

Peter who fell into temptation and in fear for his own well being denied the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ his Savior—was so completely restored and given a new beginning, that he stood up in front of thousands of people (many of them witnesses of his own denial and fall) and charged them with the sin of denying Christ!

Acts 3:13-14 “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 “But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you...”

Christ's complete forgiveness and restoration takes the bitterness and sting out of our past sins—and makes them a memory of God's grace. That complete restoration to ministry is why I say that Peter is one of the greatest examples of God's grace, loving us even when we sin and fail Him. Peter is perhaps the greatest witness to the new beginnings that Christ offers, because...

PETER DENIED JESUS

One of the amazing aspects of Peter's life is his recovery by God's grace from one of the most public failures, and one of the deepest personal embarrassments of all time.

Peter is forever on record for denying that he even knew Jesus not once, not twice—but three times.

Peter is the premier example in God's Word about hope; hope for a new start, hope for complete forgiveness, hope in the God of the second chance.

After three years of personal one-on-one training in Christ's presence, after all the absolute confirmations of Christ's power—Peter, the leader of the Twelve denies that he ever even knew Jesus. He becomes a complete failure. As we read earlier, after Gethsemane an unprepared Peter faces temptation and fails. That night becomes...

PETER'S DARKEST HOUR

For most of us a failure that big, an event that public, would be the end. It was a scandal of epic proportions and it must have echoes around Jerusalem. Peter, the lead representative of Christ was a washout and a quitter. He melted in the face of only the threat of servant girls.

But the lessons left for us are priceless. It is so wonderful to see what Jesus taught Peter in that darkest hour of his life. And if there are ever dark clouds in the days of our lives—we can remember like Peter remembered and like Peter have HOPE for a new beginning!

That is what we need to be reminded of; they are...

LESSONS PETER FORGOT

Luke carefully records the events in the courtyard of Caiaphas' house.

It was there that Peter waited for word about Jesus.

It was also there in that place that Peter forgot what he had been taught by Jesus.

Peter forgot the old truths, he failed to practice them, and he failed miserably. Instead of not entering temptation, Peter was tempted and gave in and betrayed Christ three times before the cock crowed.

But the record of what happened to Peter is part of the profit of Scriptures. From Peter's failure we can observe and glean doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

These are the lessons we can learn from Peter about how we all need to heed and apply God's Word this morning.

Peter first forgot the lesson that...

1. JESUS KNOWS WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN EACH DAY OF MY LIFE.

Luke 22:31-34 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." When we read the Bible we should read it like we believed that Jesus knows what is going to happen in each day of my life. When He says temptations will come, but He will always make a way of escape—we must believe Him and escape.

When He says that Satan prowls around and devours those who don't resist the Devil—we must believe Him and resist (**1 Peter 5:8-9**). Since Jesus knows every day, and every need of our lives we must look upon His Word as what we can't live without (**Matthew 4:4**).

So Jesus knows what is going to happen in every day of my life.

Peter secondly failed because he forgot that...

2. JESUS WANTS US TO WATCH AND PRAY.

Luke 22:40-46 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." Sadly, it was in a garden of olive trees that Jesus prayed, and in a place like the nearby cave most likely is where Christ's disciples slept.

Mark records an even clearer call by Christ in **Mark 14:38**

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Temptations often come when we are not watching, when we are not on guard. So the story continues, Christ is arrested and Peter isn't careful. He forgot that Jesus had warned him clearly about not "entering into temptation". Jesus said don't go toward temptation, don't enter places where you are tempted to do wrong.

So Jesus wants us to watch and pray.
Peter disobeyed and didn't remember that...

3. JESUS HAS WARNED US TO FLEE TEMPTATIONS.

Luke 22:54-61 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."

God has always told us what to do with temptations—FLEE! There is no person strong enough to trifle and only sample sin by playing with temptation. Beware, heed, and flee!

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Psalms 1:1-3 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 [what he walks with, stands with, and sits with] 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.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

So Jesus knows what will happen each day of our lives, He asks us to watch and pray, and He has warned us to flee temptations and not stay around and try to overcome them on our own.

So Jesus has warned us to flee temptations.
Peter also needed to learn the lesson that...

4. JESUS IS IN CONTROL OF ALL THE EVENTS SURROUNDING MY LIFE .

Luke 22:60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

For one cock to crow at the right time while the other birds in the city remained silent was certainly a miracle.

But the crowing of the cock was much more than a miracle that fulfilled our Lord's words; it was also a special message to Peter, a message that helped to restore him to fellowship again.

What encouragements did the crowing of the cock give to the Apostle Peter? It was an assurance to him that Jesus Christ was still in control of things even though He was a prisoner, bound and seemingly helpless before His captors.

