

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 22- **Luke 22:54-62**
336- Jesus Looked at Him- Christ's Supremacy
in Peter's Denial

December 04, 2016

Luke 22:54-62

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him *away* and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.

56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

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

58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are *one* of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59 After about an hour had passed, another man *began* to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "**Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.**"

62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

To the Glory of God

Now, in these nine verses, we have Dr. Luke's inspired account of one of the most important "sins" that is recorded in the entire Bible. Here Peter denies the Lord. Now over the years, the concept of denial has been watered down to mean little more than acting out of weakness during a time of stress. And there are many preachers today who will

gladly tell you that denying Jesus Christ is no big deal, that everybody denies the Lord at one time or another.

But the English word "deny" comes from a Greek word that means: *to disown with accusatory tones; to disregard; to prove false to oneself; and to cherish a pernicious opinion and immorality as to apostatize from God and Christ.* So, I would suggest to you that this is a big deal because you can't have it both ways. If it is true, as the Scriptures declare, that we are saved by what we "believe" and what we "trust in" and what we "confess", and not by what we "do", then what we "deny" is of the utmost importance.

We are told repeatedly to deny sin and to deny wickedness and to deny evil and to deny all manifestations of our broken former life from which we have repented. But here, Peter, the very leader of the Apostles, denies Jesus, *repeatedly*.

I will tell you that the sin of the "denial" of Jesus by the Apostle Peter, right here in this Passage, is second only to the "betrayal" of Jesus by Judas. The differences in the two sins are almost negligible. And so, this should bring us all into a serious examination of our *own* hearts and our *own* walk with God. So, let's examine this Passage carefully. Look again at **Luke 22:54**:

Having arrested Him, they led Him *away* and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

Now remember that this is early on Friday morning, and Judas has just led at least 600 soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus has been agonizing in prayer for several hours. And we have seen that there is no reason to assume that Jesus was afraid or that He was reluctant to be beaten or having second thoughts about dying. Jesus was not agonizing in the Garden because of fear.

In order to fulfill His Father's Will, all of the sins of all of God's elect had to be placed on Him, and at that moment, God the Father and God the Son would be separated for the first time. And that was almost more than Jesus could bear. So, Jesus is begging God for another way. Now understand that Jesus is absolutely committed to carrying out God's Will. But because of the horror that awaits Him in becoming sin and in God being separate from Him, Jesus is seeking another way to

fulfill God's Plan. And so, in this overwhelming grief and distress, Jesus cries out:

My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me

Now why is Jesus seeking another way? What is going on that Jesus is begging God for another way? You see, as sinners, we struggle with temptation because of our sinful and unholy flesh. We are a new creation, *incarcerated* in unredeemed flesh. And so, we are seduced by the remnants of our fallenness. With *us*, *our* temptation has to do with us *holding on* to sin and *not* coming to righteousness. We are tempted to *hold on* to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. We struggle because the power of evil is so strong in us. We struggle because the power of sin is innate to us, because the power of iniquity is intertwined in our being. We have *unholy* impulses residing in us. *Our* battle is to fight against our innate *attraction* to sin, to fight against our *fallenness*, and to strive to *abandon* it and *embrace* righteousness and holiness and purity.

But, that was *not* Christ's Struggle. Jesus struggled with temptation in exactly the *opposite* way. He struggled because of His holy flesh. He struggled because He was *totally* devoted only to that which was pure and righteous and perfect. He struggled because the Power of Holiness was the *only* motive He had ever known in His eternal being. The only motive Jesus had for every thought, every word, and for every act, was absolute pure Holiness.

We struggle with three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. He struggled against three driving dominant, all-consuming, all pervading impulses: Holy, Holy, Holy. So for us, we're struggling to *abandon* sin and embrace Holiness. But, for Jesus, He was being tempted to abandon *Holiness* and embrace sin, *our* sin, on the Cross. So it is just the opposite.

Jesus was having to fight against His Own *holy* impulses. We have to fight against our own *sinful* impulses. We fight to *hold on* to God. He fought to *let go* of God. We fight to be *joined* to God. He fought against being *separated* from God.

And the answer from Father was, "No!" There was no other way for Jesus to do this. All of the sins of all of God's elect was going to have to be placed on Jesus, and for the first time God the Father and God the

Son would be separated, and the Righteousness of God would force God to damn all of those sins on Jesus.

