

Pastor Tom Mortenson

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The Eyes of Jesus

Selected Scriptures

Easter. Well, as you all know and we've just certainly seen this morning, Easter is a celebration of victory. You know, most folks think of Easter as the time to celebrate spring, as the time to celebrate new life, as a time basically to celebrate the end of winter; but we here, we all know that the real meaning of Easter is that Jesus Christ's resurrection was proof positive that his sacrifice on our behalf, that is his substituting his perfect life for our sinful lives was accepted by God as perfect. You see, the world loves to paint Jesus as this victim of a kangaroo court, and we of course know better. We know that in fact he was the high priest orchestrating his own sacrifice and that he was certainly no victim. In fact, Jesus was in such complete and absolute control of himself and of his surroundings that he was in the midst of his torture and execution still discipling his followers. I want to focus in on one such training incident that happened during Jesus' arrest and his interrogation to point this out. I want to pick up the story in Matthew's gospel as Jesus is being interrogated after his arrest. This is *Matthew 26:63-75*, it says: *But Jesus remained*

silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the son of God." "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?" Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." Then he went outside and wept bitterly.

I think we all know the story of Peter. And we know that previously he had bragged to Jesus and to the others saying in *Matthew 26*: "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same. We all know that Peter did disown Jesus, and we know that he did it three times just as Jesus said he would. Now, there was another apostle who disowned Jesus and we know there's a vast difference in the outcome of Peter's response to his sin and that of Judas Iscariot. We know that Peter went on to lead the church at its beginning. We also know that Judas despaired, took his own life, and Jesus himself says this of Judas in *Matthew 26*, he says: "*The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.*"

I want to focus on something that Jesus did that you don't learn of through *Matthew's* gospel, and it's one of the reasons why we have four gospels; sometimes you need to combine information from two or three different gospels to get a complete picture of what actually took place. We know from *Matthew's* gospel that Peter bragged that he wouldn't disown Jesus, and we know that he did, but in between

those two events was something critical that points to the absolute and complete control that Jesus had over all of the events that seemed to be spinning out of control, and it also pointed out the absolute depths of love, the unconditional love that Jesus had for Peter. It was Joni Eareckson Tada who suggested that Jesus' control over the events of his execution extended even to the high pressure weather system that was over Jerusalem that night. You see, while Jesus was being spit on, mocked, and beaten, he was also guiding the weather over Jerusalem. And we know that Jesus was in complete control of the weather because previously we saw what he did when he was awoken from his sleeping during a torrential squall on the Sea of Galilee. You know, the boat that he was fast asleep in was taking on water in the midst of the swells and the disciples are completely panicked, fearing for their lives, and they wake him up and they say in *Luke 8*: "*Master, Master, we're going to drown!*" *He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. "Where is your faith?" he asked the disciples? In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."*

Well, the same power that enabled Jesus to stop that storm also enabled him to create the weather in Jerusalem on the night of his arrest. And it was this cold weather that Jesus had created that

had Peter sitting in a circle around a fire. And the conversations that took place as Peter sat warming himself became a critical part of Jesus' discipling of Peter; and Jesus did it all without uttering a single word. Luke's account of the same event includes this critical detail. This is Luke 22:54, it says: *Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You are also one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. You see, Matthew's account only tells us that Peter cursed three times and then that this rooster crowed; but it leaves out one critical detail that Luke includes in verse 6, he says: Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. You see, it wasn't luck, it wasn't fate,*

it wasn't circumstance that had at that exact moment a beaten and mocked, seemingly powerless Jesus locking eyes with Peter at the moment of his greatest failing.

