

The Lord Looked Upon Peter... Death to Self by the Look of Life

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Bible Text: Luke 22:54-62; Malachi 4:2-3

Preached on: Sunday, August 7, 2011

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Let us join our hearts as the Lord would allow us this day in prayer.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, I thank thee, Lord, for this hour, for this day that thou hast made. Oh, Lord, give us that joy that we may rejoice and be glad in what thou hast done. Lord, give us a revelation from on high. May you testify in our souls that it truly is finished, the work that thou has done is perfect. Lord, give us an revelation and an understanding of who we are this day. Lord, I thank thee for this place to assemble. I thank thee for all that thou hast brought today. Oh, Lord, may you now prepare the soil, may you prepare the ground and may thy name be glorified. Lord, I pray that thy power and thy strength, the clarity of mind, the calmness of thy Spirit would be upon me now, that, Lord, thou would empty me and fill me with thyself. Lord, may thy presence be known and felt to the glory of thy holy name in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

This morning I am going to start a little differently. I am going to start with a question. It is a searching question, at least I hope it is. How many times this week, how many times have you betrayed the triune God?

That is a tough one. If the Holy Spirit is pleased to bring it home to our souls, it would hit is right between the eyes, not just in deed, but in our thoughts. How many times has unbelief clouded our vision of what the Father has done? How many times have we thought wrongly or in our words or our deeds, we have done things this week that have went against what Christ has done and it is finished? And how many times this week have we grieved the Holy Spirit and how many times have we quenched his unction? It is a searching question.

I would follow that question up with this statement, that one of the most... the greatest blessings that the Lord gives his children and that he bestows upon his children is that he reveals to them who they are and not only who they are, but the evilness of sin.

We don't think of that often because to our flesh and to our understanding and to our will and to our mind those things are painful. They are painful to us to go through. They are painful when the Lord says from on high, "Thou art the man."

But only he can do it. We can try to read. We can pray. We can listen to sermons. We can search the Scriptures. We can try to humble ourselves. But unless the mighty hand of God is upon us, unless the gentleness of the Spirit speaks and testifies of the Son to show us who he is and who we are, there will be no understanding of those things.

This morning my prayer and hope in the message that the Lord has laid upon my heart as it reveals a couple of things to us today, the evilness of sin and also that simple statement of who we are, who we are in the fall and who we are in Christ Jesus.

Today I want to trace the apostle Peter. I believe that the Lord laid this out, the absolute preservation of this Word in the last moments of his life here on earth. Peter had a great fall. But there was something for Peter. This morning I would like you to join me as we begin this journey in the 26th chapter of Matthew. We will be here a little bit to set the stage. This, where we begin today, is right in the garden of Gethsemane. After the Lord had spoken he had these words to say beginning in verse 31 to his disciples.

“Then saith Jesus unto them, All...”¹

That is a very strong word. It is a stronger word for some that are in the group than it is for others. But Jesus said something to give us a picture and an understanding of what the nature of man is. He says that:

“All ye shall be offended because of me this night.”²

Do you understand that? That we, as left to ourselves, will always be offended in the Lord Jesus Christ? We would be one of the ones that would follow him for a while, but then as his teaching and what he would start to hone in on the sin that remains within us, we would flee at the first sight of this. We would flee at the first sight of conviction. But only the Holy Spirit can do those things truly in the child of God's life. Only he can bring to the soul what it is and who it is that we have sinned against.

And as Jesus said these words, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,”³ I wonder if that question, when I asked that question to start this morning, when the question flowed forth and it said, “How many times have you betrayed the triune God this week?” How many of you thought in your heart, “Of course, I didn't. I would never betray my Lord. I would never do these things that go against my Lord. I am saved and I am complete in Christ Jesus.”

Well, then maybe you were offended. Maybe you were offended at the question.

“All ye shall be offended because of me this night.”⁴

¹ Matthew 26:31.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Now he wasn't talking to strangers. He was talking to 11 of them that had followed him everywhere, that had taught in his name, that had sat at his feet, that had healed in his name, that had cast out devils in his name, that had followed him all along his ministry here on earth. And the Lord said, "You will be offended because of me this night."