And so, Jesus prayed the single most important prayer that can ever be prayed:

... yet not as I will, but as You will.

Jesus humbled Himself here more than anyone has ever humbled themselves. And His surrender to God's Will was greater because Jesus had more to lose. In order to obey God, Jesus had to become sin. And yet, right here, Jesus fully submitted Himself to His Father's Plan. And He did it through prayer. Jesus came to the place where He was willing to become pure sin and have God the Father abandon Him while screaming in agony on the Cross so we could be saved, through prayer.

And so, now in verse 54, Jesus is being led away from the Garden by these 600 soldiers and the Temple guards along with some of the priests. And they led Jesus to the house of the High Priest. Now look at the end of verse 54:

... but Peter was following at a distance

So, we see that it is all different now. There will be no more crowds crying out, *"Son of David, heal us and feed us and bless us!"* No, the only thing many of the very same people will cry now is:

"Crucify Him!"

And this is the Will of God. This is what the Father's Plan is. We must remember that Jesus came to this earth the first time to die. He did *not* come to rule and reign. He did *not* come to be marveled at and admired. He did *not* come so that ever knee would bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

That all will happen when Jesus comes back. But, *this* time, Jesus came to be rejected and scorned. *This* time He came to be despised and struck down. *This* time He came to be spit on and mocked. He came to be beaten and humiliated. *This* time Jesus came to die. *This* time, it pleased the Lord to crush Him. Jesus Himself said in Mark 10:45:

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The angel had told Joseph, back in **Matthew 1:21**:

... you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

... and Jesus saves His people from our sins by having all of those sins imputed to Him, and then God the Father pours out the full Fury of His Wrath on Jesus to judge those sins. And that is the only reason God shows any of us His Mercy.

And so God's Sovereign Will is in motion now, and Old Testament Prophecy is being fulfilled nearly every moment, and although Jesus had the Power to command twelve legions of angels to eviscerate these 600 soldiers and go free, He calmly submits Himself to God's Will and walks out of the Garden to stand trial and be murdered. And Peter follows at a distance.

O what must have been going on in his mind! Here his Master and Lord is being dragged to His death, and what is Peter supposed to do? Why was Jesus doing this? I mean Jesus obviously had the Power to stop it, because when these battle-hardened soldiers came near, they all fell backward on the ground at just the Words that Jesus spoke. And yet, Jesus is *not* stopping it.

And then when Peter tried to defend Jesus and lash out at the men who dared to take Him, Peter had tried to cut the head off of the first man there and evidently the man ducked and Peter only cut His ear off, but it was Jesus Himself Who rebuked Peter and said:

Luke 22:51b

... Stop! No more of this...

... and then Jesus healed the man! This had to be so confusing to Peter, as well as the remaining eleven disciples. So what are they supposed to do? Jesus doesn't want them to fight, but these soldiers mean business.

Now many people see Peter following at a distance here as being weak, and even sinful, but I don't. I see it as Peter doing what he does best, leading. First of all, where is Levi? Where is Nathaniel? Where is

Simon the Zealot? Where is James? How come Dr. Luke only mentions Peter here? Where are the others? I mean Judas has betrayed the Lord and is with the soldiers, so where is everybody else? At least Peter is following, even though it is at a distance. Now look at his first encounter from verses 55-57:

55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.

56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

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

So outside the High Priest's home was a courtyard. And evidently it was cold at night and so they kindled a fire. And a group of people sat around the fire.

Now there is a little confusion between the Gospel Records as to how the Trial of Jesus actually went down. So, to be clear, we need to understand that there are actually *two* High Priests in this story. There is Annas, who is the *former* High Priest, and there is Caiaphas, who is the *current* High Priest. And Annas is the real power while Caiaphas is Annas' son-in-law. And the houses of these two religious hypocrites are joined together in the middle by a courtyard. And that is why there is some confusion. The houses, here, actually belongs to both Annas and Caiaphas. And so they take Jesus to Annas house first to produce an indictment against Him. And then they take Jesus back outside, across the courtyard, over to Caiaphas's part of the house to bring another indictment against Him. And it is when they take Jesus back across the courtyard that He looks at Peter.

And it is during these two phases of the Trial, which went on for a couple of hours, that Peter's denials take place. So, all three denials occur in the same courtyard that joins both of the High Priest's houses. The first one is when Jesus is inside with Annas, and the next two are when Jesus is being confronted by Caiaphas.

