

**The Gospel of the New Beginning**  
**Peter's Life of New Beginnings**  
**John 21**

# **The Lesson Peter Never Forgot**

Peter reached the bottom and came to his darkest hour.

Alone and unprepared for temptation, he forgot Christ's warning and plunged into waters too deep for him. Drowning in fear, Peter succeeds in denying Jesus firmly and openly three times.

But Jesus, who warned him, also prayed for him, and now comes to Peter and restores him, giving Peter a new beginning on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

We have come to Peter's final lesson, the one he never forgot. In fact, to the end of his life he was talking about Christ's wondrous love and forgiveness that restored Peter back into ministry. In his letters Peter spoke of that love when he said:

*1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

Peter's final lesson that comes from his darkest night and lasts for the rest of his life is that **Jesus promised Peter a new beginning and offered complete forgiveness.**

Start with me in Luke 22: 32, 60-62

*Luke 22: 32, 61-62 "But **I have prayed for you**, that your faith should not fail; and **when you have returned to Me**, strengthen your brethren."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. And **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**.*

It was the miracle of the cock crowing at that exact moment that reminded Peter of God's Word; but the cock crow also signaled that a new day was dawning, for after all, that is what the rooster's call means each day—and Jesus promised Peter would be restored.

Peter had a new day, a new beginning of hope because he was remembering and trusting in what Jesus had said. It was a new day for Peter as he repented and wept bitterly.

God has promised that “a broken and a contrite heart” He will never turn away (Ps. 51:17). Help was on the way; God’s plan was unfolding.

Peter first received a special message from the angel on Resurrection morning which encouraged Peter (Mark 16:7), later that day Jesus Himself appeared to Peter and renewed his fellowship with Peter (Luke 24:34). But it was on the shores of Galilee where Jesus had first called Peter, He returns to restore Peter’s call and to re-commission him for ministry in John 21.

Peter’s last scene with Christ in the Gospels, holds one of the greatest messages we could hear. Let’s see that moment as we turn now to John 21 and read the first three verses. Stand

*John 21: 1-3 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.*

Pray

On a tranquil beach, not far from where Christ's ministry began, at the break of day—Jesus met with seven men, straightened them out and headed them His direction for their lives.

## **PETER’S FINAL LESSON IS FOR US ALSO**

In a real sense those seven Jesus met on the shore, represent all of us here this morning, whoever we are, wherever we are going or have been—Jesus wants to restart and redirect our lives.

Jesus spoke to them two thousand years ago, but through His Word, He is also speaking to us today.

John 21 is amazing in many ways.

Just the surface message is so deeply encouraging. For example if you look closely the men Jesus starts with in chapter one are still with Him in chapter 21—speaking of His ability to keep to the end those that are His.

***That is security***, we need to believe and rest in Christ's securing power to save us to the uttermost.

But even more thrilling are the first two named in chapter 21—Peter and Thomas (v. 2). We could better refer to them as *chief denier* and *chief doubter*. It is no accident they are the first two listed. It is such a testimony that Christ's team would be so representative of the flock they would lead. There is room in Christ's church for all deniers and doubters who love Jesus and repent of their doubts and denials. Such is the opening message of this wonderful chapter.

***That is forgiveness***; we need to believe with all our heart what Jesus says in Mark 3:28 "all sins are forgivable", we can rest in Christ's complete forgiveness.

Another even more penetrating message of this chapter is the one we may need most to hear in this Laodicean age in which we live. Jesus confronts the seven disciples with the danger of a self-prompted life and ministry.

***That is a warning***, we need to heed and respond to that warning lest we waste this precious life we have been given to live for His glory by living for everything and Him rather than for Christ alone.

Chapter 21 is simply a record of how Jesus works to give His children a new beginning when they have gotten off course.

What Jesus does is show up on the shore and ask a question to reveal their current condition (getting nothing from all their hard work all night long); then He gives them a command (throw the net now at My word); then He wants to minister to them as their obedience reveals who He is and what He can do with their lives (fish fill empty nets).

## **NEW MEN, OLD JOBS**

From their call as disciples (Mark 1:16-20) Jesus made them new men going back to their old jobs; He had equated fishing with ministry. They were called as fishers of fish to become fishers of men. Fish became people and fishing became evangelism.