The one that everyone... all of the 11 there would say that they loved him, that they would follow him. In fact, they will say that in a few minutes.

"All ye shall be offended because of me this night."⁵

See, it reveals our nature. It reveals what took place in the fall with us all being in Adam. This is our nature without Christ's power. This is our nature without the power of the one on high. This is our nature to search out and to run at the very sight of danger. If someone stands up and says, "Oh, no, the Lord is not who that is," we cow tow down and say, "Ok, ok," and we brush off our feet and we walk away. And sometimes that is the best path.

But in our heart of hearts when the Lord brings us to see the wickedness of sin that evilness of sin, it is this and only at this time that we know that these words are true. There have been many times in our life where we have been offended of him.

"All ye shall be offended because of me this night."⁶

And then he quotes to them from the prophet Zechariah and he says, "...for it is written, I will smite the shepherd."⁷

And what a strong "I" that is. It was his Father. It pleased the Father to smite the shepherd. It pleased the Father that the sheep of the flock would be scattered abroad. It pleased the Father that he would send his Son to die for those same sheep that left to themselves would scatter every chance they got.

"I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."⁸

And you have to believe, you have to believe with the Old Testament parchments and the amount of the Scripture that was there and those that had been schooled in the Scriptures, you had to know they have heard it before out of the law and the prophets. And this prophet Zechariah prophesied of this very hour and he said, "I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen..."⁹

There is a lot in that statement.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Matthew 26:31-32.

“But after I am risen again...”¹⁰

“After I have defeated death, after I have put Satan under my feet, after all of the bondage of the law is completely put away and I am... it is finished... after all of these things, after all that... after I rise again, after I come forth out of the... from the grave of death, after death has been defeated, after I rise with everyone of my children upon my breast, as they rise with me, after I am risen again, the shepherd tells us, even though the sheep will scatter, I will still go before them. Isn't that what the shepherd does? The shepherd goes before his sheep. The shepherd leads his sheep. The shepherd shows the way. And it would be no different even in the highness of the hour of the sin, the denying of the Lord Jesus Christ, the standing up basically and saying, “I am offended in you tonight.”

But the Lord says, “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”¹¹

When the Lord, when the power of the Lord comes to your soul and he lays you at his feet and he shows you in the law and his holy law stops your mouth and you have no answer for the holiness of God and you have no answer of the perfectness of God and he lays you at his feet and he lays you down as nothing and he strips away all that you had relied on your whole life and he strips away your self and you have nothing left, the Lord picks you up, the Lord goes before you, the Lord shows you that he is risen again, that he is the resurrection and the life, but it is needful. It is needful to be stripped down to nothing. It is needful to be laid low.

But as you will see in Peter, that has not been taught yet. It has not been lived. It has not been experienced. It has not been shown because Peter's answer...

“Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended...”¹²

Though every one of these other 10 should be offended because of thee, I can agree that those 10 may be offended because of you.

“...yet will I never be offended.”¹³

You know, “never” is another one of those words we like to use a lot. I never saw that. I will never do that. I will never ...

Peter uses it here as an absolute fact. He is convinced. And this is what is hidden from him is the sinfulness of sin. And what is hidden from him is how depraved and how left to ourselves we will run the opposite way every time. And what is hidden from him is

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Matthew 26:33.

¹³ Ibid.

the almighty power that it takes for him to do anything, though he has been taught,
“Without me you can do nothing.”¹⁴

“Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”¹⁵

That is not me, Lord. You may have it right with them, but not me.

But what is Jesus’ answer to the never?

“ Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night...”¹⁶

You say never, Peter? I tell you exactly when it will happen. You say you will never betray me. I am going to tell you something. Not only will you do it once, but you are going to do it three times.

“That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”¹⁷

Now what do you think is going through Peter’s mind at this time? I dare say maybe it was going through some of our minds earlier when the question was asked. No, not me. I don’t believe you. I just got done saying I would never do it. But, Lord, why don’t you believe me? Because the Lord knew Peter. He knew Peter better than Peter knew Peter.