Now what is interesting is just how Peter got there inside the courtyard of the High Priest in the first place. You couldn't just walk in there. There was a gate with guards around it, so you had to have access to get in. And even though Dr. Luke doesn't tell us, the Apostle John gives us the answer in **John 18:15-16:**

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and *so was* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

Now from the way this is written tells us that it was no doubt John who was the “**other disciple**”. That was John’s style of writing to identify himself that way. So, somehow, John’s family was connected to the High Priest, and evidently John had been there before, and so he was recognized by the guards and they let Peter inside.

And so, there is Peter, perhaps with John, as well, totally baffled by everything that has transpired that night, and he is standing around this fire to keep warm along with some other people, probably keeping his head down so as to not draw attention to himself. And you know that Peter’s head is spinning, trying to put all the pieces together, and even though he is confused, he is trying to keep his word to Jesus that he said back at the Last Supper:

Luke 22:33b

Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!

And so Luke tells us:

Luke 22:56

And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

Now “**servant- girl**” here is a female slave. And John Mark says that she was one of the slaves of the High Priest. And John says she was the one who had let Peter through the gate. And that means that this slave-girl knew John, which would also mean that she suspected Peter as being with Jesus, because John had let Peter in.

And so, as she began to stare at Peter, she blurted out:

This man was with Him too.

And Peter, true to form, never hesitated. He fired right back:

Woman, I do not know Him.

Now the way this is written shows us that this servant-girl *kept on* making variations of the same accusation. She didn't just say this one time. She *kept on*, which is why the various Gospel writers record her words differently.

But this also means that others around the fire joined in with her. And so, Peter's denial is *especially* evil because it is a blatant lie and a determined effort to deceive these people, and denied the Lord to protect himself. And this also means that Peter's denial is *repeated* several times during this first confrontation. And no sooner did he make that first denial than **Mark 14:68** says:

... And he went out onto the porch.

Now later manuscripts add "**and the cock crowed**" to this verse, but that phrase wasn't in the original manuscripts, it was added later. While the King James, the New King James, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and the ESV all have that added phrase, the NASB omits it.

Now during the first confrontation, Peter's *initial* thoughts were to save himself. But as the accusations increased, his denials became stronger and more strident. John Mark wrote that Peter said:

Mark 14:68b

... I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.

The Apostle John wrote that Peter said:

John 18:17b

... I am not [this Man's disciple]

Now evidently these initial accusations eventually died down and Peter once again returned his thoughts to all that had happened that night, and he began to remember that his Lord was inside being interrogated right at that moment. And Peter's soul was tortured.

And so Luke tells us that Peter began to move onto the porch, which was probably near the gate that he entered. And this tells us that Peter was actually trying to just get away at this point. Now read **Luke 22:58**:

A little later, another saw him and said, "You are *one* of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

So as he was moving toward the porch, a little later, Luke says "**another saw him**". Now this probably means somebody that either knew John and made the connection, or someone who had seen Peter with Jesus. And this man began to accuse Peter and said:

You are *one* of them too!

Now Peter is adamant in his denial. And he cries out:

Man, I am not!

The Apostle Levi shows the emotion of Peter's denial and writes that Peter:

Matthew 26:72b

... denied *it* with an oath, "I do not know the man."

... so at this point Peter is swearing on oath that he doesn't even know Jesus. And finally, Peter is confronted the third time with the most serious and detailed accusation:

Luke 22:59

After about an hour had passed, another man *began* to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."

And Levi gives us some additional information about this third confrontation:

Matthew 26:73

A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are *one* of them; for even the way you talk gives you away."

... while the Apostle John gives us the most details:

John 18:26

One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

The accusations and confrontations are now coming at Peter from every angle. This slave was a relative of the man Peter had tried to kill, and so Peter knows that he is going to soon be found out. And he is already horribly confused and frightened about everything in the first place. He is unbelievably disillusioned, and is being put on the spot, and Peter has never felt more distant from Jesus than he is right now. And so he resorts back to his fishing days and how he handled things before he ever met the Lord. And Luke says:

Luke 22:60

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

Now both Matthew and Mark says this:

Matthew 26:74a

Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!"...

