circumstance, we bring them to Jesus.

Well, let's pray before we get into God's Word this morning.

So please turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke, where we will be in Luke chapter 22, verses 54-62...

This morning our focus is on one of my favorite personalities in the Bible, the Apostle Peter, really the prince of the Apostle, the one set apart by Jesus to lead the others.

The Gospel's are filled with the Apostle Peter, he is spoken of more than any other disciple in them.

The Lord Jesus addressed him more than any of His other followers.

No disciple was rebuked as harshly as Peter, and no other disciple was ignorant enough to rebuke Jesus as Peter did.

No disciple encouraged Jesus the more than Peter, and Peter above the rest also discouraged Jesus the most.

Peter had what we call foot in mouth disease, Kent Hughes says, "sometimes he only opened his mouth to change feet."

And although Peter spoke foolishly at times, other times he confessed some of the most Divine Truths. Christ blessed Peter above the others, to only curse him only a moment after.

Jesus was harder on Peter, expected more out Peter, and challenged him more than the others.

Jesus was more stern with Peter than even Judas.

It is interesting, the four Gospel's, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all have a list of the 12 disciples, and the list varies in all the different Gospel's, but Peter is always listed first, and Judas is always last.

Now, one of the most meaningful portions of scripture for me is found in Luke Chapter 5 when Peter is called by Jesus into the ministry.

Remember it was a frustrating night of fishing for the angler Peter.

He had spent all night out on the Sea of Galilee with nothing to show for it.

Jesus in the morning, barrowed his boat, and went out a little ways from the shore to teach the crowds, if you ever get a chance to go onto the shores of Galilee, you can understand this teaching position would provide a natural amphitheater for Jesus to preach from.

After Jesus was done teaching, He asked Peter to go out into the deep water, and throw his net out one more time, but it was morning time, Peter was the pro

here, the fish were not anywhere to be found once that sun was up.

Jesus the Carpenter needed a little lesson on fishing here, Peter informed Him of the pointlessness of the venture.

Jesus insisted; and you all know the story, the amount of fish that was caught in the net was so immense that Peter had to call another boat over to help, the nets were breaking, and both boats began to sink from the Lord's provision that day.

This here is where Peter was first humbled and amazed at Jesus, he realized here that Jesus was not just a lucky Man, but that He was in fact the Creator of the fish and the Sea.

Peter so overwhelmed, gives us a lesson on our approach toward Jesus, through humility and brokenness... Peter was undone, as he spoke these incredible words... **Luke 5:8 "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"**

Peter was rid of self at this point, his inadequacies were fully understood, and he realizes the true reality of our humanity.

**Jer. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?"**

When you can own up to that reality, you have reached the starting point of faith and service for Jesus.

Too many justify themselves, by declaring, "I am a good person, mostly."

And that is just not an accurate truth, just consider your thoughts from this week, the gossip, the filth, the wickedness that just passed through the window of your mind.

Maybe not just this week, maybe you only need to assess your thoughts from this morning.

What if, before everyone here on the internet we could somehow play your inner thoughts for all to see this morning, the horror of that, would cause you to go into hiding and never show your face again.

Listen, we are wicked innately, this is our reality, and when you can come to Jesus as Peter did and confess that you are a sinner, well you are in the right place.

Jesus from that humiliated position tells Peter, **Luke 5:10 "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."**

This was his calling into the ministry... the beginning of many incredible lessons for Peter.

You see as we assess his life and failure this morning, please know there is no one more relatable to our

Christian journey than that bull-headed fisherman from Galilee.

As we look at Peter's example, there are some real life lessons, and great realities that we can learn from his life.

We really can be hard on Peter, but it is only because he is the most exposed in the Gospels, but understand Peter's bull-headedness actually allowed him to experience things the others did not.

I mean who else can say that they have walked on water, but the brave Peter...

Even though only moments later he was crying **Matt 14:30 "Lord, save me!"**

You see, Peter's audacious personality pushed him further in his faith than the other disciples.

To Peter's credit, he was an incredibly loyal friend to Jesus, earlier in Jesus ministry, when others began to leave Jesus, because they simply could not receive the difficult things that He was asking of them, it was Peter who was shown to have incredible loyalty.

John 6:66-69 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also

we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

He was immensely loyal to Jesus, and very bold in his claim that Jesus was the Christ.

