

Mark 14:66-72

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Date: 08 March 2015

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[0 : 00] Please open up your copy of God's Word to the Gospel according to Mark.! We're in chapter 14. We're continuing our verse-by-verse exposition through Mark's Gospel.

! Before we get there, I had intended to make an announcement at the beginning, but I was kind of getting some conflicted reports. Those of you who have been around for a while know that this building has some water issues.

We're on a well, and sometimes the water doesn't work so well. Don't pun intended. And this seems to be one of those mornings for us, and so it wasn't working, and then it was working, and again, now it seems to not be working.

And most of us have dealt with that before, so it seems to be kind of working at the moment. So, just as a heads-up for whatever you may want to go do in the building concerning water, to be aware that it may or may not work at the moment that you try.

But, I'm glad that the reason that our church exists is for the supremacy of Christ and not for the beauty of a building. As we have issues like this, it's just my constant recitation in my head, but we have no debt, but we have no debt, but we have no debt, and we praise God for that.

[1 : 14] So, it is a blessing to us. Our text for today is Mark chapter 14, verses 66 through 72. And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also are with the Nazarene Jesus.

But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. And he went out into the gateway, and the rooster crowed. And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, This man is one of them.

But again, he denied it. And after a little while, the bystanders again said to Peter, Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean. But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times. And he broke down and wept. This is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to obey its promises, excuse me, believe its promises, and obey its commands.

[2 : 29] Let's pray together. Father, we again praise you for this morning and the opportunity for us to come together as a church.

A people called out of the world and called together for your mission. We thank you, Father, that you have not left us alone, but you have given to us a helper, the Spirit, and you have given us your word, the tool that he employs in our lives to shape us and change us for your glory.

And so we would ask this day that you would do this, that he would be alive and active in my speaking and in all of our hearing. That the things that we hear today will not merely be taken into our minds, but they will be applied to our hearts.

That all of us will be changed from one degree of glory to another. That we will leave this place proclaiming the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So in our text this morning, Mark records for us the failure of Peter following Jesus' arrest, just as Jesus had predicted.

[3 : 42] But before we address Peter's failure, and we will, let's recall together the failure of our author of the Gospel of Mark. I know that many of you weren't with us when we first began working through this Gospel account.

And in the very first sermon that we worked through together, I told you a little bit about who Mark is. And he's an interesting character, and there's much for us to learn and to be encouraged by his life.

So with me, if you will, just for a brief break from Mark, you can mark it, no pun intended, once again, turn to the book of Acts, and we're going to begin in chapter 12.

Apparently when I'm tired I speak in puns. We did this once before, so I'm going to do it rather quickly, but I just want you to see this together.

I believe that Mark's desire to record what Peter did is fueled by his own experience. So Acts chapter 12, verses 1 through 5.

[4 : 51] About that time, Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James, the brother of John, with a sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

This was during the days of unleavened bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

So Peter is imprisoned by his faith. The persecution of the churches is really on the upswing at this time. And as the church is praying for him, Peter is delivered from prison by an angel later there in Acts 12.

Peter recognizes it was an angel. Verse 12 records this for us of the Lord that led him out of prison. And it says, verse 12, When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

And so this is the Mark that wrote the gospel of Mark, or we could call him John Mark if we would like. I'm Joseph Nathan, if you don't know that.

[6 : 04] And I go by Nathan. So here we have John Mark going by Mark in many cases. I'll go a little further in that chapter to verse 25. And Barnabas and Saul, soon to be Paul, or was Paul at this time, returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

So they picked up a companion in their travels, and this is John Mark, who's now traveling with Barnabas and Saul or Paul. Acts 3, verses 1-5. Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Menaion, a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews, and they had John to assist them.

So Barnabas and Paul set aside for a work to the Gentiles. Of course, they still visited the Jewish synagogues and preached to the Jews, and John Mark is with them. Now in verse 13 of chapter 13, in case you lost where we were at.