On their reaffirmation to ministry in Luke 5:1-10, Jesus again makes the connection. Now one final time in this touching scene, the message is repeated. The old ways are over, life is different—we live in the same old world as different people. We can never do life the old way, our way; and if we try it doesn't please God—nor do we enjoy it anymore.

Remember the "Gone Fishing" sign? It belonged to a Huckleberry Finn/ Andy Griffith world of Mayberry and less stressful times. That sign signaled a departure from the pressures and responsibilities of the daily grind to a quiet place of reflection. That is where we find Peter and the others in John 21.

What were they doing sitting in a boat, on a quiet cove of the Sea of Galilee? Was it sinful and wrong? No. They had just hung up a sign on the doors of their lives—"gone fishing". Jesus had told them to go and wait for Him in Galilee, what better to do than go back to the old and the familiar comfort of what they thought they knew how to do best.

The only problem was they forgot they were new men, called, commissioned, enlisted, and responsible men who now were under the authority of Jesus as their Commander and Chief. Things can never be the same once we come to Jesus.

The greatest danger we have after becoming believers is going back to living in our own strength, operating in our own power, going in our own way.

How easy it is to forget that once we are saved we are no longer our own, we are to live and serve the One who loved and bought us.

Reverting to walking in the flesh rather than the Spirit is something we often do when life gets too hard to figure out; and how hard it must have been for them.

## **WHEN LIFE GETS CONFUSING**

Just think what the disciples had been through.

- The whirlwind of Christ's last days...
- The crowds at Palm Sunday, the huge response to Jesus as He rode in to the city...
- The sublime warmth of the Last Supper and all Christ's words and actions...
- Then the sadness of the walk and talk with Jesus headed to Gethsemane, and their dozing off only to be rudely ripped from sleep by a crowd of 600 armed soldiers with torches and chains...
- Then the blur of Christ's arrest, the long dark night with one disciple's suicide, nine disciples flight into their individual hiding places and Peter and John's vigil at the courtyard of Caiaphas.

That was what confused Peter every time he went back over those memories.

Peter still felt the shame of his denials even after the angel sent word through the women that Christ was alive; and he felt it still as he reflected on seeing Jesus alive and so powerfully risen.

For Peter it just was too much to compute, his system overloaded and now in default mode he hangs up on the doorway of walking with Jesus a "gone fishing" sign.

Back to what he knew and could handle, that is what fishing meant. He could count on it, live comfortably and predictably. He loved the quiet shores, the early morning mists and the rhythmic sounds of the water. Even the storms were okay because he knew this

place and felt so comfortable here. Ministry with Jesus had been exciting but he just wasn't sure about the future.

For most of us this "gone fishing" moment will come somewhere along the way. We have been serving the Lord but someone or something just knocks us off track.

Confused and unsure, without clear direction we decide to get out of the flow, away from the pressures and just think. We get into our boats and just go sit and sort things out.

Unseen on the shore, Jesus waited for them to realize how empty and fruitless it is to step away from following Jesus. It is very hard to follow Jesus. Paul called it agonizing, and so it was. But hard as it is to follow Jesus, it is far worse to not do so! That was the lesson Jesus led them though that morning.

**1. Jesus wanted them to know they couldn't do anything on their own (vv. 1-3).**  
*"... and that night they caught nothing."*

What would ever prompt men who just witnessed the greatest event in the history of the Universe (Christ's Resurrection) to go back to their "old life"? It was their flesh.

Peter was frustrated, he was uncertain what would be his future after his failure—so he said I am going back to what I know best. He forgot, or maybe was trying to forget the day he left his nets (Matthew 4:20). What ever his reason, Jesus again knew their hearts and was going to renew that call and draw them away from serving in the energy of the flesh.

All night long the disciples had cast the net, waited, drew the net back, pulled it in soaking their clothes, and finding each time—nothing.

## **WHEN LIFE BECOMES EMPTY**

Nothing.

That is how it can be in our jobs, our homes, our careers and our hearts when we take our lives back from Christ's hands and take the reins into our hands. Our work is empty, our relationships are empty, our accomplishments don't cheer us, and our past track record no longer encourages us. We dip the nets of life as we always have and each time they come up empty.

Jesus wanted these men to feel the emptiness of life lived in the energy of the flesh. So the little boat was drifting aimlessly, the men were sitting stiffly. They were wet, cold and sore as the first light of dawn began to rise over the hills of Galilee.

