

Luke 22 (Part 5):47-62 • Betrayal, Arrest, and Denial

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And Luke chapter 22, and then we're going to skip all the way down to verse 47. This is our, I think our fifth week in Luke chapter 22. So beginning in verse 47, we're going to read down a ways and then we'll pray. It says,

“While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “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 said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” ⁵⁴ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵ And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.

⁵⁶ Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” ⁵⁸ And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” ⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.” (ESV)

We're going to stop there. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we take time to dig into Your Word this morning, we pray that you would open our hearts to the ministry of what You're saying to us here. That we might not just understand the passage, but that we might understand Your will and what You are saying to us, personally. That we might apply Your Word to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

The first two verses of this section record for us what is most likely the most heinous act that has ever been done in human history, and that is the betrayal of Jesus by one of His closest disciples.

Students of the Word believe that the time frame for this event is somewhere between midnight and 2 to 2:30 in the morning. But as we read through Luke's account of this passage, there are essentially three things that Luke wants us to know about the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

And the first thing that Jesus wants us to know is caught up in those words where Jesus says to Judas, "*Would you betray the son of man with a kiss?*" And by saying that, Jesus made it absolutely clear that He already knew about, not only the betrayal, but He also knew about Judas's secret sign. And we see from that, this omniscient understanding of our Lord and our God.

Secondly, Luke wants us to see the heart of Jesus. Even in the midst of all that is going on in this situation, as they begin to take hold of Jesus, His disciples snap into defensive mode and pull out the sword that one of them has. And we know from another Gospel account that it's Peter, and he starts swinging the sword around and slashes off the ear of one of the servants of the high priest.

And you'll notice in the text, it tells us that Jesus takes time to reach out and touch that man's ear, and it was supernaturally healed from that moment. And we have to be careful not to miss the compassion that our Lord and Savior shows. And Luke wants us to see that, even in the midst of all that's going on. I've been in situations where I felt like I was being threatened and so forth, and I'll tell you right now, I wasn't thinking about what I could do to help somebody else. Not so with Jesus.

And thirdly, Luke wants us to know just how hypocritical and just how evil are the religious leaders by arresting Jesus at this particular moment in time. And you'll notice Jesus poses a question to them and He says, have you come out against a criminal with your clubs and your swords and so forth? He says I spent all those days in the temple precincts teaching the Word and you never laid a hand on me, and what He's doing is He is exposing their duplicity. And, you know, they had no answer for Him of course because the people, the

common people love Jesus. They love to listen to Him, and they were afraid that there might be some kind of a riot if they were to arrest Him in front of the people so, they did it under the cover of darkness.

And frankly, there's a lot to be understood in the words of Jesus that are recorded for us in verse 53. If you look with me again in your Bible where He says, *"but this is your hour."* And then He even actually refers to it as, *"the power of darkness,"* and that tells us that Jesus was fully aware of the events that were going on and the timing of these events and He knew that this was the hour when darkness would be unleashed upon Him, particularly the focal point of that darkness, and in such a way that it would eventuate in His death on the cross and He let it happen.

He let it happen. I think sometimes it's nice to look at some of the accounts of the other biblical writers as we look into events like this, that to see a little bit more of the understanding that were given in the Word about this thing that Jesus referred to as this hour, *"this hour of darkness."* Let me show you a passage from John chapter 12, where Jesus, is recorded as saying,

John 12:27 (ESV)

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this purpose, I have come to this hour."

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We see that Jesus knew and understood that this hour was what He had come for. And then in Matthew chapter 26, it says,

Mathew 26:53-54 (ESV)

"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

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Matthew records this statement right after they tried to stop this arrest from going on and Jesus said, no, you stop. And then he made this statement. Do you think that I couldn't possibly appeal to my Father and He would take care of me

in the midst of this situation? And yet we see that Jesus allowed these things to happen. But I want to also show you another passage from John chapter 12, and we're going to focus a little bit on this one. This is Jesus speaking and answering, saying that,

John 12:23-24 (ESV)

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

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And if we could take just a bit to think about that passage from John 12, and the reason I want to focus on it is because in this couple of verses, Jesus makes reference to this same hour. Right? That He has just called in Luke, the hour of darkness. But I want you to notice here, He also calls it, *"the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified."* And that's an important distinction to see. It is an hour of darkness, but it is also an hour when Jesus will be glorified, and what we see there is not a contradiction.