Peter at another place made another powerful claim, that no one else was Bold enough to make...

Jesus asked who the people said He was, and also asked His disciples directly who they thought He was...

It was Peter who revealed...

Luke 9:20 "The Christ of God."

Peter at times was so filled with discernment, but on the other hand he also seemed so aloof at times.

Think of the Mount of Transfiguration, when Elijah and Moses appeared to Jesus to speak to Him about the death He was going to experience in Jerusalem, Peter not knowing what to say about it all, he thinks its best that they stay there...

Matt 17:4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Peter missed the reality of that moment... and that Jesus had to forge ahead to the cross.

Then Peter again in the upper room was found indifferent to what he thought should be taking place at the Table.

Remember he and John prepared the meal, and surely this should have bought him a seat of honor, but Jesus placed him in the lowest seat, to serve everyone.

Peter refused to serve the disciples... he failed to understand the lesson on greatness Jesus was setting before him.

Jesus then had to take it upon Himself, to set the ultimate example, and He washed the disciple's feet.

Peter indignant, said... **John 13:8-9**

"You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

Peter once again not completely understanding Jesus' point here, or the lesson in servanthood.

So at times he was seen as having divine insight and other times he was oblivious.

Peter, as I picture him, was like many of the tradesmen I have known throughout the years, broad-shouldered, with a booming personality, extroverted, and extremely assertive, probably always dripping with perspiration.

He would be a strong man, big in all aspects, big physically, and a big personality.

Kent Hughes calls him a “Headstrong, unbridled hulk who is always getting into trouble and causing his Master plenty of the same.”

Well, this morning, Peter will once again lay out some profound lessons for us.

Peter’s exposure in the scriptures make him “every man’s teacher.”

Clarence MacCartney, explains him this way, “His impulsive deeds, his frequent questions, his eager exclamations and confessions, the praise and honor and rebukes that were bestowed upon him, his sometimes manly and sometimes cowardly acts, oaths, his bitter tears – all this makes Peter the great companion and the great instructor of his fellow men and his fellow Christians.”

And understand, the greatest lessons we can learn from Peter come from his Great Failure that came on that fateful night of Jesus’ arrest and trial.

Let’s read our text this morning, and then we can come back through and glean from this dynamic and also depressing text...

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

(Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; John 18:13-18,25-27)

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the

midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Let's take a moment to remember what has transpired prior to this and the steps that Peter took to get to this pathetic position.

I think as we look back we can see the pitfalls that Peter allowed himself to succumb to, and in our looking back, we can find our application and

instruction on how we can avoid ending up where Peter is found in this portion of scripture.

Back when Jesus warned them about this night, we see Peter's response...

Matt 26:31-33 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd,

And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

Understand here, Peter's first step toward his fall and denial was that he began to walk in pride.

Peter did not see himself truthfully, of course his intentions were noble, yet he was trusting too much in Peter.

I think there were a lot of Christian's and ministries acting like this when the news of the coronavirus started.

"We will never shut our doors, nothing can stop us..."

The people were cheering them on, then the next week, they all shut down.

People just have such a heroic view of themselves, and that is rooted in pride.

This was step one of Peter's slide to denial, he was walking in pride.

He trusted in himself above God's Word, Jesus told him clearly what would happen, and Peter's pride would not allow it.

This brings us to the next step, when pride begins to dictate the hearts response, God's Word is then belittled.

Remember a few weeks ago, Jesus told Peter very clearly... in **Luke 22:31-33** "**Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.**"

33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

The next step after pride, we see here is rejection of the Jesus' Words.

Peter was confident in his own might, and now filled with pride, he was putting himself above the Word of God.

He went on his feelings and emotions and that can be very dangerous and misleading.

I cannot tell you how many times I hear people dismiss their clear spiritual obligations in God's Word, because they feel like they should do something else.

They even try to cover it up with, "I prayed about it, and I felt led to do it this way."

Church understand something, God will never tell you to do something counter to His Word.

You see, we are not above God's Word, and God will never have us do anything that His Word declares is right or wrong.

Peter was told about his failure and he played it down, he believed in how he felt over the sure Word of Jesus.

And Peter's pride, that led to disbelief of God's Word, led him to underscore the necessity of prayer.