Maybe you have gotten out of the main stream of life and ministry with Jesus. You have been hurt or bumped or confused and just got in your boat and gone back to the old life. Jesus wants to meet you on the shore and gently restore you back to the blessing and joy of your call to ministry. All believers are called to the ministry. All believers have been bought at a price. And all believers need to serve the Lord with their body that belongs to the Lord. So we all have a calling to ministry.

Jesus starts this final lesson for Peter and the disciples with a question crossing 100 yards of water and reaching those seven men in the boat.

**2. Jesus wanted them to know He won't bless anything done apart from Him** (vv. 4-5). *John 21:4-5 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."*

Have you caught any fish? Looking up in the dim light and through the mists of the lake they could see a lone figure on the shore. The answer was the obvious; but it was also a reminder of the emptiness of their nets and of their lives at that moment.

"No" [nothing has come of all our efforts all night long]—that was the answer Christ wanted to hear.

Across the water a clear voice again reached the boat saying, "Cast your nets on the other side".

Peter was the greatest fisherman he had ever known; and inside began to boil with indignation at a landlubber's impudence giving him directions.

**3. Jesus wanted them to learn to follow His directions for their lives** (v.6). *John 21:6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.*

But what else was there to do since nothing else mattered anyway. So Peter the leader, Peter the pendular, went from anger to resignation and the men followed throwing the net where they were commanded to throw it.

The sharp tug on the rope in his hand, the weight of an entire shoal of fish summoned by the Master of Creation—jerked Peter out of resignation and apathy to full alert.

Instantly an old memory had flashed across his mind. The confident and commanding voice from the shore reminded him of a moment buried deeply in his past.

*Luke 5: 4-8 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and **let down your nets** for a catch."<sup>5</sup> But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will **let down the net**."<sup>6</sup> And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.<sup>7</sup> So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.<sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*

But the sight before Peter's eyes of 153 of the largest, strongest, fighting and splashing fish ever surrounded by his nets instantly connected that event years back with this moment.

The key is not why Jesus said, "Cast on the right side", because if Jesus had said the left side, that is where the fish would have gone. It is not **where** we serve or **how** we serve but whether we serve at Christ's command!

The key was listening to Jesus, doing what He said, and not operating on our own initiative and in our own wisdom.

Ministry that is self-prompted, self-directed, self-energized, and self-satisfied will always come up empty of eternal value and lead to emptiness of the soul.

Again Peter was remembering Christ's words as he looked at Jesus in the distance. It was only a few days back that Christ's loving eyes had locked onto Peter's in the courtyard of Caiaphas' home, now Peter's head jerked up, eyes squinting and riveting on that lone figure on the shore.

**4. Jesus wanted them to know that He blesses obedience.** (vv. 7-11) *John 21: 7-11 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.<sup>8</sup> But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.<sup>9</sup> Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."<sup>11</sup> Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.*

As his heart told him the same he heard John's voice behind him, filled with awe and worship for the miracle they were experiencing again. "It is the Lord!"

Peter needed one thing always and only and that was to be back as close as he could be to Jesus. The pendulum had swung wildly these past days. But nothing drew him, and caught him like the thought of Christ's presence. In a flash he was overboard and swimming with all his might through those cold dark waters that had separated him from Jesus for even a moment.

If you are listening to this story of Christ's dealing with Peter and likewise feel empty and frustrated and aimless—maybe you need to follow Peter's lead.

Stop anything else you are doing and lift your eyes to Jesus, gaze at Him and listen to what He commands you to do, and obey.

Jesus has a work for each of us to do and a way for us to do it—only when we are willing to stop, listen, and obey—can He do it.

Have you seen Jesus? If you haven't you can today. You can discover Jesus as you obey Him. Even if at this moment Jesus seems distant, far off or even unreal—that is normal. Sin always separates us from Him. If you want to obey Him, and if you will seek Him—you will find Him. As surely as those seven men found Jesus that morning you can also.

You may be asking, "How can I find Jesus?" As a believer you just need to stop going your own self-prompted way, confess your sins and ask for His cleansing as you yield your way back to Him (1 John 1:9). If you have never been saved, Jesus says, "Come to me and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-30). Call upon Jesus as your Savior and by His grace turn away from your sins.