“Verily I say unto thee, That this night...”¹⁸

This very night, this very time we are standing in front of each other talking. This night, before this night is over.

“Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”¹⁹

Did that convict Peter? Did that change the heart of Peter?

“Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee...”²⁰

Though whatever happens tonight, if you go and you die tonight, I will die with thee.

“Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.”²¹

¹⁴ John 15:5.

¹⁵ Matthew 26:33.

¹⁶ Matthew 26:34.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Matthew 31:35.

²¹ Ibid.

There are times in my life when the Lord comes very powerfully to me that I think the same thing. How could I deny the goodness of God? How can I deny this Lord who has done it all for me, who has stood in the place of me, who had the wrath of God, the just wrath of God poured out upon him for me? And, Lord, I would never be offended in you.

But remember. This is a blessing. This is a blessing to the child of God to see who he is, because if you don't see who you are, if you are not shown what you are capable of, you will never understand your need for a Savior.

“Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.”²²

And look at the last sentence.

“Likewise also said all the disciples.”²³

They all jumped on the same word. Oh, Lord, we will never deny thee.

Now this was the Son of God. Peter earlier said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”²⁴

You know he is the Son of God, but yet you doubt his word. You know he is the Son of God, but yet you deny his word. You know he is the Son of God, but yet you think your knowledge is higher.

We will pick this back up now in Luke 22. You say, “Why Luke?” I like the descriptiveness of Luke. And Luke is the one that records ... oh, we will get there.

Luke 22 and we pick up in verse 54, which, incidentally, is right after Peter had pulled his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. See? Peter said, “I will not be offended in you, Lord,” and even though there is all these people of the army and all of these come out against Christ, Peter still pulled that sword and he cut off the ear of Malchus and the Lord told him to put it away. The Lord made it known that he could call legions of angels at that very hour to save him. But that is not what he was appointed to do. That is not what he came to do.

Peter put his sword up. What zeal, what presumption.

And so nothing that we have seen so far has given us any indication that Peter has been humbled.

I thought about that because, you know, I have a lot of Peter in me. Sometimes the

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Matthew 16:16.

humbling process is much painful because it takes a while. The Lord brings you a lot on the path because if he has something to teach, he is going to do it perfectly.

Verse 54 reads this way.

“Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house.”²⁵

You know, I have to make this comment about that statement. The condescension of Christ when given a glimpse of it, overwhelms me. To think that he allowed himself, the Son of God, to be led and brought and to be judged by the high priest, the one who deemed himself the highest in the in the religious order, to put himself under that. Oh, what great love. And you think sometimes we just flippantly say, “Yes, he died on the cross.” But every agonizing moment, every moment that went against his deity, this moment where the high priest is exalted to a place that he believes is higher than the Lord Jesus Christ and yet not [?].

“And Peter followed afar off.”²⁶

All of the sudden now we have got a picture of Peter who is not right in the mix of things, nor would he be. But he is following and he is wanting to see what goes on. Remember God’s perfect providence. Remember, nothing here is out of chance. Remember Christ said what would take place. Christ was the great prophet. His prophecy would come true.

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.²⁷

She had seen Peter sitting there and she had seen him before. She had seen him as one of the ones who followed Jesus wherever he went. She had seen him as one that had clung to Jesus and stayed by his side wherever he was. And that was her observation. Her observation is, “That is who you are. You are the one that I have seen with him.”

“This man was also with him.”²⁸

And, by the way, the Lord said it. There is no cloak for our sin. There is nowhere that our sin will be hid that he light of Christ won’t manifest it because that is what he does. The Holy Spirit... the Lord said, “I send the Holy Spirit and he will convince you of sin. He will convince you that you are a sinner.”

²⁵ Luke 22:54.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Luke 22:55-56.

²⁸ Luke 22:56.

And you say, “Well, that is highness. I don’t want to hear that.”

Because the Lord Jesus Christ came to save sinners. He didn’t come to call the righteous. He came to save sinners.