Now when it says **he began to curse and swear**, that means that Peter first used profanity in his denial of even knowing Jesus. That's the cursing part. But then he attempted to give his denial credibility by sealing it with a curse upon himself. And the typical way a Jew in the first century would do that is by saying:

"May God throw me into the pit if I'm lying."

... the "pit" being a reference to Hades, or Gehenna, which was all that those operating under the Old Covenant understood about the abode of the damned. We have to understand that the Revelation about hell in the details that we understand now was almost exclusively revealed in the New Covenant. And so, even though Peter's understanding of hell was vague, it meant the same thing, a place of damnation.

Peter was saying that if he was lying about not knowing the Lord, he hoped that God would damn him, which is about as strong a denial as anyone can make. And as soon as he said that, the most frightening sound Peter ever heard shattered the night. The cock crowed.

And all of this happened at the very moment as Jesus was being moved from Annas' house to Caiaphas' through the courtyard. And as Peter was cursing and swearing and the cock was crowing, Peter looked around just as Jesus was being moved into the courtyard and Luke says:

Luke 22:61

The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."

Just as Peter was in the full fury of his cursing and swearing his denial of Jesus, Peter looked full into the beaten and bloodied Face of the Man Peter had seen transfigured in the brilliance of the Glory of God. And Jesus looked Peter right in the eye, and immediately Peter remembered what Jesus had said and Luke tells us:

Luke 22:62

And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now at the moment, Jesus looking at him was the last thing that Peter wanted. Yet it was the only thing that rescued him from that terrible darkness that had come on him. Peter was completely disillusioned at the whole thing, and all he wanted to do was to get out as fast as he could. But Jesus looked at Peter. And that is why Peter found a place of repentance.

This is the very pinnacle of satanic evil. Right at the moment when Jesus is entering into the most horrific beating that any man has every endured, right at Jesus' weakest moment when all His followers have deserted Him, all have run for the hills, and two men, Judas, and now Peter, have both betrayed Him; right now the absolute Supremacy of Jesus Christ is shining through.

You see, I think the good doctor is telling us that there is a powerful dynamic being played out here this night that illustrates not

merely Peter's denial, but also Christ's Supremacy. I think, that right now, as Jesus is being led off to be beaten within an inch of His Life and to be nailed to a tree to die for the sins of all of God's people, that Jesus is in complete control. Jesus is not a victim here, He is the Victor. He is not at the mercy of these evil men, Jesus is actually issuing out Mercy to Peter, and through Peter to the rest of the Apostles, who will change the world.

Peter is right in the middle of experiencing his greatest defeat, his most serious failure, and his most wicked sin. Peter is betraying the Lord, not once, but three times, and sealing it with an oath. Peter is *not* standing strong as he imagined, he is *not* testifying to all who are there about his great love for Jesus, and he is *not* willing to die for Jesus. Peter is denying that he even knows Jesus. And he is sealing that denial with a curse he pronounces on himself.

Yet, right at Peter's most sinful moment, even as He is exhausted from praying so hard that He sweat blood, as Jesus is being led to be beaten and killed, Jesus is not only going to transform Peter, He is, at that very moment, actually preparing Peter for Ministry.

All of Peter's vacillation, all of Peter's fumbling and putting his foot in his mouth, all of his brashness and his impulsiveness, all of his wickedness and weakness is now laid bear with these denials, and through the greatest failure of his life, Jesus is going to rebuild Peter into a giant of the Faith.

You see, to know the Lord is to *treasure* Him. Salvation is God giving unworthy sinners the power and desire to put such a high value on Jesus that everything in this life, including our families and our possessions and even our own lives is detestable by comparison.

So, you see, it is *impossible* to be truly saved and not hold Jesus Christ to be higher and better and more important than anything that has been made. And so, if a person does *not* treasure Jesus Christ, it is because He has never experienced the miracle of the New Birth.

We must continually remind ourselves that we do not have to be saved to want a better life down here. We do not have to be saved to want to be healed or fed or clothed or to be blessed. We do not have to be saved to want more money or more possessions.

We do not have to be saved to want to go to Heaven or to walk on streets paved with pure gold or to pass through gates of pearls or to be re-united with loved ones who have gone before us.

We do not have to be saved to want to drink from the Water of Life or to have a new immortal body or to see glorious sights. We do not have to be saved to want to possess the power to relieve suffering on this earth or to either perform or receive spectacular miracles. We don't have to be saved to understand spiritual mysteries or to cast out demons or to raise the dead.