##### **5. Jesus wanted them to share the joy of His Presence through life** (vv. 12-13).

*John 21:12-13 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord.13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.*

Onshore the scene was like the old days. Eating, talking, and in wonder before Jesus, quietly worshipping and adoring Him. As the day begins the distance of the past days of doubt and confusion are erased and the warmth of Christ's love is surrounding them.

Remember fearful Peter who got caught in water over his head and cusses and swears that he didn't know Jesus, and then Jesus turned and looked at him? Devastated Peter slips out into the dark to weep the bitter tears of failure, but Jesus comes looking for Him and gives him forgiveness. That is just what He does for each of us when we fail Him!

##### **6. Jesus restored Peter in public, showing all of them the only motive for ministry Christ accepts is LOVE.** (vv. 15-17). *John 21:15-17 So when they had eaten*



*breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.*

Then Jesus begins three distinct questions to Peter as they stood beside a fire of coals. The warmth evaporated as Peter flashed back to his worst memory. A similar setting, with a fire of coals late at night (John 18: 18) with probing questions from the servants of Caiaphas, and relatives of Malchus, whose ear Peter had savagely severed. Three times by a fire Jesus questions Peter's love; three times by a fire Peter denied loving Jesus.

Every part of Christ's three questions is so full of meaning.

First Jesus reverts to the old name and reminds Peter that he is acting like what he used to be. "Simon" was the names of the person Jesus changed into Peter (John 1.42); and Simon was the way Jesus warned Peter of his coming temptation (Luke 22.31) after Gethsemane. So when Jesus says Simon it brings back a strong reminder of the old man, the flesh or natural man that was Peter. Then Jesus asks, "Do you love me (with self-sacrificial **agape** love)"; and adds, "... more than these?"

'These' may mean the other disciples but probably meant more than these fish, more than your old career, more than doing what you want to do, to which Peter responds that he admire Jesus as a friend.

Jesus responds to Peter's honest, contrite admission of his failure with a renewal of Peter's call. Just like in Mark 1: 16-20 when **Peter was recruited** right here at this lake; and just like in Luke 5: 1-8 when **Peter was recommissioned** right here at this lake; so this third time at this same lake **Jesus restores Peter**, "I want you to be my servant and serve my church".

A second time the question comes to Peter, piercing and wounding him as he remembers his three denials. But Jesus drops the "more than these" so Peter can focus on just his heart. The question for Peter is also for all of us, do we really love Jesus. We may serve, we may speak, and we may study—but without love, it amounts to nothing.

Jesus would later warn the Ephesian church that they had perfected the defense of the faith but at the loss of love, and thus they amounted to nothing. Without love there is no real life; we are lifeless speaking and serving mannequins without

being motivated and controlled by a deep and abiding love for Christ in all that we do. Jesus says if you err, err on the side of loving too much—not too little.

Again Peter answer signals his humble confession that he has failed but wants a chance. Jesus repeats the same high ministry calling—minister to my flock.

Jesus here reminds Peter that only those who love Him deeply can serve Him properly. Ministering to Christ's flock, His church is a work so consuming, where appreciation is often so minimal, where criticism is often so harsh, where spiritual warfare is often so fierce, and results are often so scarce—that only those “constrained by Christ's love” (II Corinthians 5) can do the work of the ministry!

The third time Jesus questions Peter's loyalty He uses Peter's word *phileo* and says, “Peter are we friends?” To which the crushed disciples says, “Lord you know that I am your friend”. And again the highest calling is offered by Jesus to Peter. That calling is to serve Christ's church.

The repeated command to ministry was a strong signal to Peter that Jesus wanted him, weak and failed, flawed and uncertain—Peter was still called. Peter made it through the spiritual surgery. Jesus loved him whether he was perfect or imperfect, Jesus loved him whether he was bold or fearful; Jesus loved him, liked him, called him and would again use him. There was nothing Peter could do or not do that changed Christ's love.

Have you ever come to that place where you stop performing for Jesus and just get honest like Peter. Telling Jesus, “you know I am flawed, I'm weak and often sinful—but I want to be your friend; but I am afraid to even say that I love you with self-sacrificing love?” Jesus knows that; He loves us while we sin, before we sin, after we sin. He never changes, but we must.

