

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon June 13, 2021
Luke 22: 54 – 62 "The Bitter Weeping of Faith"

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him." 57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

63 Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. 64 And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65 And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

66 As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. 69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

I. Introduction

- a. Calvin “Peter’s fall, which is here related, is a bright mirror of our weakness. In his repentance, also, a striking instance of the goodness and mercy of God is held out to us. This narrative, therefore, which relates to a single individual, contains a doctrine which may be applied to the whole Church, and which indeed is highly useful, both to instruct those who are standing to cherish anxiety and fear, and to comfort those who have fallen, by holding out to them the hope of pardon. And first it ought to be observed, that Peter acted inconsiderately, when he entered into the hall of the high priest. It was his duty, no doubt, to follow his Master; but having been warned that he would revolt, he ought rather to have concealed himself in some corner, so as not to expose himself to an occasion of sinning. Thus it frequently happens that believers, under an appearance of virtue, throw themselves within the reach of temptation.”¹
- b. Luke 22: 54 – 62 “The Bitter Weeping of Faith”
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II. The setting: v54a

- a. 54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house.
- b. We know from the other Gospels that Jesus was first taken to Annas, and then He was taken to Caiaphas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and a former high priest still wielding the greatest power behind the scenes.
 - i. First to Annas: John 18:12,13 “Then the detachment [of troops] and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. 13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.”
 1. John 18:24 “Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.”
 - a. So, we know that both Annas and Caiaphas were involved in these dark hour questionings of Christ.
 - ii. Caiaphas:
 1. Mt 26:57,58 “And those who had laid hold of Jesus led [Him] away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high

¹ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 260). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.”

- a. None of the synoptic Gospels mention going first to Annas. Only John mentions this.
 - b. Unlike Luke and Mark, Matthew names Caiaphas. So, from Matthew, we know that Peter's three denials mentioned in Luke occurred in the location where Jesus was being interrogated by Caiaphas.
 - c. To see the end: the questioning of Jesus is underway as Peter is sitting with the attendants of the high priest. Jesus is questioned as Peter is questioned.
- iii. Annas and Caiaphas both called high priests in Luke 3:1,2
1. “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”
- c. Annas
- i. “Annas—was high priest 7–14. In 25 Caiaphas, who had married the daughter of Annas (John 18:13), was raised to that office, and probably Annas was now made president of the Sanhedrim, or deputy or coadjutor of the high priest, and thus was also called high priest along with Caiaphas (Luke 3:2). By the Mosaic law the high-priesthood was held for life (Num. 3:10); and although Annas had been deposed by the Roman procurator, the Jews may still have regarded him as legally the high priest. Our Lord was first brought before Annas, and after a brief questioning of him (John 18:19–23) was sent to Caiaphas, when some members of the Sanhedrim had met, and the first trial of Jesus took place (Matt. 26:57–68). This examination of our Lord before Annas is recorded only by John. Annas was president of the Sanhedrim before which Peter and John were brought (Acts 4:6).”²
- d. Caiaphas
- i. The surname of Joseph, the son-in-law of Annas the deposed high priest (John 18:13).... the Roman procurator preceding Pontius Pilate, had appointed him high priest *ca.* A.D. 18, some eleven years before John the Baptist began his ministry (Luke 3:2). His nineteen-year tenure testified to his ability as a diplomat and an administrator, but he was deposed ...in A.D. 36. It was Caiaphas who proposed that Jesus be sacrificed in place of the entire Jewish nation (11:49–50; cf. Matt. 26:3). Once Jesus was arrested, he was led first to Annas (John 18:12–13)—because he may still have been the legitimate high priest in the eyes of the Sanhedrin or

² Easton, M. G. (1893). In [Easton's Bible dictionary](#). New York: Harper & Brothers.

because of the authority he still wielded as former high priest—and then to Caiaphas (v. 24). Matthew records that Caiaphas, the high priest, tore his robes upon Jesus' confession as the Christ, the Son of God...A few weeks later Caiaphas, accompanied by his father-in-law Annas and other members of the Sanhedrin, investigated Peter and John concerning their authority to preach about the resurrected Jesus (Acts 4:6).³

III. Peter followed at a distance v54b

a. "But Peter followed at a distance."

b. Peter had choices.