I think we all know how powerful a single look can be, how the eyes can communicate instantly something that no other form of communication can. Well, there are three different sets of eyes that I would like to compare this morning, three different types of responses to our weakness and our sin. The first look was one that I personally will never forget. I would call this the look of the law. This happened in 1964, I was 15 years old, I was a freshman student in an all boys high school that was run by a headmaster who stood six foot six and never, ever cracked the hint of a smile. He was the law; and he was terrifying. I was sitting in Mr. Senerchia's Latin class, I was taking a test and our classroom had these transom windows that were along the upper part of the classroom and it had a stairway going right up on the outside. The headmaster had been walking up the stairs, and as he was walking up the stairs, he could look right down from the transom into the room, and as he looked down the stairs, he saw in the back of the room there was a student with his Latin book open at his feet cheating on the test. Well, my headmaster's response was instantaneous. He just burst into the room, he burst into the room and he pointed his bony finger at the back of the room and he said

with this rage in his voice, "You!" Kid stood up and he just went like this, he went (indicating) not a word, and with his curled finger the student stood up and he bowed his head and he just walked out of the room with him. We never saw that student again. I'm serious. I mean, I assume he was brought into the office and that his parents were called and he was expelled and sent home, and if you had told me that they killed him and buried him in the athletic field, I would have believed that easily. You know, there's a German word that is coined to describe the exact feeling that I had at the moment that our headmaster burst into this room, and the word is: "shadenfreude." It's a unique German word. It consists of two words that means harm, joy. And what it means is a feeling of giddiness, it's a feeling almost of joy, if you will, at something terrible happening to somebody else. I felt guilty for feeling that way, but I can tell you right now, knowing that the absolute terror of that man was fixed on somebody other than me, it gave me an incredible sense of relief. You see, he was the law: Unyielding, unbending, I've got you, I've nailed you, you're dead. The apostle Paul says this is what God's law does: It nails us, and it has no mercy. Listen to what *Romans 3:19* says: *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we*

become conscious of sin. You see, Paul knew that the law had captured and nailed him. He knew that he was a sinner. He knew that he could not possibly live up to the standard of God's law. He knew that he could not live up to any standard that he set for himself, and that no one could live up to the standards that they set for themselves. Romans 2:14 says this, it says: Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them. You see, Buddhists are incapable of being perfect Buddhists; Muslims can't be perfect Muslims; atheists can't even be perfect atheists. It doesn't matter what standard you claim; you will ultimately fail to live up to that standard as well. And the bony finger of whatever headmaster you are under is going to point to you at some point and declare you guilty. You know, Paul was just trying to live as a Jew according to the standards of the law that God had set out for him and he knew, he knew in his heart that he had utterly failed. He said in Romans 7:14: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who

do it, but it is sin living in me. And so it is with every one of us. There is something inside of us and it tells us that we have failed to live up to whatever standards we have set for ourselves. It's something that we push way to the very back of our consciences about this idea of judgment and wrath, and something that we are all someday going to face. Something again that Paul describes this way in Romans 2:5, he says this: But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done."

Compared to the wrath of the living God, my old headmaster, he is a piker. I mean that young man in the back of my Latin class, he saw one look from eyes that had no mercy and he knew he was done. Such is the effect of the law. You see, the law only has the ability to condemn. It only has the ability to tell you you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. You see, the ten commandments were not given to us as a means of working our way into heaven as so many different people believe. Instead what God is showing us through these ten laws is that it is impossible to be good enough to get to heaven on our own. You know, if you've ever lied, if you've ever stolen even a paper clip, if you've ever lusted, if you've ever coveted, ever, you've forfeited your perfection. The

law says you are unfit for heaven. You see, the law can give you no power, no ability whatsoever to succeed in living up to it. It can only tell you you failed. There's no mercy in the eyes of the law.

On the other hand, I want to tell you a story about another set of eyes. This is a set of eyes that communicate an entirely different picture. I have a sister who lives out west, and she runs a resource room for students who've either been kicked out of their class or for one reason or another, they're just not compatible with the general public school population. As you can guess, these are not the easiest students to be responsible for. Well, my sister was telling me that she was -- she was proctoring a student who was taking a chemistry exam and she saw a student sitting next to him Googling the very questions that the test was all about. Now, when somebody's taking a chemistry test and the person sitting next to him who's never gone near a chemistry book in his life is suddenly Googling the periodic table, you have good reason to be suspicious. And so she confronted the student about his cheating. The student just got right back in her face and it escalated and ended up with the student cursing her to her face and her sending him to the assistant principal. Well, this didn't work out very well for my sister. Within a short period of time, there was some back and forth, within a short period of time the student's back in

