

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

**Peter—Do You Love Me?**  
**Lessons in Loving Jesus...**

***“Peter, Do you love Me?”***

Have you ever answered the question Jesus asked three times to Peter? It was directed to Peter that morning two thousand years ago, but it is also directed to us each day we live.

***“DO YOU LOVE ME?”***

Spoken to Peter, heard by the other disciples, recorded forever in God's Word—those are the words of Christ we need to examine this morning. They are found in John 21:16. Please turn there with me.

If we will watch and listen closely, John 21 can become a school with Jesus Christ Himself as our instructor, training us in loving Him with all our hearts and lives.

Christ's final lesson focused on just one area of Peter's life—LOVE.

The question was pointed, focused, and simple: **“Peter do you love Me?”**

Jesus had simplified the life of His disciples seven chapters earlier, on the way to Gethsemane. He had uttered those priceless words explaining that if they loved Him they would obey Him.

Do you remember His final words about love in John 14? Let me remind you of them again.

*John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”*

That is why Jesus asks, “Peter do you love Me?” In fact, if you think about it carefully, Jesus is asking all of us the same question each day. He watches us toiling through life and reaches down and whispers in our ears, “Do you LOVE ME?”

Jesus says if you have and keep my words (commands) then you love Me and you will get the full access to all that God wants to be in your life.

After Christ's ascension to Heaven, He sends a letter through John the last Apostle as recorded in Revelation 2-3. It is in that first letter to the Church at Ephesus then (and us today) Jesus asked the believers why they had cooled in their love for Him.

Jesus is asking, why have you stepped back, let up, and drifted away from loving me supremely? Why am I second-rate?

That is why Jesus asks, "Peter do you love Me?"

Our whole responsibility to God was once reduced by Jesus to love! Remember the greatest commandment question and Christ's answer (loving God and our neighbor)?

Further, God's Word says that without love all we do is nothingness God says (John 15 and I Corinthians 13). Love for God focuses our lives. Love prompted obedience enriches us immeasurably for eternity. So Peter then, and each of us today need to hear and respond to Christ's question, "Do you LOVE ME?"

That love Christ seeks is what brought Him to find and fix these aimless men.

Look at John 21 this morning and join me as we read and learn lessons from Jesus on how to be sure that we are loving Him!

John 21, read, pray.

## **LESSONS IN LOVE PROMPTED OBEDIENCE**

On a tranquil beach at the break of day, not far from where Christ's ministry began—Jesus met Peter and six of the disciples, transformed their hearts, refocused their lives and pointed them in a new direction serving Him—**all by giving them lessons in loving Jesus.**

If you want to love God more, serve Him more completely, and please Him you're your life—this is the chapter to come to. Welcome to Peter's final lesson, as Christ restores him back to ministry.

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 into love prompted obedience.

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

Jesus begins His lessons by showing 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).

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

Obedience prompted by love is what Christ came to teach. 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! The first lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

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

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.

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.

Remember that we only have two choices each day—pleasing God, or our self.

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.

Jesus continues this final lesson for Peter and the disciples with a question crossing 100 yards of water and reaching those seven men in the boat. That leads to the second lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

**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.

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.

“No” [nothing has come of all our efforts all night long]—that was the answer Christ wanted to hear. So, He initiates the third lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

**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.*

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.

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.

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.

But the sight before Peter’s eyes of 153 of the largest, strongest, fighting and splashing fish ever surrounded by his nets instantly made Peter’s head jerk up, eyes squinting and riveted on that lone figure on the shore. That was the start of the fourth lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

**4. Jesus wanted them to know that He ONLY 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, Peter heard John's voice behind him; and 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. That is a lesson for all of us this morning.

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 (I 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. And finding Him was wonderful because the fifth lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

**5. Jesus wanted them to share the joy of His Presence all 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.

Soon they were eating, talking, and in wonder before Jesus, quietly worshipping and adoring Him in their hearts and minds. Soon 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 that had stained his days every since.

But John 21 is all about Jesus who comes looking for Peter and gives him forgiveness. That leads us into the sixth lesson of obedience prompted love that morning was—

**6. Jesus restored Peter in public, showing Peter and all of them (and us) that 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.*

Jesus begins asking Peter three distinct questions as they stood beside a fire of coals. The warmth evaporated as Peter flashed back to his worst memory.

This was a similar setting to that night—with a fire of coals, in a dim and flickering light (John 18: 18), with probing questions from the servants of Caiaphas.

Three times by a fire Jesus questions Peter's love; three times by a fire Peter had denied loving Jesus.

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

- First Jesus reverts to his 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, "Yes Lord, You know that I like You (with **phileo** admiration of Jesus as a friend). "

Jesus responds to Peter's honest, contrite admission of his failure with a renewal of Peter's call, as He says, "Feed My lambs".

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 (v. 16) the question comes to Peter, "Do you love me (with self-sacrificial **agape** love)?" These words pierced and wounded him as he remembered again his three denials. But this time 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 even really friends?" To which the crushed disciple 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.

This three times repeated command to ministry (Feed My lambs) 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—and ***offer to Him our obedience prompted by love!***



## 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 (I 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...

## **5. 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

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<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!