“But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him.”²⁹

Well, there is number one.

“And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.”³⁰

Peter, what is going on in your mind now? The Lord said, “You will deny me three times.” And that before the cock crows. What is going on in Peter’s mind right now in the first denial?

I will tell you what is going on in his mind. Nothing. Self preservation. He sure has not been revealed sin. We can sin. We can even deny Christ and not even know it.

“And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him.”³¹

A little while. So a little while has passed. The second one would come and lay the charge against him.

“And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.”³²

That is two. Still no sulking, no I feel bad for what I have done. No oh, Lord, I have sinned against you, because repentance is not of us. Our willingness to turn to God is not found in us. There must be a power from on high. The willingness of Peter in this hour is to preserve himself. And we can’t cast a stone at that, because left to ourselves we would do the same thing day in and day out to preserve ourselves, preserve what is ours.

And now one hour later. Think about this time now. Think about the time that Peter has with himself. Think about what possibly could be going through his mind, if anything.

“And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.”³³

²⁹ Luke 22:56-57.

³⁰ Luke 22:57.

³¹ Luke 22:57-58.

³² Luke 22:58.

³³ Luke 22:59.

It is of a truth. I swear it by an oath. I know this man was with Jesus. I know that he was him.

“And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.”³⁴

Well, that is three times, Peter.

“And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.”³⁵

Well, what happens now? Is that what it takes and then we come to ourselves and all of the sudden now Peter is sad or Peter knows that he denied Christ because the cock crew?

It is a fulfillment of what the Lord said would take place. In Matthew’s account of this very thing he says that Peter cursed and swore the name of Christ. He said, “I don’t know him. I don’t want to be associated with him.”

I hope we don’t have any sitting here today that say, “That wouldn’t be me.” I hope we don’t have anybody here that thinks their piety and their holiness is greater than what God can do. You see, Peter now has denied the Lord three times. And now what is going through his mind?

I have got the answer for that one, too. Scripture tells us what it is. It is nothing. It is absolutely nothing. We can deny the Lord three times in the span of just hours and unless he draws us back and unless he speaks a word to us in season we will be left.

But do you know what? He doesn’t leave his children there, not until he is done teaching, showing the evilness of sin, showing us what we are without him. And then one of the most blessed words of that the Holy Spirit has penned in verse 61.

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.”³⁶

That’s what it takes. The Lord must look upon your soul. The Lord must send the power of his Spirit to testify that thou art the man. Great things he has done. He doesn’t leave us to perish. He doesn’t leave us in our sins. And in one look he picked Peter up out of the mire. And in one look and in one power, what was this look? It was the look of love. It was the love of repentance. It was the love of forgiveness. It was a love sent to Peter’s soul.

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.”³⁷

And look what happened. Look what happened when the power came.

³⁴ Luke 22:60.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Luke 22:61.

³⁷ Ibid.

“And Peter remembered.”³⁸

The covenant remerancer, the Holy Spirit brought it forth to his thoughts. He brought it forth to Peter’s soul at that very hour that thou art the man. You have denied me three times. You have denied my name in front of man. You have cursed my name.

“And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”³⁹

Some say there is not much in a look. But in this look there was the whole world, a world of forgiveness, a world of conviction, a world of healing. Peter now remembers. He was willing to remember in the day of the Lord’s power.

“And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”⁴⁰

And what does it lead to in the child of God’s life? What does the holiness of God lead to? What does a sight and a revelation of our sin lead to?

“And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”⁴¹

His soul lay very low. And now we have evidence that he saw himself. He saw how wicked he could be. He saw that the Word of the Lord is true. And every man is a liar.

Turn with me over to Malachi four. We begin today in verse two.

“But unto you that fear my name...”⁴²

Peter feared the name of the Lord. There are times that we are left to explore the possibility of ourselves. There are times we re left to slide down that slippery slope of our knowledge, of our understanding of who we think we are.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”⁴³

See, the Lord in that look even I want you to think about this a moment. Even in the Lord’s darkest hour the very hour where he will be separated from the Father, it didn’t separate him from the love for his children. And he arose with healing in his wings. And that healing from Peter that healing upon Peter is the same healing that he does to all of his children when they are brought to the end of themselves.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Luke 22:61.