her class and he's smirking about the victory that he's just won. Wouldn't you know it, few days later he's right back at the same thing, there's another test going on, and there he is right next to her Googling the answers to the test. My sister had simply moved his seat and insisted that he sit right in front of her, and he had launched a campaign every single day: You must let me sit wherever I want. I have to sit wherever I want. I get to sit wherever I want. His mother started writing her emails: My son should be able to sit wherever he wants. So this goes back and forth, back and forth, and once again she's confronting him about this test, and once again it escalates. But this time he tells her he's going to the assistant principal. "Go ahead." Well, that was followed very shortly thereafter by a phone call to the class from the assistant principal. The phone call says, well, such-and-such is in my office and he's very, very upset. And so the man asked my sister, "How can we arrive at a solution that is compatible for both parties here?" My sister said, "No problem, he comes back to my classroom and he sits in the seat that I assigned him." The assistant principal said, "Well, that's not going to work for him." My sister said, "Well, basically how about then I quit?" The assistant principal was astounded, and he said, "You would quit over something like this?" And she said, "No, I wouldn't be quitting over this. I'd be quitting over the lack of the support that the administration has for its employees." Well, eventually

they worked out a compromise. But you know, the student knew in the end that he had won, and my sister realized that now the question of cheating, well, it had swung so far from my classroom in 1964 to this classroom in the year 2014, that cheating had no longer become a question of ethics but of opportunity. I mean, the idea that it might be immoral was no longer even part of the discussion. You see, in fifty years the question of cheating had evolved from something that you don't do first of all because it's flat out wrong, to something that you don't do because after all, you might get caught, to something that's negotiable even if you do get caught. You see, if you can eliminate the consequences of getting caught, then what possible reason do you have for not cheating? You know, fifty years ago my headmaster was -- he was the tyranny of all law and no grace. Well, the assistant principal today is the tyranny of all grace and no law. You see, in the absence of any law whatsoever, any standard of what is right or wrong, what is true, what is untrue becomes meaningless. The new standard becomes what works for me? And when there's complete and utter collapse of an ethical reason to avoid cheating, the answer to: "Why shouldn't I cheat?" becomes "Why not?" You see, whatever law the school had attempted to enact was a joke. And it was a joke that everybody in the system was in on: the students, the teachers, and the staff. So the eyes, I want to focus on the eyes of the assistant principal because they were the exact opposite of

these cold heartless eyes of my headmaster, but they were not any better. They were the eyes of grace run amok: no standard, no law, and no real grace at all, just this suffocating niceness in the hope that everyone can be made happy. That's the culture of today. But you know, that's not just the attitude that we find in the schools, it's also an attitude that many, many people find today in the church.

Sociologist Christian Smith interviewed 3,000 -- 3,000 teenagers -- because he wanted to find out what the bottom line was when it came to their beliefs. He and his team came up with what he called five core beliefs that defined the understanding of teenagers in their relationship with the Lord, and they labeled this Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, or MTD for short. They made the claim, this is what teenagers actually believe in America today about God, five things: Number one: A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth. Number two: God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. Number three: The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. Number four: God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. And number five: Good people go to heaven when they die.

Christian author Al Mohler said this, he said: "This first of all is a brand new religion." He went on to say this, he said: "Smith and his colleagues recognize that the deity behind Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is very much like the deistic God of the 18th-century philosophers. This is not the God who thunders from a mountain, nor a God who's going to serve as judge. This undemanding deity is more interested in solving our problems and in making people happy. In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: He is always on call, takes care of any problem that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process." He's the assistant principal at my sister's school. I mean, "Obviously Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is not an organized faith. This belief system has no denominational headquarters, no mailing address. Nevertheless, it has millions and millions of devotees across the United States and other advanced cultures, where subtle cultural shifts have produced a context in which belief in such an undemanding deity makes sense. Furthermore, this deity does not challenge the most basic self-centered assumptions of our postmodern age. Particularly when it comes to so-called 'life-style' issues, this God is exceedingly tolerant and this religion is radically undemanding." This is the religion that many evangelicals today embrace.