Remember we saw this last time in the Garden... the three disciples closest to Jesus, including Peter, were all sleeping when they were supposed to be watching and praying.

Jesus told them **Luke 22:40 "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."**

And prayer is essential in walking with Jesus in this life, our prayer life keeps our perspective right and clear in this world, and helps us to overcome temptation, as we pray to the Lord, to "lead us not into temptation, and to deliver us from the evil one."

Peter slept instead of praying... and this led to the next step, the pride that led to disbelief in God's Word, that led to prayerlessness, led then to Peter beginning to act independently apart from Christ.

Remember when the soldiers arrived to arrest Jesus, and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, the disciples asked, if it was time to use their two swords.

Peter did not wait for the answer, and he went ahead and chopped my great, great, great, great grandpa's ear off, Malchus.

When we are prideful, not honoring the Lord at His Word, lazy in prayer, we begin to make decisions outside of the revealed will of God.

We began charting a course by our own emotion and instinct, and that is a very painful path.

We become powerless in the face of temptation.

And as we see here in our text this morning, these things led to Peter slipping further down this slippery slope of despair.

Look at verse 54 again...

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance.

We see here as Jesus was led into the home of Annas and Caiaphas, the high priests at this time, Peter followed at a distance.

Now, just for clarity, the high priest according to the Law of Moses held a lifetime position, there was only supposed to be one, but under the Roman's they changed the priesthood to an oligarchy of sorts.

Meaning that they changed out the rulers as they saw fit, and there became a ruling class of priests, and at this time Caiaphas was the Roman puppet priest, but Annas was the true high priest in the Jewish eyes.

Both men had immense power and influence and Jesus will be tried in front of both.

You see, the Oligarchy priesthood had a palace for the high priestly class to live within a home, with a courtyard, and one wing was probably occupied by Annas and the other wing by Caiaphas.

Jesus was led there, and next week we will look at Jesus' religious trial, for which there are 3 religious trials, and 3 secular trials total.

But we focus in on Peter this morning, as we see at the end of this verse, Peter followed at a distance.

And this is an important question to ask here, how does one of Jesus' closest disciples, a sword swinging, and courageous disciple end up now following at a distance.

Understand Peter was a loyal man, a dangerously loyal man, ask Malchus... but we see a different Peter here...

Now God's Word clearly calls for us to have a passion in our lives for Jesus Christ.

We are to love Him supreme to serve Him supreme, everything else in our lives is supposed to come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

God has no taste for Lukewarm commitments, He desires a whole-hearted allegiance.

Many today settle for a casual relationship with Jesus, or a convenient relationship as I call it.

Where we don't seem to fanatical about our faith, many are more concerned about being labeled as one of those weird Christians whose life is boring and dull.

So they put a distance between themselves and Jesus, and they like to remain kind of undercover for Jesus.

Commitment to church is second to their hobbies and extracurricular activities.

Saturday fun leads to neglecting the fellowshiping with the Saints on Sunday.

Heb. 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Now, of course, there are some challenges to this today, but when things get back to normal, this should be top priority.

We cannot afford to follow Jesus at a distance, we need to surround ourselves with other Jesus People.

Of course, today, make every effort to call other Christians, find a way to connect with them.

Pastor Joe hosting those meetings on Zoom is amazing, last Thursday I was so refreshed to talk with those of you who joined in...

When we distance ourselves from Jesus and His people, it is much more difficult to stand for Him during the hour of temptation.

Now I cannot leave this verse without giving Peter some credit, because the sheep were supposed to scatter, and yet Peter is still following somewhat... and although Peter followed, he will abandon the battle when time comes.

So, let's remember the steps so far, Peter's pride, led to disbelief in Jesus' Words, which led to prayerlessness, which led to Peter acting independently, which as we see here led to Him distancing himself from Jesus.

And this leads to the last step toward denial, which is blending in with the crowd

55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Peter now blends in with crowd as to not stand out.

This was Peter's downfall, he had forsaken the fellowship, and tried to blend in with the world.

You see God has set us apart from this world, from the moment we put our faith and allegiance toward Jesus.

In fact, Peter would write about this reality later on in his ministry... a lesson learned in failure for sure...

1 Peter 2:9-12 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

You see we are called to stand out, and really be a witness to the world.

This world is not our home, we are strangers, sojourners, passing through, and we cannot afford to blend in or conform to this world...