Peter repented on that shore. He repented of trying to be perfect and perform well enough to earn Christ's love. He found Christ's love was secure even when he was not.

Have you ever stopped thinking that what you do externally for Christ makes you any more pleasing to Him? It is in His unchanging love that we rest. Peter did so to the end of his life.

## **REMEMBER THE LESSON PETER NEVER FORGOT**

Each one of us at some point in our lives, will miserably fail the Lord by yielding to some temptation and sin. Soon after that sin we will hear (in one way or another) “the crowing of the cock.”

At that instant the accusing voice of Satan will ring in our minds, telling us that we are finished, we are useless, pleasing God is hopeless, and our future has been destroyed.

But that is never God's message to us. As Peter learned, so we need to know. Our God is a forgiving God, a compassionate God, a God who loves us no matter what we have done.

Every time we open to the Gospel by Mark we remember that in one way or another, all of us too have stumbled. And for each of us, Peter's triumph by God's grace is an incredible source of encouragement to trust in our God of the new beginning!

## Summary/Appendix

**Jesus wanted Peter to know He has chosen the timing and the manner of our death** (vv. 18-19). *John 21:18-19 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

Peter was in it now for the long haul, and he never turned back. One of the earliest accounts of Peter's death is by Eusebius who wrote a book entitled Ecclesiastical History. There he states that Peter was forced to first watch his own wife's crucifixion and then as his time came he asked to be crucified upside down because of his unworthiness to die as Jesus died. Whatever may have happened at his death, one thing is certain—Peter loved Jesus Christ his Lord with all of his heart!

**Jesus reminds Peter that we look forward to His Coming—not death!** (vv. 20-24). *John 21:20-24 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." 23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" 24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.*

When Peter asks about John it was the old Peter resurfacing, curious and controlling. Christ's answer was so clear—God's plan for each of us is unique and personal obedience is the key. We are not to be walking looking over our shoulders at others but as the writer of Hebrews says, we run with our eyes fixed on Jesus and not others!

I just love the note about John never dying; it is comforting to know that people garbled and gossiped even back then just like they still do. Other people may misunderstand God's message and misinterpret what you are to do, but God wants each of us to follow Him with all of our heart and let His love cover our multitude of sins!

Seven signs:

1. Water and wine (2.1-11): Jesus controls quality; nothing in my life needs to stay empty.
2. Nobleman's son (4.46-54): Jesus controls distance; nothing is out of His range.
3. Invalid healed (5.1-9): Jesus controls time; nothing is too far gone.
4. Feeding 5000 (6.1-14): Jesus controls resources; no quantity impedes Him.
5. Walking on water (6.16-21): Jesus controls nature; no force is too great for Him.

6. Sight to blind man (9.1-7): Jesus controls misfortunes; no disability stymies Him.
7. Lazarus raised (11): Jesus controls destiny; not even death defeats Him.

After three years of personal one-on-one training in Christ's presence, after all the absolute confirmations of Christ's power—Peter, the leader of the Twelve **denies that he ever even knew Jesus**. He becomes a complete failure. As we read earlier, after Gethsemane an unprepared Peter faces temptation and fails. That night becomes...

## **PETER'S DARKEST HOUR**

For most of us a failure that big, an event that public, would be the end. It was a scandal of epic proportions and it must have echoes around Jerusalem. Peter, the lead representative of Christ was a washout and a quitter. He melted in the face of only the threat of servant girls.

But the lessons left for us are priceless. It is so wonderful to see what Jesus taught Peter in that darkest hour of his life. And if there are ever dark clouds in the days of our lives—we can remember like Peter remembered and like Peter have HOPE for a new beginning!

That is what we need to be reminded of; they are...

## **LESSONS PETER FORGOT**

Luke carefully records the events in the courtyard of Caiaphas' house.

It was there that Peter waited for word about Jesus.

It was also there in that place that Peter forgot what he had been taught by Jesus.

Peter forgot the old truths, he failed to practice them, and he failed miserably. Instead of not entering temptation, Peter was tempted and gave in and betrayed Christ three times before the cock crowed.

But the record of what happened to Peter is part of the profit of Scriptures. From Peter's failure we can observe and glean doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

These are the lessons we can learn from Peter about how we all need to heed and apply God's Word this morning.

Peter first forgot the lesson that...