So let me bring this discussion back to Easter itself. Let me bring this back to a cold night and a warm fire. Sitting around that fire is Peter and his various accusers and they begin to accuse and Peter begins to curse, and the accusations grow more threatening. The response grows more intense until Peter is virtually shouting his denial of Christ as a rooster crows and Peter finds himself locking eyes with the beaten and blooded eyes of his Lord and Savior. Now had those eyes been the eyes of my headmaster, Peter would have seen wrath and no mercy. He would have been pile driven right into the ground; the law would have pummeled him, nailed him, and killed him right there on the spot. But had those eyes been the eyes of my sister's assistant principal, Peter would have been in no better shape. He would have looked into those eyes and he would have found nothing. He may well have escaped the condemning stare of my headmaster but he would have known that he had dedicated his life not to a king and conqueror come to die and set men free from the law; no, but to an amorphous blob willing to shift shape in order to accommodate whatever it is the culture wants. You see, my headmaster was the picture of law with no grace. My sister's assistant principal is a picture of grace run amok with no concept of law. And to look into the eyes of either is to realize you're absolutely lost, you have no help, and you have no hope. Thank God Peter didn't look into either of those eyes. Instead he looked into the eyes of the Lord

Jesus Christ whose absolute unyielding determination to fulfill the law down to its last comma is what put him while still in absolute control of the weather in Jerusalem at the hands of those who would beat, mock, strip, flog, and execute him, all so that the demands of the law could be met not by the payment of the ultimate penalty by us, but by him. And there in the midst of that penalty being exacted stood the One who was not only absorbing our punishment but was also teaching Peter about the folly of tooting his own horn and relying on his own strength and denying his own God. As Jesus was being slapped, spit on, and mocked, he didn't have to say a single word. At precisely the right moment, He who was commanding the cold weather to settle into Jerusalem that night sent another command, not to the earth that it would open and swallow whole all of his tormentors, not to the sky that it would unleash its fury from heaven itself and pour judgment down on those who would dare touch its king; no, instead Jesus sent this critical command to a rooster, and the rooster instantly complied. Verse 60 says: *Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.* Just try to imagine the chances of Peter's eye-to-eye contact with the beaten and blooded Jesus taking place by accident? When you stir up the probabilities of that accident, realize that Jesus stated the specifics of this event the night before it was going to happen. *Matthew 26:34: "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."* Now there's only

two different conclusions you can reach about this. Jesus was either extremely lucky that chance lined up all the different possibilities just right and that rooster just happened to crow right on cue or that the sovereign God of the universe who had entered this universe in flesh some 33 years previously was now guiding the weather, the servant girl who accused Peter, and even the rooster who crowed right on cue. Verse 60 says: *Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.* I cannot begin to imagine just what it is Peter saw in those eyes. These were the eyes that saw all of his sheep abandon him. They were the eyes that saw the religions leaders of the very faith that he was the center of so filled with hatred that they demanded his torture and execution even though he alone perfectly fulfilled their law. These were the eyes that saw the Roman government so fearful of a riot that they forwent even common justice to have him first flogged within an inch of his life and then finally given over to a crowd whose bloodthirst would accept nothing less than his torture and execution. These were the eyes that saw his own mother watching the life draining out of him and instructing the apostle John to care for her. These were the eyes that saw what no human being could ever see, that is the absolute horror of complete and utter abandonment not just by man, not just by earth, but by his own Father, as He who knew no sin became sin for us. These were the eyes that saw the very bottom of what the

pit of hell looked like. These were eyes that ceased seeing altogether not because they weren't functioning but because the place where Jesus was cast out to was a place of outer and utter darkness, 'cause he was thrust out from life and light itself. There's no eyes that can see in a place of utter darkness. And finally, these were the eyes that grew dim as death approached and Jews knew the end was near. We pick up on it on *Matthew 27:38*, it says: *Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross if you are the son of God!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the son of God.'*" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* (Which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). When some of those there heard this, they said, *"He is calling Elijah."* Immediately one of them ran and God a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff,