[7 : 30] Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

So John Mark goes with them on this journey, the beginning of it, and as they're about to go on to another stage, he leaves and returns to Jerusalem. In the account so far, that's all we know. Just that he left.

We don't know why he left, but we find out later the very reason. Turn a couple of chapters over to Acts chapter 15. And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaim the word of the Lord and see how they are.

This is Acts 15.37 now. Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. He's actually the cousin of Barnabas. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

And there arose a sharp disagreement so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. And this is when Paul picks up Silas in his journey.

[8 : 45] So there becomes a division between Paul and Barnabas because Barnabas really wanted John and Mark to go with them on the journey. But Paul said, No, he abandoned us.

He bailed out on us. This man was fickle. Likely due to fear of the advance and the preaching of the gospel and the things that were happening in his time, he went back to Jerusalem.

And Paul wants nothing to do with him at this point in his journey. Barnabas so convinced, Barnabas seems to be the second chance guy, John Mark is now ready, that he goes with him. We don't know exactly where Barnabas disappears from the New Testament narrative for two years, with nothing about the timeline, for two whole years after this incident. John Mark disappears from the biblical text for ten years.

But he does reappear. He reemerges. Now after some time, Paul is in prison for preaching the gospel. And during his first imprisonment, he writes his letter to the Ephesians, his letter to the Colossians, the letter to Philemon, and to the Philippians.

[9 : 51] And we see in two of those, particularly in Colossians and in Philemon, Paul's companion in prison is none other than John Mark.

So they, by some circumstance, have rejoined one another and either been thrown in prison together or found each other once again in prison. In Paul's second imprisonment, one of his last letters he wrote, 2 Timothy 4.11, he writes this, Do your best to come to me soon, writing to Timothy, for Demas, in love with his present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia. Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. And then the instruction he gives to Timothy is get Mark. This is John Mark he's referring to.

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. So we see this young disciple that's taken on this journey to begin with and bails out on the Gospel mission, likely for fear of what would happen to him, now re-engaged in Gospel ministry in a major way as a fellow servant along with Paul, later pinning for us the Gospel account that we've so richly enjoyed over this past year.

The redemption that is pictured in this that has to be pieced together, but yet we find it all the same. Sinners and recovering sinners are the only type of people that there are.

[11 : 30] So there's much space for us this day in even considering Peter's denials. We think about Mark's life, and later Peter's life, the things that will be accomplished by God through him to reflect upon our own lives and the ways in which we've failed our Lord.

The ways we've turned our back on Him. The ways that we have denied Him to receive joy and encouragement from the lives of Mark and of Peter.

Now in last week's text, Mark places Peter in the courtyard of the house where Jesus' trial is occurring on the night of His arrest.

And if you'll look back in Mark 14, verse 53 and 54 reads, And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together.

And Peter had followed Him at a distance right into the courtyard of the high priest. And He was sitting with the guards and warming Himself at the fire.

[12 : 38] Now the other disciples, it would seem, have already fled at this time. We have no record, no account of them. Although John's Gospel account does tell us that the way that Peter got into the courtyard is that John was known by the family of the high priest.

So it's likely that John went along and said, Hey, it's okay to let him in. But it would seem that John's already left the scene at this point. The disciples fleeing is a fulfillment of Zechariah 13.7, the last half anyway, which Jesus quotes in Mark 14.7, Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. So we find Peter having followed at a distance, having been so bold in the Garden of Gethsemane that he strikes the ear off of one of the temple guard, rebuked by Jesus for it.

And then he follows from afar, wants to be near what's going on. And this trial is taking place in the home of the high priest, which is Caiaphas in this year.

Likely also the home of Annas, also called the high priest. He is Caiaphas' father-in-law. That title never passed away from someone once they served in the role of high priest.

[13 : 53] And Annas is kind of like the godfather of the Sanhedrin. He has been appointing high priest. People do what Annas says. So there's been a trial before Annas, which is not recorded in Mark.

And then he's been delivered from Annas, Jesus has, to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. This would be 70 men plus the one being the high priest. 71 men that hold this sort of trial, this perversion of justice.