We have to be saved to love Jesus. We have to be born again of incorruptible seed to adore and value and treasure Jesus Christ more than anything else. We have to be redeemed by a sovereign miracle of God to find the fullness of our own joy in struggling against the lusts of our flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be found humbly submitted to the Authority of Scripture, all to the Glory of God.

We have to be radically transformed by the miracle of the New Birth to see the Commandments of God as being the pathway to our own happiness. We have to be sovereignly regenerated to be satisfied in God, and to delight in God receiving all the Glory, even to the point of our own suffering.

Ever since Adam fell, it is *unnatural* for human beings to love God. It is normal for us to love sin and to love the world and to love the things in the world and to love ourselves, but it is *not* normal for any fallen human to love God. We are attracted to sensual pleasures and riotous living, but in our fallen state, we are *not* attracted to God.

We are overwhelmed and overcome by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things, but we are not overwhelmed, we are not overcome by God. We are happy to be first, to be on top, to be enlarged, we are vindicated when we are important and when we receive applause, and we feel validated when we are made much of. But, ever since Adam's sin, we do not normally or naturally enjoy God, we do not normally delight ourselves in God or the things of God.

Therefore, it is nothing short of breathtaking to comprehend the magnitude of the Work that God did, all by Himself, and at great cost to Himself, the death of His Own Son, that so radically transforms us that rebels now have the distinct honor of knowing God and of loving God and enjoying Him forever. For wicked sinners to be so changed that they now adore and treasure Jesus Christ and take genuine delight in Him, took nothing less than the horrific Murder and glorious Resurrection of the only sinless Man that ever lived.

And so, it is not what *we* do that causes us to be saved, but it is what God alone does *for us*. No fallen human in his lost state initiates love for God. But we also have to know that it is also not anything in us that brings about repentance and forgiveness in our lives, it is that Jesus looks at us.

God told Isaiah that the problem with Man was sin when He said:

Isaiah 59:2

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.

... so all Israel operated under the reality that their sin made a separation between them and God. And as a result, God hid His Face from them and did not look upon them. But, on this night, the Prophecy of Isaiah was coming to pass for Peter:

Isaiah 57:15-19

15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *on* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

16 "For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath *of those whom* I have made.

17 "Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid *My face* and was angry, And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart.

18 "I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,

19 Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near," Says the Lord, "and I will heal him."

Now over the last several weeks, we have examined two men, Judas and Peter, two chosen men, two human beings, both born of woman, both products of the Fall, both sinners, both in need of Salvation, both called by Jesus Christ, both given the great privilege of personally walking with the Incarnate God for 3-1/2 years, both being eyewitnesses of spectacular miracles and earthshaking demonstrations

of Divine Power, and unexplainable supernatural manifestations, and perfect Teaching.

Both Judas and Peter were given Power to perform miracles themselves, and to heal sick bodies and to cast out demons and to raise the dead. Both were among the closet men that Jesus ever had while He was here on the earth. And both betrayed the Lord.

Judas, the “son of perdition”, was fueled in his betrayal by at least two things:

1. His love of money.
2. His disillusionment with Jesus.

... and he sold the Prince of Life for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed Him with a kiss, and eventually took his own life and went to “his own place” in hell. And, in so doing, Judas fulfilled many Old Testament Prophecies.

And then, there is Peter, who was also fueled in his denial by at least two things:

1. His disillusionment with Jesus.
2. His fear.

... and at one of the critical points in this entire drama, denied that he even knew Jesus and sealed it with an oath. And, in so doing, fulfilled not only several Old Testament Prophecies, but the Promise by Jesus Himself, earlier that very night when Jesus told Peter straight up in **Luke 22:34b**:

I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.

So, what was the difference between these two men? What is it that made Peter end up being one of the most beloved Apostles of the Lord, while Judas’ name is reviled to this day? What made Peter to eventually become a martyr of the Lord, while Judas went to his own place in hell?

Both of them sinned. And *both* betrayed the Lord. And what is amazing is that the Holy Bible tells us that *both* Peter and Judas felt

grief over what they had done. I want you to turn with me for a moment to **Matthew 27** to see what the Holy Bible tells us about Judas. Now first look at **Matthew 27:3**

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Now notice that the Apostle Levi says here that Judas:

...felt remorse...