⁴² Malachi 4:2.

⁴³ Ibid.

Self won't save you. But it is a blessing to see how wicked the self is. It shows me my dependence. It shows me my total need of the power greater than mine, a power to bind the strong man, to cast him out.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”⁴⁴

I love the “shalls” of the Word of God. You shall go forth. You shall go forth in his power. Peter, you shall go forth in the day of the Lord's power.

Why do you think the Lord asked Peter three times in John 21, “Lovest thou me more than these?” One time for each denial. “Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.”

All of this was to equip Peter to preach the truth of the gospel, to prove his love, to show him the forgiveness. And that is the thing. You know, the next thing we hear from Peter he is running to the grave.

You say, “Well, how can he do that. How can one run to the grave after being so destroyed?”

Because it is not a destruction. It is a needful bringing down so that the Lord comes with healing in his wings.

“...and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.”⁴⁵

And notice how this takes place.

“...in the day that I shall do this.”⁴⁶

Yes, it is the Lord who fights for us. It is the Lord that goes before his people. It is the Lord who has done it all. And some don't like to hear that. Some think that leads to a licentious life or loose living. You can't teach your children that because they will go of and do whatever... they will sin that grace may abound. God forbid, because that same love that constrained Peter that night is the same love that constrains his children today, a preserving love, a love that saves to the uttermost, a love that performs and a love that keeps.

I would like to end today with words from Peter in 1 Peter. Flip over there with me in 1 Peter chapter three. Just in case we are not sure if Peter has learned anything or if the Lord has not revealed anything to Peter, you learn a lot from the life of Peter, the Holy Ghost would reveal it. There is a lot of self.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Malachi 2:2-3.

⁴⁶ Malachi 2:3.

In 1 Peter chapter three we will just begin in 17 although 18 is my focus, but I want to show you something Peter learned.

“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”⁴⁷

Interesting in light of where we just were.

“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”⁴⁸

Peter suffered that night and he suffered because of evil doing. But he had learned in the school of Christ, he had learned at the feet of his master that it is better to suffer for Christ’s sake than for the evilness of our sin.

Verse 18.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.”⁴⁹

And here it is.

“...the just for the unjust.”⁵⁰

You think the Lord brought this home to Peter’s soul? Oh, yeah. He suffered once, him being the perfect, just and holy God and he suffered for the unjust. Peter doesn’t put himself in that category anymore. He doesn’t boast of himself anymore and say that maybe there is some justice in me.

“Lord, I would never deny you.”

That is dead.

“...the just for the unjust.”⁵¹

And then the beauty of this.

“...that he might bring us to God.”⁵²

There is no other way.

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 3:17.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ 1 Peter 3:18.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

Today you have heard the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ as our great high priest as he has broken down that as the only way to the Father is through him. But he has to present that bride and he does it through the perfection of himself. He does it through the righteousness of himself. He does it through the holiness of himself. And there is no mixture of creature here. The creature is depraved.

“...that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”⁵³

You know that, of course, is talking about the Lord laying down his life, and then as the triune God brought him up out of the grave. But this is my prayer for each one of you in here, each one of you that are the children of God, that are his precious elect, that this day you would put to death in you the flesh and that he would quicken you by his Spirit.

Oh, how needful it is, how much we stand in need of him. My prayer is that you could identify with Peter today and that the Holy Spirit would be pleased to reveal who you are today and your need of this Savior.

But he doesn't leave us with who we are. He shows us who we are in him in the perfection of him as one of the greatest things the Holy Spirit teaches us is what we are in him because he has to teach us because we doubt. We say, “Lord, there is no way in the depravity of who I am that I could be holy.”

But in him you can be.

How can I, this unrighteous person that I am, but in him is righteousness and it is his righteousness that he puts on the child of God. May the Lord be pleased to reveal himself in you this day.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, add thy blessing for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

⁵³ Ibid.