In fact, may I suggest to you that it's possible, and this is an important thing to remember, in terms of all that were going on here globally with the coronavirus and everything else, may I suggest to you that it is possible to be in a very dark hour, and to also be in an hour that is, at the same time, a powerful and life changing hour because that's what's happening right here. We're being told that this is the hour of darkness, but Jesus also says it's the hour when He is glorified. And that is a good thing.

But I want to show you, if we could put John chapter 12 back up for just a moment, I want to show you something else that Jesus said toward the end of that passage.

John 12:23-24 (ESV)

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

He said, *"unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone."* Did you notice that? He said, *"but if it dies, it bears much fruit."* And

that is a very powerful insight for us to consider because when Jesus said things like, *“the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,”* His disciples assumed that that meant, well, they knew what they, how they saw being glorified. To them being glorified was Jesus rising to a place of great political power. To them it meant overthrowing the occupation of Rome, which was happening in Israel at that time.

To them, it meant themselves being glorified right along with Him. So, they were probably pretty excited when Jesus started talking about the fact that the hour of the Son of Man to be glorified is now upon them. But I want you to notice that Jesus, knowing of course that it would all happen very differently, He began to speak to them using a word picture because He knew that what was about to take place. His arrest, His beating, all the suffering that He endured, and finally His crucifixion on a cross. He knew that that would temporarily dash their hopes.

And so, He gave them this word picture here in this passage in John to help them to understand what was happening. And in it He reminded them that all of the beauty and the joy that is accompanied in this idea of harvest. And that's something that maybe we don't understand if we haven't ever been involved in the harvest process of going out and bringing in the crop of wheat, or a crop of corn, or where I was born and raised in Minnesota, soybeans was a big crop that came in the fall along with corn.

But there was always such a time of joy that accompanied just harvest. It was payday for heaven's sake, and so Jesus is reminding them that all of the beauty and the majesty that harvest contains begins with a seed, and not just a seed, but a seed surrendering its own life so that it might become part of that harvest. The glorious grain that grows up and is then harvested for the continuation of life.

And the reason that this statement is so important and so insightful for you, and I is because Jesus is maintaining the idea that this is the hour of His glory when He will be glorified, but at the same time He is introducing another idea that right before glory must come death.

Before glory must come death. Back to our text. If you look with me again in verse 54, it says, *“then they seized Him and led Him away, bringing Him to the high priest house. And Peter was following at a distance.”* Now, unless you might be thinking that Peter stuck close to Jesus during this whole arrest period, we actually learned differently from Matthew's account. Let me put this on the screen from Matthew chapter 26. It says,

Mathew 26:56b (ESV)

Then all the disciples left him and fled.

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We find out that Peter ran just like all the other disciples, and he fled, but apparently somewhere along the line in the midst of the darkness and everything else, he thought better of it, and he decided to keep to the shadows and follow Jesus from a distance. And so that he did as they were carrying Jesus off, Peter stayed in the background where nobody would recognize him, stayed in the shadows.

And verse 55 tells us, look with me there in your Bible, *“that when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.”*

And then we begin to go through this whole process of first of all, a servant girl, seeing him sitting there in the light of the fire, she begins to study his face, and she says, I know this guy. He was with Jesus. He was with Him.

But in verse 57, we're told that Peter denied what she was saying, *“woman I don't know him.”* And it's really interesting, isn't it how incredible we can switch into defensive mode when we feel like we're being threatened with something?