... and then Levi went on to say that this remorse was so great that Judas actually *returned* the money that the chief priests had given him, which was one of the motivating factors in him betraying the Lord in the first place!

Now I would think that if any of us saw someone who was so remorseful over what he had done that he went to the extent of refunding the money that he received from his sin, that most of us would applaud that and see that as a sign of genuine repentance. And yet Judas had not repented and Judas was *not* saved and he was *not* forgiven and Judas went to hell.

But now contrast that to what Dr. Luke wrote about Peter from **Luke 22:62:**

... he went out and wept bitterly

So, Judas was so remorseful, he returned the blood money, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Now he didn't actually "do" anything, Luke says that Peter simply wept bitterly. Now by saying that, I'm not *minimizing* Peter's grief, that isn't the point. If we are looking for outward signs of repentance, Judas seems to actually have more than Peter.

And the point here is that we can't say that the reason Peter was forgiven was because he repented and Judas didn't. Because from what is written, it looks like Judas' grief was actually *greater* than Peter's. In fact, look again at what the Apostle Levi wrote in **Matthew 27:3-5:**

3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See *to that* yourself!"

5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

Now look closely at what Levi wrote in verse 4. Judas openly confessed two very important things:

- ✓ **I have sinned**
- ✓ **by betraying innocent blood**

So, here we see that Judas actually confessed that he had sinned and that Jesus was innocent. And then, in verse 5, we read that Judas was so overcome with remorse that he killed himself.

So, what did Peter do? He went out and wept bitterly. That's it. He didn't try to speak with those to whom he had betrayed the Lord to correct the record, and he didn't rush over to where Jesus was to worship Him and display his love for the Savior publicly. No, Peter went out; he went out of the courtyard where he had betrayed the Lord and he wept.

Now, before I go on, I don't want there to be any misunderstanding of what I'm trying to say. I am *not* taking up for Judas. I do *not* believe and I am *not* teaching that Judas was forgiven. I am telling you clearly that Judas was *not* forgiven and that he went to hell. Judas was evil and was *not* saved. He was *never* saved. So, it isn't that Judas was at one time saved, but then lost his Salvation because he betrayed the Lord. No. Judas was *never* saved.

And I am also telling you that Peter *was* forgiven and he *was* saved, even though I don't think Peter was saved at this point. I think Peter was saved at some point after this moment, and that it was this very moment that was instrumental in Peter being saved.

All I'm saying is that from a human standpoint, Judas' grief looked more like repentance than Peter's. And yet, Judas was *not* forgiven and Peter was. Why?

Well, first of all, the answer is *not* because Peter cried and Judas didn't, as so many commentators have taught over the years. Crying doesn't have the power to wash away sins. And we know that because of what the writer of **Hebrews** told us, so please go there with me, **Hebrews 12:15-17**:

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16 that *there be* no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.

17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Now this is getting into what I am teaching on Sunday Evenings about Conviction, Confession, Repentance, and Forgiveness, but most of the leaders of the modern Church don't really get too deep into this issue, which is why there is so much confusion about this subject. But this is an issue that has profoundly disturbed me over the years. Look again what the writer of **Hebrews** says about Esau in verse 17:

... he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

... so even though Esau actively sought for a place of repentance with tears, he didn't find that place and was not saved. That tells us that repentance is not something we do or that we get, but is something that God must grant to us. And again, it isn't that Esau was saved at one point, but lost his Salvation because he sold his birthright. No, Esau was *never* saved. And so, Esau sold his birthright because he despised it and he despised God.

So, Esau didn't delight in God or what God had done, and so he took the slightest provocation and showed the depth of his hostility toward God by selling his birthright. And when the reality of what he had done hit him, he sought for repentance, with tears, but did not find it.

Now the writer of **Hebrews** goes to great length to tell us some interesting things about all this. In verse 16, the writer says that Esau was:

- ✓ Immoral
- ✓ Godless

... and that means that Esau was *not* saved. He was *never* saved. In fact, that Bible is crystal clear that Esau was *never* going to be saved. Because, in both **Malachi 1:2&3** and **Romans 9:13**, God Almighty said:

JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED

... and then, in verse 15, he says that we need to take heed to *ourselves* so that we don't engage in those activities that will prove that we are immoral and godless:

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

... so the writer warns that as saved people, we cannot allow two things to be true in our lives:

1. **See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God.**
2. **that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble.**

Now, the phrase “**See to it**” is an imperative command. It means that we are to pay strict attention, we are to make sure, we are to do whatever it is that we need to do to assure that we do not:

come short of the grace of God

And we are to pay strict attention, we are to do whatever it is that we need to do to, that we are to make sure that:

no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble

.. and the “**trouble**” that the writer of **Hebrews** is talking about is what happened to Esau:

who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.