### **1. JESUS KNOWS WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN EACH DAY OF MY LIFE.**

*Luke 22: 31-34 And the Lord said, "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." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

When we read the Bible we should read it like we believed that Jesus knows what is going to happen in each day of my life. When He says temptations will come, but He will always make a way of escape—we must believe Him and escape.

When He says that Satan prowls around and devours those who don't resist the Devil—we must believe Him and resist (1 Peter 5:8-9). Since Jesus knows every day, and every need of our lives we must look upon His Word as what we can't live without (Matthew 4:4).

***So Jesus knows what is going to happen in every day of my life.***

Peter secondly failed because he forgot that...

## **2. JESUS WANTS US TO WATCH AND PRAY.**

*Luke 22:40-46 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."*

Sadly, it was in a garden of olive trees that Jesus prayed, and in a place like the nearby cave most likely is where Christ's disciples slept.

Mark records an even clearer call by Christ in Mark 14:38

*"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Temptations often come when we are not watching, when we are not on guard. So the story continues, Christ is arrested and Peter isn't careful. He forgot that Jesus had warned him clearly about not "entering into temptation". Jesus said don't go toward temptation, don't enter places where you are tempted to do wrong.

***So Jesus wants us to watch and pray.***

Peter disobeyed and didn't remember that...

### 3. JESUS HAS WARNED US TO FLEE TEMPTATIONS.

*Luke 22:54-61 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But **Peter followed at a distance**.<sup>55</sup> Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, **Peter sat among them**.<sup>56</sup> 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."<sup>57</sup> But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."<sup>58</sup> And **after a little while** another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"<sup>59</sup> **Then after about an hour had passed**, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."*

God has always told us what to do with temptations—FLEE! There is no person strong enough to trifle and only sample sin by playing with temptation. Beware, heed, and flee!

*2 Timothy 2:22 **Flee also** youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

*Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who **walks not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **Nor stands** in the path of sinners, **Nor sits** in the seat of the scornful; 2 **But his delight is** [what he walks with, stands with, and sits with] *in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.* 3 *He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.**

*1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.***

So Jesus knows what will happen each day of our lives, He asks us to watch and pray, and He has warned us to flee temptations and not stay around and try to overcome them on our own.

***So Jesus has warned us to flee temptations.***

Peter also needed to learn the lesson that...

### 4. JESUS IS IN CONTROL OF ALL THE EVENTS SURROUNDING MY LIFE.

*Luke 22:60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" **Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.***

*For one cock to crow at the right time while the other birds in the city remained silent was certainly a miracle.*

*But the crowing of the cock was much more than a miracle that fulfilled our Lord's words; it was also a special message to Peter, a message that helped to restore him to fellowship again.*

*What encouragements did the crowing of the cock give to the Apostle Peter? It was an assurance to him that Jesus Christ was still in control of things even though He was a prisoner, bound and seemingly helpless before His captors.*

*Peter could recall witnessing his Lord's authority over the fish, the winds, and the waves, and even over disease and death. No matter how dark the hour was for Peter, Jesus was still in control!<sup>1</sup>*

Whether Peter was out in the middle of the storm sinking in a fishing boat (Matthew 14) or here in the courtyard of Caiaphas—Jesus is completely in control.

The same is true when you sit alone in the broken down car, the emergency waiting room, or lay in bed during long and sleepless nights over your job, your marriage, or your children. ***Jesus is in control of all the events surrounding my life.***

Why don't you cement that in your mind and heart by saying it aloud with me right now?

***Jesus is in control of all the events surrounding my life.***

So we are assured that God is in control, He will strengthen us if we take His way of escape, and He already knows what we face as the days of our lives unfold.

Another lesson that Peter had to learn, and one that can also deeply impact our lives is that...

## **JESUS WANTS ME TO KNOW THAT HE IS WATCHING ME IN MY DARKEST HOURS.**

*Luke 22:61 **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.** And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."*

So Peter doesn't watch and pray, doesn't flee temptation, has miserably failed by denying Christ three times. But not only is Jesus in command of the situation—He

---

<sup>1</sup> These pointed adapted and drawn from Luke 22 in Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.



actually has His eyes on Peter the whole time. Jesus who prayed that Satan wouldn't get Peter is also personally watching Peter each moment.