Peter could recall witnessing his Lord's authority over the fish, the winds, and the waves, and even over disease and death. No matter how dark the hour was for Peter, Jesus was still in control!

Whether Peter was out in the middle of the storm sinking in a fishing boat (Matthew 14) or here in the courtyard of Caiaphas—Jesus is completely in control.

The same is true when you sit alone in the broken down car, the emergency waiting room, or lay in bed during long and sleepless nights over your job, your marriage, or your children. Jesus is in control of all the events surrounding my life.

Why don't you cement that in your mind and heart by saying it aloud with me right now?

Jesus is in control of all the events surrounding my life.

So we are assured that God is in control, He will strengthen us if we take His way of escape, and He already knows what we face as the days of our lives unfold.

Another lesson that Peter had to learn, and one that can also deeply impact our lives is that...

5. JESUS WANTS ME TO KNOW THAT HE IS WATCHING ME IN MY DARKEST HOURS.

Luke 22:61 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." So Peter doesn't watch and pray, doesn't flee temptation, has miserably failed by denying Christ three times. But not only is Jesus in command of the situation—He actually has His eyes on Peter the whole time. Jesus who prayed that Satan wouldn't get Peter is also personally watching Peter each moment.

- Jesus knew exactly where Peter was in that courtyard.
- Jesus heard each of Peter's denials.
- Jesus felt every one of Peter's fears.
- Jesus was interceding and saving Peter to "the uttermost" (**Hebrews 7:24-25**).

But note that Jesus was doing all this unknown to Peter. Peter thought he was alone. But despite the rough treatment Jesus was enduring, the mocking, the ropes or chains that bound Him (**John 18:12**)—Jesus was watching Peter!

That is the lesson of v. 61 as we note who was watching who; Jesus knew exactly where Peter was both spiritually and physically.

He is in touch with our lives. No matter what you and I do, no matter where we are—Jesus has His eyes on us.

When the disciples were sinking in the boat during the storm and Jesus was miles away on top of a lonely mountain—He was watching and came to them at exactly the right moment they needed Him. He is always there. He is always watching. He is always rescuing us just when we need Him!

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is always living to intercede for us; He is always watch, always praying and always with us. We are not alone even in our darkest hours of failure and sin, because Jesus has a plan to bring to pass in our lives and that plan surrounds His Word.

For you it may be at school that you face those darkest of temptations, maybe it is on the road as you travel; maybe it is at work or after work when you stay late; maybe it is when you are all alone at home watching TV or on your computer online—where ever it is that you are seized with temptations to fear, to lust, to steal, to lie, the cheat, to deny Christ in any one of a millions way...it is then and there Jesus wants you to remember ONE THING:

Jesus wants me to know that He is watching me in my darkest hours!
Peter learned another powerful lesson...

6. JESUS WANTS ME TO REMEMBER HIS WORD IN MY DARKEST HOURS TO GIVE ME HOPE.

Luke 22:61 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.”

The crowing rooster was a tool God used in Peter’s life. That rooster reminded him of Christ's words.

Peter grasped that memory; Jesus had promised him forgiveness if he fell. At the moment (**Luke 22:31-34**) Peter wasn’t hearing Jesus. He was arguing, he was blurting out as always—instead of listening. But now the rooster jarred his memory. And what was it he remembered? Jesus had given him a future and a hope. He could be forgiven, Jesus had said so. And Peter believed the Word of God.

Jesus had already given His Word to Peter; the outcome was already sure. He says Peter when you turn away from your sin, when you come back to me, when you get converted...then you will be a tool in my hands!

Peter was going to survive, he would repent and he would be restored to ministry. Peter just needed to remember the promises Jesus had made to him. That promise was back in v. 32. Look back and see what Peter remembered!

Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned [epistrepho, lit. ‘converted, or returned ’] to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

Jesus wants me to remember His Word in my darkest hours, to give me hope.
So one last lesson Peter needed to learn was that...

7. JESUS PROMISES US A LIFE OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND OFFERS US COMPLETE FORGIVENESS AND NO CONDEMNATION.

It was the miracle of the cock crowing at that exact moment that also reminded Peter of God's Word; but the cock crow signaled that a new day was dawning, for after all, that is what the rooster's call means each day.

Peter had a new day, a new beginning of hope because he was remembering and trusting in what Jesus had said. It was not a new day for Judas or for the enemies of the Lord, but it was a new day for Peter as he repented and wept bitterly.

God has promised that "a broken and a contrite heart" God will never turn away ([Ps. 51:17](#)). Help was on the way; God's plan was unfolding.

Peter first received a special message from the angel on Resurrection morning which encouraged Peter ([Mark 16:7](#)), later that day Jesus Himself appeared to Peter and renewed his fellowship with Peter ([Luke 24:34](#)). And then on the shores of Galilee where Jesus had first called Peter, He returns to restore Peter's call and to re-commission him for ministry (John 21).