.. and since he came short of the Grace of God, and since Esau had that root of bitterness, look what happened:

... he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears

So, the difference between *why* Esau came short of the Grace of God and Jacob didn't, the difference as to *why* Esau operated under the root of bitterness and Jacob didn't, the reason *why* Esau sold his birthright and Jacob didn't, the difference as to *why* Jacob found a place for forgiveness and Esau didn't had *nothing* to do with any noble or good quality in Jacob. It isn't because Jacob never sinned, because he did. It isn't because Jacobs' sin was less evil than Esau's. And it isn't because Jacob tried harder than Esau. It wasn't because of anything in either Jacob or Esau.

The reason why God loved Jacob and hated Esau was solely because, before the foundation of the world, God chose to "set His Love" upon Jacob, and God determined to leave Esau to himself. Look what the Apostle Paul wrote about this in **Romans 9:11-13**:

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "*THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.*"

13 Just as it is written, "*JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.*"

We must understand that God is the only truly free Being in the universe. And even though you may not like this, and even though this might not sit well with you, the Holy Bible is crystal clear that before He made the world, before any of us were born, in His absolute Freedom, God determined in Himself to save *some* of the fallen race of Adam, and God determined to leave the rest to themselves.

And the Bible goes on to say that the reason God did this was so that the Glory of His Grace might be displayed through the Salvation of His elect.

And so, Man's decision to repent is *not* decisive, God's Decision to grant repentance is decisive. Man's will is *not* what determines who will be saved, God's Will determines who will be saved. Man *cannot*

repent on his own, God must mercifully grant us the gift of repentance. Man cannot believe in his own strength, God must give us the gift of saving faith. And it is not what any of us "does" that determines whether God will receive us and forgive us, it is what God alone does *for us* that determines God's forgiveness in our lives. So unless Jesus looks at us, we are doomed.

And so the reason why Peter was forgiven and Judas wasn't was not because Peter repented and Judas didn't. It wasn't because Peter wept and Judas didn't. It wasn't because Peter was serious and Judas wasn't. The reason God forgave Peter and didn't forgive Judas was because Jesus looked at Peter. And that very night, just hours before he betrayed the Lord, Jesus told Peter:

Luke 22:31-32

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;

32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Peter had the only thing that Judas lacked, and it was *nothing* inherent inside of himself. It had *nothing* to do with *anything* that Peter did or did not do. It is no more complicated than this: Jesus prayed for Peter and Jesus did not pray for Judas. And so when Peter was in the very depth of his denial and betrayal, Jesus looked at Peter and He did not look at Judas.

Jesus looked at Peter in his weakest moment, when he had just committed his greatest sin, and because Jesus looked at Peter, Peter found that place of repentance. But, before He looked, Jesus interceded for Peter; Jesus was determined to interrupt Peter's lie, Jesus stepped in to stop Peter, Jesus violated Peter's will, Jesus *imposed* Himself into Peter's life. And Jesus prayed to His Father that Peter's faith would not fail. And that is why Peter was forgiven and Judas was not.

And all you need, all you have need for, dear friends, in the darkest moment of your life, in the blackest day where you can't see daylight, all you need when you have failed God the most, when you are at your weakest moment, when you can't even walk another, all you need when you are at the very edge of coming short of the Grace of God, all you need when the root of bitterness threatens to empower you to

sell your birthright, all you need when you are at the very threshold of your greatest sin is for Jesus to pray for you that your faith not fail. All you need is for Jesus to look at you. And when Jesus prays for you, your faith will not fail, and you will *not* sell your birthright, and you will *not* operate according to the root of bitterness, and you will find that place of repentance. And the Supremacy of Jesus Christ will turn your denial into glory!

Amen. Let's pray.

© 2008- 2016 by The Covenant of Peace Church. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse study of **The Gospel According to Luke**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.