Paul says in... **Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

We are to be set apart, to be a light in a dark world.

I find it troubling that the church has this insatiable drive to look more like this world, to act more like the world, to dress and talk like the world, it is troubling that many claim in order to reach more, they must blend in.

I think of my father-in-law often when I hear this line of reasoning.

My father-in-law, Tony, was an outlaw Biker, he road with a notorious outlaw club, and there came a point in his life when he desired a change.

I remember talking to him about the Biker ministries, and what he thought of these Christians dressing like them, acting like them, and trying to talk like them, then trying to reach him for Jesus.

And he would tell me how silly it all seemed to him, many of them putting on this hard shell, this tough talk, but not having any clue what being an outlaw really meant.

He said when he came to Jesus, he did not look for Jesus in a setting like his, Tony didn't want a Biker Jesus; he wanted a Saving Jesus.

He wanted to be around Christians who didn't change who they were to blend in, he wanted to be around genuine believers in Jesus.

When he wanted a change, he did not want to be around people that reminded him of the Old Tony, but he wanted to be around people that encouraged him in his new life with Jesus.

I have to say Christians oftentimes look ridiculous, when they try to blend in, in the name of outreach.

Paul says... **2 Cor. 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:**

"I will dwell in them

And walk among them.

I will be their God,

And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore

"Come out from among them

And be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean,

And I will receive you."

18 'I will be a Father to you,

And you shall be My sons and daughters,

Says the Lord Almighty."

Come out from them, be separate is our calling.

Understand something, you will reach more people by simply being you, then you will then trying to pretend you are something that you are not.

I see 60-70 year old pastors dressing like hipsters, in skinny jeans trying to appeal to a younger generation, come on, just where those Dockers in your closet already, you know that you are uncomfortable in those skinny jeans.

Just be yourself, and you will be surprised at what God can do with your life, God saved you, to use you.

You don't have to run out to get tattoos to be more relatable to this world, you don't have to pretend that you this hard rebellious Christian, you just have to be you, God can use that.

So Peter is here blending in, warming his hands by the fire of the enemy, he is letting the world shape him, instead of influencing and making a stand.

Peter will be led to deny his Lord now three times, just as Jesus foretold.

56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Three times Peter denied Jesus, and each time he only amplified his position more.

"Woman I do not know Him." "Man I am not one of His followers."

Then in Mark we see the treachery of the third denial...

Mark 14:70-71 And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it."

71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

Peter so lost and confused here resorts to the old boat talk from his days before Christ, and he begins to curse, or more precisely calling down curses upon himself, and swearing sinful oaths...

His Galilean Brogue gave him away, and he looked foolish...

Now, if this is where the story ended for Peter, what a tragic tale it would be, and it would be hopeless for us, who are looking to Peter as an example.

But look now at the rest of verse 60 as Peter hits his rock bottom, as a rooster's crow jolts him back into reality...

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

We will never fully know the hellish turmoil that Peter went through over the next few days.

A part of Peter died that night, and maybe it was not so bad that it did.

The old man, the self-assured presumptuous man died in Peter.

Church I want you to understand something here, Great Failure is a great teacher, a painful one, but an effective one.

The rooster crowed to remind Peter of the Providence of the moment, Peter so caught up in his folly, he failed to notice, that Jesus was now being led through the courtyard.

As Peter heard the rooster, then His Master's electrifying eyes sent pain jolting through Peter's broken heart.

Jesus eyes said everything, "Peter it is happening just as I told you, don't forget this moment, because I prophesied every detail of it."

This lesson as painful as it was, was a pivotal turning point in Peter's life, the pain of this moment, will allow him to never forget, that he was still that sinful man that Jesus called back on the fishing boat.

The lesson will be deeply seeded into his heart, and seared into his conscious.

Now, here we must remember that Jesus just did not predict Peter's denial... there was more.

Peter failed to pray for himself, but there was another Mediator working on his behalf...

Jesus told him... **Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."**

Peter was being perfected and refined for a purpose, he had a calling upon his life to lead, to strengthen his brethren.

Jesus also prophesied Peter's repentance.

The message was certain for Peter, he would fail, sin greatly, but he would be granted forgiveness, when he returned to Jesus.

He would have a ministry, his life would be used greatly.

This sinful man would become a pillar in the church.