Let's go now to the final lesson in [John 21:1-24](#) as Jesus promises us a life of new beginnings and offers us forgiveness and no condemnation. It wasn't just Peter that Jesus had to restore, it was all of them. But Peter is the one we want to especially remember. This lesson is the most detailed

- Jesus wants us to know when we serve in the energy of our flesh (vv. 2-3).

What would ever prompt men who just witnessed the greatest event in the history of the Universe (Christ's Resurrection) to go back to their "old life"? It was their flesh. Peter was frustrated, he was uncertain what would be his future after his failure—so he said I am going back to what I know best. He forgot, or maybe was trying to forget the day he left his nets ([Matthew 4:20](#)). What ever his reason, Jesus again knew their hearts and was going to renew that call and draw them away from serving in the energy of the flesh.

- Jesus wants us to know how empty are the labors we do in the energy of our flesh (vv. 3-5).

Before He furnishes the abundant supply, we must first be made conscious of our emptiness. Before He gives strength, we must be made to feel our weakness. Slow, painfully slow, are we to learn this lesson; and slower still to own our nothingness and take the place of helplessness before the Mighty One. The disciples on the sea picture us, here in this world; the Savior on the shore (whither we are bound) Christ in Heaven. How blessed, then, to behold Him occupied with us below, and speaking to us from "the shore!" It was not the disciples who addressed the Lord, but He who spoke to them!

- Jesus wants to give us His direction for our lives (v.6).

These men had fished all their lives, yet had they toiled throughout that night and taken nothing. But here was the Lord telling them to cast their net but once, and assuring them they should find. Was it not He, by His invisible power, that drew the fishes into their net! And what a striking line is this picture of Christian service. How He tells the servants that success in their ministry is due not to their eloquence, their power of persuasion, or their any thing, but due alone to this sovereign drawing-power.

- Jesus wants to pour out His blessing upon all we do in His Name and for His glory (vv. 12-13).
- Jesus restores Peter and shows him the only motive for ministry Christ accepts is LOVE. (vv. 15-17).

Remember fearful Peter who got caught in water over his head and cusses and swears that he didn't know Jesus, and then Jesus turned and looked at him? Devastated Peter slips out into the dark to weep the bitter tears of failure, but Jesus comes looking for Him and gives him forgiveness. That is just what He does for each of us when we fail Him!

- Jesus has chosen the timing and the manner of our death (vv. 18-19).
- Jesus reminds us that we look forward to His Coming—not death! (vv. 20-24).

Each one of us at some point in our lives, will miserably fail the Lord by yielding to some temptation and sin. Soon after that sin we will hear (in one way or another) “the crowing of the cock.”

At that instant the accusing voice of Satan will ring in our minds, telling us that we are finished, we are useless, pleasing God is hopeless, and our future has been destroyed.

But that is never God's message to us. As Peter learned, so we need to know. Our God is a forgiving God, a compassionate God, a God who loves us no matter what we have done.

Peter's restoration was so complete that he could charge the Jewish people of his own city who knew him and many probably knew what he had done with these words, “But you denied the Holy One and the Just!” ([Acts 3:14](#), nkjv)

Peter could point that sin out to them because he knew his similar sin was already on Christ, the guilt taken away, the penalty paid, and the record against him removed.

Peter did not have a copy of [1 John 1:9](#) to read, but he had already experienced the truth of Christ's promise in his own heart.

Every time we open to the Gospel by Mark we remember that in one way or another, all of us too have stumbled. And for each of us, Peter's triumph by God's grace is an incredible source of encouragement to trust in our God of the new beginning!

Special Appendix

What lessons can we draw from the way Jesus trained, shaped and used Peter in the Gospels, Acts, and his two Epistles?

Jesus RENAMES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our IDENTITY.

[John 1:42](#) And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

Peter was a crusty crass fisherman with a foul mouth. Depart from me he said, so Jesus changed him. He was a new person, he had a new identity. He wanted to please Jesus with all his strength. Has that ever happened to you? Who is shaping your identity? Paul said – either the world squeezes us into its image, or we let Christ's Word squeeze us into His Image. The choice is ours; one we make one day, one page, and one verse at a time!

Jesus RESCUES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our FUTURE.

Matthew 14:27-30 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" Jesus REFOCUSES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our AMBITIONS.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" Jesus REBUKES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our FLESH.

Luke 22:61 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." Jesus REMINDS Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our MINISTRY.

John 21:5-7 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. Jesus RESTORES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our FAILURES.

John 21:15-17 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. Jesus REFRESHES Peter.

Jesus wants to manage our SECURITY.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

These pointed adapted and drawn from Luke 22 in Wiersbe, Warren W., The Bible Exposition Commentary, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.
Pink, John, pp. 321-322.
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