We talked about last week. We saw the contradiction, the juxtaposition of the false witnesses against Jesus' faithful witness to who he was.

And this is where we find, as this is happening upstairs in one of the apartments of this massive home, Peter's sitting in the courtyard, warming himself with the temple guard around a fire. John MacArthur says of Peter, he was caught between fear and faith. He was caught between love and terror, between courage and cowardice.

[14:57] Certainly, Peter loved our Lord and followed Him because of that. There's some zeal in Peter that we certainly should admire, that he even was willing to follow that far, that he was willing to sit outside in the very home, enter through a gate, and be in that place.

But yet he fails. Now remember who we're talking about, this Peter. Back in Mark 8, beginning of verse 27, Mark records, And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way, He asked His disciples, Who do people say that I am? And they told Him, John the Baptist. And others say, Elijah. And others, one of the prophets.

And He asked them, But who do you say that I am? And it's Peter that answers Him, You are the Christ. And in saying that, that phrase that He's saying, He is saying that you are the Son of God. You are the Messiah, the One that has come to take away the sins of the world. Our prophet, our priest, and our King. You are the Christ.

[16:11] Matthew's account adds, And Jesus answers him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father, who is in heaven.

So, God Himself has revealed this truth to Peter. And I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The truth that Jesus is the Christ, is the rock that He'll build His church on. He says, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whenever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven. And whenever you loose on earth, shall be loose in heaven.

This is the Peter that we're talking about. And so, set against the backdrop of Peter's bold proclamation of Jesus as the Christ, Mark tells us of his failure on the night of Jesus' arrest.

Charles Spurgeon wrote of this text, This fall of Peter is doubtless intended to be a lesson to the whole church of Christ. It is recorded for our learning that we may be kept from like sorrowful overthrow.

[17:14] It is a beacon mercifully set up in Scripture to prevent others making shipwreck. So we must pay attention. It's important that we stop and look, not just as a mark in Peter's life, but what are we meant to learn and to understand?

We must understand by this record. And to do that, we must examine the condition of Peter's heart, which ultimately led to these denials. You see, there must have been something at work in him to cause him to betray his Lord, right?

He wasn't on top of the mountain and suddenly in the valley there was something happening in him and we have record and account of what that was. Remember that Peter had given up everything to follow Christ.

He had sacrificed everything and he'd been with him now three plus years bringing him to this point. What is happening in the heart of Peter that would cause him to deny Christ at this time?

There are at least three things we should observe. At least. There may be more, but at least three things we should observe that we're going to do this morning lest we also fail in this way.

[18:21] Firstly, and primarily, Peter was prideful. Peter was self-sufficient in his own mind.

None of us really are self-sufficient. All of us are sustained by the power of God. All of us are very, very, very finite and so desperately in need of an infinite God.

Peter didn't recognize this was the case. He was prideful. Mark 14, 26-31 says, And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away. For it is written, this is from Zechariah, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

Peter said to him, listen to the words that Peter responds to Christ. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by His own admission, has said, You will all fall away. This will come to pass.

[19:23] And Peter responds to Him, Even though they all fall away, I will not. And Jesus said to him, Truly, I tell you, this very night before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.

But He said emphatically, If I must die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said the same.

You see the pride there. Jesus is telling them the very thing that will come to pass. And He's having nothing of it. Not believing His Lord and the prediction that He's giving to Him. This man has seen Jesus accomplish amazing things.

He has established His authority over sickness. He's established His authority over death. He's raised people from the dead. He's calmed storms with His voice. He has forgiven sin. Amazing. Amazing things. And He says a simple thing to Him. And He is so full of Himself. He is so arrogant and so self-sufficient that He says, I will not.

[20 : 29] I will not deny you. Are we not this way so often? Proverbs 16. Proverbs 16. 18 says, Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10. 12, Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. Beloved, we are always at all times in desperate need of the intervening work of God on our behalf.

There are certainly times in our life that this is exclamation. I just made that word up. There is an exclamation mark placed on this at times in our lives.