- Jesus knew exactly where Peter was in that courtyard.
- Jesus heard each of Peter's denials.
- Jesus felt every one of Peter's fears.
- Jesus was interceding and saving Peter to "the uttermost" (Hebrews 7:24-25).

But note that Jesus was doing all this unknown to Peter. Peter thought he was alone. But despite the rough treatment Jesus was enduring, the mocking, the ropes or chains that bound Him (John 18:12)—Jesus was watching Peter!

That is the lesson of v. 61 as *we note who was watching who*; Jesus knew **exactly** where Peter was both spiritually and physically.

He is in touch with our lives. No matter what you and I do, no matter where we are—Jesus has His eyes on us.

When the disciples were sinking in the boat during the storm and Jesus was miles away on top of a lonely mountain—He was watching and came to them at exactly the right moment they needed Him. He is always there. He is always watching. He is always rescuing us just when we need Him!

*Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Jesus is always living to intercede for us; He is always watch, always praying and always with us. We are not alone even in our darkest hours of failure and sin, because Jesus has a plan to bring to pass in our lives and that plan surrounds His Word.

For you it may be at school that you face those darkest of temptations, maybe it is on the road as you travel; maybe it is at work or after work when you stay late; maybe it is when you are all alone at home watching TV or on your computer online—where ever it is that you are seized with temptations to fear, to lust, to steal, to lie, the cheat, to deny Christ in any one of a millions way...it is then and there Jesus wants you to remember ONE THING:

***Jesus wants me to know that He is watching me in my darkest hours!***

Peter learned another powerful lesson...

## 6. **JESUS WANTS ME TO REMEMBER HIS WORD IN MY DARKEST HOURS TO GIVE ME HOPE.**

*Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. **And Peter remembered the word of the Lord**, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."*

The crowing rooster was a tool God used in Peter's life. That rooster reminded him of Christ's words.

Peter grasped that memory; Jesus had promised him forgiveness if he fell. At the moment (Luke 22:31-34) Peter wasn't hearing Jesus. He was arguing, he was blurting out as always—instead of listening. But now the rooster jarred his memory. And what was it he remembered? Jesus had given him a future and a hope. He could be forgiven, Jesus had said so. And Peter believed the Word of God.

Jesus had already given His Word to Peter; the outcome was already sure. He says Peter when you turn away from your sin, when you come back to me, when you get converted...then you will be a tool in my hands!

Peter was going to survive, he would repent and he would be restored to ministry. Peter just needed to remember the promises Jesus had made to him. That promise was back in v. 32. Look back and see what Peter remembered!

Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; **and when you have returned** [epistrepho, lit. 'converted, or returned '] **to Me**, strengthen your brethren."

***Jesus wants me to remember His Word in my darkest hours, to give me hope.***

So one last lesson Peter needed to learn was that...

## **7. JESUS PROMISES US A LIFE OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND OFFERS US COMPLETE FORGIVENESS AND NO CONDEMNATION.**

It was the miracle of the cock crowing at that exact moment that also reminded Peter of God's Word; but the cock crow signaled that a new day was dawning, for after all, that is what the rooster's call means each day.

Peter had a new day, a new beginning of hope because he was remembering and trusting in what Jesus had said. It was not a new day for Judas or for the enemies of the Lord, but it was a new day for Peter as he repented and wept bitterly.

God has promised that "a broken and a contrite heart" God will never turn away (Ps. 51:17). Help was on the way; God's plan was unfolding.

Peter first received a special message from the angel on Resurrection morning which encouraged Peter (Mark 16:7), later that day Jesus Himself appeared to Peter and

renewed his fellowship with Peter (Luke 24:34). And then on the shores of Galilee where Jesus had first called Peter, He returns to restore Peter's call and to re-commission him for ministry (John 21).

Each one of us at some point in our lives, will miserably fail the Lord by yielding to some temptation and sin. Soon after that sin we will hear (in one way or another) "the crowing of the cock."

At that instant the accusing voice of Satan will ring in our minds, telling us that we are finished, we are useless, pleasing God is hopeless, and our future has been destroyed.

But that is never God's message to us. As Peter learned, so we need to know. Our God is a forgiving God, a compassionate God, a God who loves us no matter what we have done.

Every time we open to the Gospel by Mark we remember that in one way or another, all of us too have stumbled. And for each of us, Peter's triumph by God's grace is an incredible source of encouragement to trust in our God of the new beginning!