This was all part of God's schooling, God's perfecting of Peter.

From this point on the scriptures show us a completely different Peter...

Peter will have a restorative encounter with Jesus on the shores of the same Sea of Galilee that he was called into ministry on.

John Chapter 21 records the whole ordeal, where Jesus will at three different times extract a commitment of love from Peter.

Jesus will also commission the fallen disciple three times to minister and lead.

Peter would never be the same, his presumption was dealt with, his arrogance was put in check, his independence would be gone, and his self-reliance would be put behind him.

And in the place of those things, will be God's Power, and the power of God's Spirit will raise up this broken man, and use him astonishingly.

This man who cowered before a servant girl earlier will stand before a crowd and fearlessly preach...

Acts 2:22-24 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Never again will Peter try to blend in, no longer will he compromise, steadfast and true he will remain aligned with Christ, all the way to his own death by crucifixion.

Now, the Holy Spirit, who inspired God's Written Word, has allowed us to see Peter in a very human way.

He really is a picture of many who have loved Christ and have been given over to self-reliance and independence from their God.

You see Peter is us, all of us...

We all can relate to Peter in one way or another...

I imagine all of us have been in this place in our Christian walk, where we failed to stand when we knew we should have.

When we cowardly avoided conflict, and instead chose to blend in and appease those around us.

Maybe not to the extent Peter has done here, but we have all had our faith tested, and we have all come up short...

Perhaps you have gone through all or some of the same steps Peter did to get to this point.

Your pride led to not receiving God's Word, which led you to a season void of prayer, then you began to act independently, following Jesus at a distance, and somehow, now you look just like the world, you are blending in.

Maybe as you listen to this teaching right now, you are wallowing in a pit of despair, because of your mistakes.

Maybe as you look at your life, you are wondering "how did my life get here?"

"How did I get so far from my Lord?"

Maybe the world has just taken you captive, and you are paying for the poor choices you have made...

Maybe this teaching is your rooster's crow, and you realize once again, that "I am a sinful man or woman."

Understand, your bottom low, is not the end... as bitterly as Peter wept that night in his own despair, his story continued on...

You see, Jesus' love for us is not like our fickle emotions at all.

Jesus' love for us is not wearied by our pride, or indifference to Him.

In fact, Jesus' Love is relentless in its cause to cure us from our sins.

But understand, in that love, He does allow us fail, to fall, to smash through the bottom at times, in order for us to look to Him to receive His Love and Grace.

I often warn people before inviting them to come to Jesus, we must count the cost.

Understand, once we put our life into the Hands of Jesus, He will begin a sanctifying, purifying work in our lives.

You see He has given us free will, and if we choose to, we can push Him away, but His love will be relentless trying to get us back on track.

Understand when our life is in the Hands of the Maker of Heaven, His job of perfecting us is not complete until eternity.

And no matter the amount of suffering it may cost us in this life, whatever other challenging circumstances we find ourselves in, He is working to purify us as it

says in Eph. 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Jesus will never rest, or let us rest, until this day.

Maybe you are listening in, and you have slipped away from the faith of your youth, maybe you have fallen to depths you once never thought imaginable, and maybe you think you have just gone too far.

Understand something this morning, God has brought this teaching to you this morning for a reason.

He is not done with you, no, in fact, He loves you greatly, and the program that He set up from failure, really is so simple.

You see there are no religious rites that you must perform to come back to the Lord, no, we believe it is a one step program, like Peter, weep over your sins, repent, and be restored.

Remember the promise to Peter, and understand our Lord's heart for you...

Luke 22:32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

There is still much ministry to be done, He is not done with your life.

Come to Jesus this morning, listen all you need to do is talk to Him, like you would anyone else, He is near to you this morning, and He is there with you.

Pray to the Lord, and ask Him to forgive you of your sins, ask Him to cleanse you, to free you this morning.

He will not turn anyone away... He offers you a New Life, a Restored Life, turn to Him this morning.

Now, if you do make that decision this morning please email or call the church this week to let us know, links to our website are below, but we want to send you a Bible and some material, one of the pastors will call you and pray with you.

We really do have so much to take away from this man Peter's life, I pray that the Lord has spoken to each of you listening in this morning.

I hope you are challenged to give up in your faith, to get back up, and keep pressing into the fullness.

We love you and miss you...

Let's pray...