Let me give you a full sentence to explain what I meant by exclamation. Punctuated, I think is what I was trying to say. God's providence reigns at all times.

Moments in our life were made very, very aware of this. Daniel Gentry, a member of our church, and I have been looking toward and praying for the possibility of our church doing some work on the east coast of Nicaragua.

[21 : 43] The west coast of Nicaragua is the developed part of Nicaragua. You can get a direct flight on Delta from the Atlanta airport straight into the Managua airport. From there, the normal way that you get to the east coast is you hop on another flight to a town called Bluefields.

Then you get on a water taxi that takes you to the place that we were going, a place called Pearl Lagoon. We decided instead, we had a trip of four, there were four of us planning on going at the time we did this, that it would be cool to rent a truck and drive to the town of Pearl Lagoon.

We just wanted to have some flexibility, not be so dependent on other people to give us rides. We really wanted to be able to check out the area. Our trip of four people quickly became a trip of two people.

So Daniel and I flew into the Managua airport. Our flight was very, very late. We just happened to catch the Alamo Rent-A-Car attendant as she was locking up.

She was the only employee that spoke any English for Alamo Rent-A-Car and Daniel and I spoke no Spanish. We stayed across the street at the Best Western that night and the next day we struck out across Nicaragua.

[22 : 56] A couple of white guys from Georgia who don't speak any Spanish in a rented truck. And I was never not aware of God's providence in that trip, that we made it.

The Alamo Rent-A-Car attendant told us that her mother lived in Bluefields and that she had never heard of a road that went to the place where we were going. There were no maps.

We couldn't buy a map in the place. And yet, God sustained us. God brought back some of my high school Spanish to ask for directions.

Brought in this town that seemed to be the dead end of our trip. Brought into in a bizarre way one English speaker who used to live in Roswell, Georgia.

And he gave us directions to where we were going. We are always, the point I'm making, we are always, always, always in need of him. Sometimes we know it more than others, but we are always in need.

[23 : 57] We never should be prideful. I will not, by the grace of God, should be the cry of our hearts. So Peter was prideful.

Secondly, Peter failed to heed the word of God. This was fueled by that very pride, but Peter failed to heed the word of God. Jesus had said to him, this thing will come to pass.

And he doesn't respond with a, how do I prevent that? You told me a thing that I will do, but how can I not do this? While Peter's denials validate the prophetic words of Christ, they certainly serve in that regard, prophecy does serve as a warning.

We shouldn't just say, oh, well that's going to happen. Prophecy is a warning. And Peter would have done very well to pay attention to it. When Jonah preached the word of God to the Ninevites, Jonah 3.4 says, yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

This was the message that God had given to Jonah to preach to the whole city of Nineveh. What did they do? They repented. They turned from their sin and they repented.

[25 : 10] And Jonah 3.10 records, when God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them and He did not do it.

So, brings a prophecy that they respond appropriately to and He doesn't do the thing that He said He would do. Proverbs 6.23 says, For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light. And the reproofs of discipline are the way of life. Our last memory verse, children, I'll leave you away. 2 Timothy 3.16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Verse 17 goes on to say that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. Peter would have done well to listen to the words of Christ, to have paid attention to the warning that He was giving to him and we do the same.

The Scriptures contain many warnings. Let's look at just a few. What do you say? Turn with me to the book of Hebrews. I'm going to show you four warnings just from the book of Hebrews. Hebrews. Hebrews.

[26 : 28] Hebrews. We don't know with certainty who wrote the book of Hebrews, but we do know that it was written to Jewish Christians who were tempted to deny Christ.

In their minds, they had added Jesus to their religion. They're still worshipping the same God, but they had included Jesus into this equation. We're following Him.

And things had gotten tough for them. The Jews weren't being persecuted the way they were. The Jews weren't being thrown in prison. The Jews weren't having their property plundered. The Jews weren't being killed. So it's tempting to go back to Judaism to deny Christ in this way.