and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

I can't begin to imagine the agony of soul that Peter had experienced knowing that one of the very last things the eyes of Jesus saw of him was his betrayal. Peter had sinned a great sin: He had denied his Lord. And Jesus himself said on one occasion in *Matthew 10: But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.* Well, you know Peter not only denied that he even knew Jesus, the scripture says in *Matthew 26: He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"* See, Peter actually called God to be a witness to his lie, that he didn't know and never knew Jesus. So Peter added lies and blasphemy to his denial. Jesus heard it all and he responded just with his eyes. You see, his eyes were not the eyes of my headmaster and they were not the eyes of the assistant principal. And what Jesus' eyes had to have said much louder than words is that there is no sin that is too great for God. There is no sin that cannot be forgiven except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and that's a refusal to respond to the Spirit's pleading that you would seek forgiveness and repentance for any sin. Peter heard the plea of the Holy Spirit and he repented, and we know that because God says in *John 6:37: "All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes*

to me I will never drive away."

We know for a fact that Peter was not disowned by Jesus. We know historically he went on to become one of the leaders of the church. You see, both Peter and Judas had sinned greatly against God and the difference -- the difference in their fate is the difference between repentance and despair. We can surmise a great deal about the look Jesus gave Peter by the fact that after a night of weeping, Peter had clearly repented. How do you know that?

Well, we know that by the direction that we see Peter moving in. You see, to repent is to change direction; it means to do an about-face. And when Peter last saw Jesus, he was moving out breakneck speed away from Jesus; but when he finds the risen Christ, we find that direction has changed in an instant. We pick up on the action in *John 21*. It says this, this is after the resurrection:

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas, (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He

said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

You see, Peter had denied his Lord. He had denied him with an oath before God himself, but Easter morning had come. And the very one he had denied had risen from the grave. The victor who had utterly defeated the enemy was now cooking breakfast for him. Again, John 21 it says: Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love

you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Here's what I find amazing about this: You see, Peter's three denials of his Lord is met with three separate affirmations of his restoration: "Feed my lambs." "Take care of my sheep." "Feed my sheep." You see, it's hard for me to get my head around the fact that the victorious risen King of the universe is serving the one who's denied even knowing him, and he's restoring him fully. For the rest of Peter's life and ministry, he would remember that night and those eyes; and he would know from personal experience that God is a God of mercy and grace and that he chooses broken vessels like Peter to minister his grace to a fallen world. You see, the eyes that now looked at Peter were not the eyes of my headmaster. They were not the eyes that condemned because on the cross Jesus was condemned in Peter's place. The sins that Jesus had gone to the cross to pay for included Peter's vehement denials, and Jesus had paid that price already, and because he had paid that price, Peter was now free. But the eyes that looked at Peter were not the eyes of the assistant principal either, those who say that grace is cheap and that God is a malleable lump of clay willing to be shaped into whatever it is the culture desires. Those who make that claim will find a very different set of eyes when they finally do see the face of Jesus in judgment. *Revelation 2:18* says they will be eyes like blazing fire. *Hebrews 4:13* says: *Nothing in all creation is*

hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. You see, the time is coming when the grace and the mercy of those eyes is going to give way to final judgment and mercy will be no more.

But here's the good news that Easter proclaims. The eyes that Peter saw are the same eyes that anyone can see if they, too, like Peter, are willing to repent. *2 Chronicles 16:9 says: For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. 1 Peter 3:12 says: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*

You know, Easter Sunday represents the triumph of good over evil, life over death, Jesus' perfection given for the sins of his sheep. And because of the resurrection, we can stand before God's judgment knowing that we have been paid for in full by the One whose eyes are still on us, strengthening us, and encouraging us to tell the good news. And the good news is that those eyes could be on you as well. And if you feel that God is speaking to you about those eyes, speak to me, speak to a deacon, speak to an elder, speak to somebody. Let's get this straightened out today. Decide today to look into the eyes of Mercy and Grace. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank you for the incredible sovereign control that your Son exerted even as he was being pummeled and mercilessly tortured. Father, I thank you that the God who controls the planets and the universe also has complete control over a rooster in Jerusalem. I thank you, Father, for the look that was in Christ's eyes, the look of mercy and grace. I thank you for the fact that that look was there because Jesus himself has paid the price for our sins so he can give us mercy and grace, and I thank you for that sacrifice in Jesus' name. Amen.