- i. He could have stood next to Jesus when He was arrested, staying with Jesus in His arrest. Probably, Peter would have also been arrested.
 1. This is what Peter said he would do.
 - a. Luke 22:33. "But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.""
 2. Had he taken this path, he would not have denied knowing Jesus. This was a real choice for Peter in that moment even though Jesus had prophesied Peter's denials. Peter used his own fallen will to make his own fallen choice not to stand with Jesus, eventually fulfilling Christ's Words to him.
- ii. He could have scattered with the other disciples. Since no mention is made of the other disciples, except John, during this dark night, it appears the other nine disciples had simply fled from the threat.
 1. Think about this. It's likely some of these nine disciples fled together, enjoying the comfort of one another's presence. Instead, Peter ended up in the presence of adversaries.
 2. Had he taken this path, he likely would not have denied knowing Jesus that night. This, also, was a real choice for Peter in that moment, but he acted according to his flesh, following at a distance instead, going on to fulfill Christ's Word to him.
- iii. He could have attempted to follow more closely like John did, but John had closer access based upon prior relationship with the high priest.
 1. Jn 18: 15,16 "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so [did] another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in."
- iv. He could have followed at a distance. This is what he did.
 1. In Peter we see what happens when the flesh seeks a compromise with the Spirit. This corrupted middle path between total abandonment and total faithfulness seemed reasonable to Peter

³ Myers, A. C. (1987). In [The Eerdmans Bible dictionary](#) (p. 181). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

after he cut off Malchus' ear that night. But, what would Peter say about this form of compromise?

a. 1 Peter 1:13-16 "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest [your] hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, [as] in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you [is] holy, you also be holy in all [your] conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.""

2. Henry "It began in *sneaking*. He *followed Christ* when he was had away prisoner; this was well, and showed a concern for his Master. But he followed *afar off*, that he might be out of danger. He thought to trim the matter, to *follow Christ*, and so to satisfy his conscience, but to follow *afar off*, and so to save his reputation, and sleep in a whole skin."⁴

IV. Peter sat among them v55

- a. 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.
- b. Note the next phase of following Jesus from a distance. We begin to see that following from a distance is not following Jesus at all. It is a path that leads to the Judas outcome, apart from real repentance. Our creature comforts (warm fire and human company) take over and set us down in the midst of adversaries. Apart from active faith in Christ, Peter was drifting toward denials. He'd rather sit comfortably and safely with enemies than acknowledge Jesus Christ.
- c. Psalm 1
- i. *Blessed [is] the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly [are] not so, But [are] like the chaff which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*
- d. Henry "It proceeded in keeping his distance still, and associating himself with the high priest's servants, when he should have been at his master's elbow. The *servants kindled a fire in the midst of the hall and sat down together*, to talk over their night-expedition. Probably Malchus was among them, and *Peter sat down among them*, as if he had been one of them, at least would be thought to be so.

⁴ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1904). Peabody: Hendrickson.

His fall itself was disclaiming all acquaintance with Christ, and relation to him, disowning him because he was now in distress and danger.”⁵

V. The three denials v56-60a

- a. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him." 57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"
- b. Note, first, it was not a soldier with a sword, nor a leading man in a robe, nor another man, but rather it was a servant girl who terrified Peter. His compromise left him with no courage when challenged by a servant girl.
- c. Note, also, that Peter went beyond what was necessary in defending against the servant girl’s words. Peter denied even knowing Jesus at all.
- d. Note, next, how Peter must have taken the approach of confidence, staying in their midst for over an hour, talking with them like he was not afraid. It is likely his accent that gave him away as a Galilean.
- e. Peter’s sinful soul compromise had led him into a situation he had no preparation or experience to endure well. The Lord’s sovereign kindness unfolds as Peter is discovering his total impotence and the need to “Be holy as I am holy.”
- f. Calvin “It is therefore our duty to pray to the Lord to restrain and keep us by his Spirit, lest, going beyond our measure, we be immediately punished. We ought also to pray, whenever we commence any undertaking, that he may not permit us to fail in the midst of our efforts, or at the beginning of the work, but may supply us with strength from heaven till the end. Conviction of our weakness ought not, indeed, to be a reason for indolence, to prevent us from going wherever God calls us; but it ought to restrain our rashness, that we may not attempt any thing beyond our calling; and it ought also to stimulate us to prayer, that God, who has given us grace to begin well, may also continue to give us grace to persevere.”⁶

VI. The rooster crowed v60b

- a. Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.
- b. Again, we see here the Lord’s sovereign kindness, using a simple rooster to call Peter back. He wouldn’t respond properly to three other human beings, but God’s voice in a rooster shakes him.