So let's just look at a few together. Hebrews 2.1 The danger of drifting. The writer of Hebrews says, Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it. We must pay attention to the gospel preached. We must know the word of God. Because if we don't know, we won't know when we drift. It will be imperceptible. Like a ship without an anchor and suddenly we're out in the dangerous sea.

[27 : 44] Secondly, Hebrews 3.12 The danger of not entering into rest, the rest of the Lord. Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God.

Be careful, he's saying. Be careful that you don't exist within the church thinking that you have a good heart when in fact you have an evil heart that's leading you away from God and not toward Him.

Be careful that you're not just going through some religious practice thinking that somehow that's credited to you as righteousness. But that you need the righteousness of Christ.

Thirdly, Hebrews 6.11-12 The danger of not going on to maturity. Of staying a child in the faith. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end. So that you may not be sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

[28 : 54] Don't be deceived thinking that you can just stay nominal. That it's okay to make a profession of faith in Christ and never grow up in Him. Those who are born again grow up in Jesus.

We become mature. There's a danger in not going on to maturity. Fourthly and lastly, Hebrews 10.26-27 The danger of willful sin.

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

What he's saying is if you are a believer, you claim to be a believer and you continue to sin deliberately, you are denying Christ in that activity. You are saying there's not a sacrifice for sin, there's only a judgment that will come.

Heed these warnings, beloved. We must heed the warnings of the Scripture. There are so many places, not just Hebrews, so many places, where we are warned against and warned against and warned against.

[30 : 12] The Christian life is not easy. Our flesh is at war with our spirit. If we are truly believers, our flesh does not win. The general trajectory of our life will be towards holiness and away from worldliness.

This must be true in our lives, beloved. If it's not true in yours, you must question your faith. Test yourselves. I never want to say any of this to cause those who are Christians to ever falter in their belief.

The Scriptures exhort us to test ourselves. Are you in the faith? Can you with confidence say, my heart is changed. There are things happening in my life that would not be happening if it were not for the work of Christ.

Jesus is purging sin from my life. And I still sin, but it breaks my heart. I sympathize.

I want to be there with Peter when he breaks down and weeps and go, I know. Oh, I know. Me too. Oh, how I fail. But test yourself that you know you're in the faith.

[31 : 24] That you know that God is working you towards holiness. So many these days want to have the promises of the Scripture, but they do not want to obey its commands.

I flubbed it up this morning. I keep goofing things up. It's okay. But most mornings when we study together after reading the text, I say to you, this is God's Word to us.

It's written for His glory and our good. We would know that, that it's for our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Peter was prideful. Peter did not listen to, he did not heed the Word of God. If he had, thirdly, he would have prepared himself.

He would have prepared himself for the thing that was going to come, the battle, as he was going to walk following Jesus, caught between these two places, his love for Christ and his fear of what might happen to him.

[32 : 23] And so thirdly, Peter failed to prepare himself for battle. Turn back to Mark 14, verse 32. After the Last Supper, Jesus and the disciples leave, verse 32, and they went to a place called Gethsemane.

The Garden of Gethsemane. This is the night of Jesus' rest, and He says to His disciples, Sit here while I pray. And He took with them Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And He said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little farther, He fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me, yet not what I will, but what You will. And He came and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep?

Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

[33 : 51] Now, who's He talking to specifically? To Peter, right? The one who He had said, You will deny. All of you will be scattered. And Peter says, I will not. He says, You will deny Me three times. He says, Oh no, I won't.

And then He's sleeping in the garden. And Jesus' exhortation to Him is that He should be watching and praying so that He won't enter into temptation because His Spirit's willing.

Oh, I will. I won't. I won't. I won't. But His flesh is weak. Verse 39, And again He, Jesus, went away and prayed, saying the same words.

And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came the third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?

It is enough. The hour has come. Peter, had he rightly understood what Jesus had said, if He had heeded His warning, had he not been so prideful, he would have been preparing himself for the battle that he was about to face.