⁵ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1904). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁶ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, pp. 260–261). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- i. Henry “The *cock crew* just as he was the third time denying that he knew Christ, and this startled him and put him upon thinking. Note, Small accidents may involve great consequences.”⁷

VII. The Lord’s look and the Lord’s Word v61

- a. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."
- b. Herein we see the work of God in the soul of Peter. Combining the gaze of Christ with the Word of Christ, Peter’s soul is fully revealed. Peter becomes aware of his deplorable sin, AND he becomes aware Jesus Christ sees into the depths of his soul. The hiding from Jesus is over.
 - i. Henry “This circumstance we had not in the other evangelists, ... When Peter disowned Christ, yet Christ did not disown him, though he might justly have cast him off, and never looked upon him more, but have denied him before his Father. It is well for us that Christ does not deal with us as we deal with him. Christ *looked upon Peter*, not doubting but that Peter would soon be aware of it; for he knew that, though he had denied him with his lips, yet his eye would still be towards him. Observe, Though Peter had now been guilty of a very great offence, and which was very provoking, yet Christ would not *call to him*, lest he should *shame* him or *expose* him; he only gave him *a look* which none but Peter would understand the meaning of, and it had a great deal in it.”⁸
- c. Note that Jesus had shortly before not only looked at Judas, but He had also spoken to him and received his kiss. Yet, Judas went on about his evil, more committed to betrayal than before his interaction with Jesus.
 - i. Apart from the Holy Spirit, Judas was near to Jesus and only became a deeper rebel.
 - ii. By the Holy Spirit, a simple look from Jesus brought remembrance of the Word and conviction of sin.
 - iii. Revelation 1:12-15 “Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands [One] like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair [were] white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters”
- d. Calvin “To the voice of *the cock*, Luke informs us, there was also added the *look* of Christ; for previously—as we learn from Mark—he had paid no attention to the *cock* when *crowing*. He must, therefore, have received the *look* from Christ,

⁷ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1905). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁸ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1905). Peabody: Hendrickson.

in order that he might come to himself. We all have experience of the same thing in ourselves; for which of us does not pass by with indifference and with deaf ears—I do not say the varied and numerous songs of birds, which, however, excite us to glorify God—but even the voice of God, which is heard clearly and distinctly in the doctrine of the Law and of the Gospel? Nor is it for a single day only that our minds are held by such brutal stupidity, but it is perpetual, until he who alone turns the hearts of men deigns to *look* upon us. It is proper to observe, however, that this was no ordinary *look*, for he had formerly *looked* at Judas, who, after all, became no better by it. But in *looking at Peter*, he added to his eyes the secret efficacy of the Spirit, and thus, by the rays of his grace, penetrated into his heart. Let us therefore know, that whenever any one has fallen, his repentance will never begin, until the Lord has *looked* at him.”⁹

VIII. The Bitter weeping of faith v62

- a. 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.
- b. Based upon future events in the life of Peter, we can be confident this was the first fruit of Peter’s repentance. Jesus gave Peter a deep drink of his own filthy soul, his own selfishness, his own self-reliance, his own foolishness, his own ignorance of his own soul, but even greater, Jesus gave Peter a much deeper drink of the grace and mercy of God, of Christ’s perfections, sacrificial love, power, wisdom, knowledge and kindness. Before the fiery eyes of Christ, Peter’s soul melted, and he wept bitterly.
- c. Henry “One look from Christ melted him into tears of godly sorrow for sin. The candle was newly put out, and then a little thing lighted it again. Christ looked upon the chief priests, and made no impression upon them as he did on Peter, who had the divine seed remaining in him to work upon. It was not the look from Christ, but the grace of God with it, that recovered Peter, and brought him to-rights.”¹⁰

IX. Questions to know, love and obey God

⁹ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 265). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

¹⁰ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1905). Peabody: Hendrickson.