[34 : 56] And he failed to do so. And so we see in our text, and I know that today was kind of a wander from the text, and we'll come back to it for a moment, the three denials.

And they all happen right there together. A servant girl recognizes Him. Right? She again points out the fact, no, I'm pretty sure, telling some bystanders, pretty sure this guy was with Jesus.

And notice that he's left the gate now. He's away from the temple guard. He's gone outside of the gate. Likely still lingering outside, waiting to see what will happen to Christ. And his responses get more and more severe.

Leave me alone about it. Leave me alone. I do not know this man. I am not to be associated with him. And then Peter remembers what Jesus has said to him, and he breaks down, and he weeps. That next day, the same, the morning, this is happening. It's the reason that the rooster's crowing. It's morning now. There's going to be some other trials. Another trial before the Jews, just really for show.

[36 : 05] Some trials, three of them in front of the Gentiles. We'll get into those things in the coming weeks. And then Jesus will be crucified that afternoon. And this is the way in which the closing remarks for Peter before our Lord is crucified.

Do you sympathize with Him? Can you feel His pain in that? Ways in which you yourself have denied Christ. Opportunity to speak on His behalf in this world as an ambassador for Him that you shrank away from.

Like Him, you cowered. I don't know Him. I don't know Him. Don't think me strange. Don't think me weird. Don't hate me for my faith. I sympathize with Him.

And praise God, Peter is restored. Praise God, Peter is restored. Turn to John 21. After Jesus' resurrection, He comes and He has breakfast with seven of the apostles by the Sea of Tiberias. John 21, beginning in verse 15, says, When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?

[37 : 24] He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, Feed My lambs. He said to him a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

He said to him, Tend My sheep. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because he had said to him the third time, Do you love Me?

And he said to him, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted.

But when you were old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God. And after saying this, he said to him, Follow Me. And you note that Jesus gives Peter three opportunities to affirm his love for Him. Just as he has denied Him three times, he takes them through a process of saying to Him, I love you.

[38 : 28] I love you. I love you. And then Jesus tells him exactly what's going to happen to him. That He is going to be crucified like our Lord was. He Himself will die such a terrible death.

The thing that He was so afraid of on this night where He betrays Christ, where He denies Him these three times, Jesus tells him, this is the way that you will also die.

And in spite of that, Peter would soon speak boldly to the very men who had judged Jesus. Like a lion he speaks to them.

Turn one more time. Acts chapter 4. It's the last place I'll have you. And we're wrapping up here. I haven't banged on a lectern once.

I promise you I would do that. Wake up. Acts chapter 4. Acts chapter 4. Verse 5. It's after the day of Pentecost. On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, all who were of the high priestly family.

[39 : 36] So all of those five and six, all of those people are Sanhedrin. It's the same people that judge perverted justice in their judgment of Jesus. Verse 7. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power or by what name do you do this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, the source of his great boldness, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

You notice that he calls him Jesus of Nazareth? The very accusation made to him. Weren't you with Jesus the Nazarene? Here he says, you're darn right I was. Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Verse 11, This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone, and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved.

The boldness as he's filled with the Spirit, the way in which his life has been redeemed, such a low point, now brought just a couple of months later to such a high point in his service to our King.

[41 : 14] And I think many of us find ourselves in the place of Peter, having seen that in some way, in some regard, our life does not reflect our love and devotion to our Lord.

We serve things that are so shabby, so worthless, so fading away, when we have Christ. In so many varied ways, we deny Him.

Let me encourage you, if you are found in Him, Paul writes in Philippians 1.6, And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Praise God. Romans 8, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And so the call to us is to repent and believe.

That is, to take up the precious truths of the Gospel as we find ourselves failing Jesus in all of the ways that we do. And to praise Him, that it is His righteousness that's been given to us.

[42 : 16] Counted to our credit. When God sees us, He sees Christ. And beloved, this should be motivating to us. This should move us to share Him with the world.

This should move us to rearrange our lives, to give up our self-determination to experience, proclaim, and display Him in all things to all peoples.

Let's pray together.