We can so easily begin to act and do things that we would never do or say any other time, but how quick it is that we just, we go into defensive mode, man did we see that happen with a lot of people with regard to just the news of the Coronavirus. Again, the Bible tells us we should take precautions but I think some people went into panic mode and here's Peter doing the same thing. He had boasted, he boasted earlier that he was ready to die. I'm ready to die Jesus, I'll go to prison with you or die this very night if that's necessary. And here he is. He's facing that moment and his natural response is to save himself.

Denial number 1, verse 58, *“a little later, someone else saw him and said, you also are one of them.”* And when it means, one of them, it means a follower. You're also one of his followers. *“But Peter said, I am not.”* And so here he denies being a follower of Jesus. First, he denies knowing Him, and now he denies being a follower.

Denial number 2, verse 59. *“And after an interval of about an hour or so, somebody else finally spoke up. Yeah, this guy was with him. I can tell he's a*

Galilean. And then Peter says, man, I don't know what you're talking about." And he denies ever having been with Jesus. And Matthew actually gives us a little color to this final denial. Let me show you this on the screen from Matthew chapter 26, it says,

Mathew 26:74 (ESV)

Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed.

Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed.

And with that comes denial number 3 and with the completion of these 3 denials, we read at the end of verse 60, look with me in your Bible, end of verse 60. *"And immediately while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed."* And we're given an insight that Luke only tells us, and that is that the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

You have to know how crushing that glance must have been. And we're told that Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how He had said to him, *"before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."* And we're told that *"he went out and wept bitterly."*

I looked up the Greek meaning of that word that is translated, bitterly in the English, and it carries the idea of a violent sort of response. In other words, violent, convulsive sobbing. The kind of sobbing where it's hard to breathe. I don't know if you've ever sobbed that hard. But one of the things I guess I've always really appreciated about the Bible is how it relates these stories to us in very realistic terms concerning the people that it's talking about.

Like Peter, like the other apostles, even people from the Old Testament, we are not only shown the devotion of these people, but we are shown their flaws. We are shown their failures and no doubt for God's specific purpose that we might learn. Not just from their successes, their victories, but also from their failures. I mean, I can learn a lot from Peter's failure that night, and I think that the Lord would have us not just imitate their victories, but to learn and understand what we can from these sorts of things.

Just imagine for just a moment, if you would, if the Lord had only included in the Bible or in the Biblical narrative, that which was positive and uplifting, and we never would have learned anything about these men in terms of their mistakes, their humanity, their issues, their quirks. We would be missing a lot,

wouldn't we? Because a lot of what we read in the Bible concerning their mistakes are things that we are to avoid. Things that we're to learn from.

Peter gives us wonderful opportunity to learn from his stuff as far as what not to do, but I'm willing to bet that Peter's failure that night has been used already many, many, many, many times over the centuries warning Christians not to go down that same path. Because Peter's life, as we know it from the Bible, is an interesting study in human nature. I mean, since we're dealing with Peter's failure here today, Simon Peter was a sturdy fisherman who was introduced to the Lord by his brother Andrew, who actually brought him initially to meet and hear Jesus.

And we see that Peter's heart seems to have been drawn to the Lord very quickly from the beginning. But you do know that Peter didn't decide to follow Jesus right away. He went back to his father. He went back to his nets, back to his fishing. And we're told that later on after Jesus met Peter that first time, later on, Jesus happened to be walking through the area of Capernaum, and He was there by the seashore, and He found Peter. He found Andrew, and He found their father.

They were all sitting by the shore, mending their nets, and you'll remember what happened. Jesus used that opportunity to say, Peter, do you mind if I use your boat for a minute because the people were all crowding in. And Peter was, yeah, sure, not a problem. He put Jesus in the boat. He put the boat out just a little ways from the shore so that Jesus could speak to the crowd, it created a natural amphitheater effect because the ground rises right from the water's edge upward.

The people could sit, and Jesus could speak to the crowd, and after that time of ministry, you'll remember what happened. Jesus encouraged Peter then to put out into deep water and throw out his net. And you've got to wonder if Peter probably laughed a little bit because now the sun was up, and this was not the time for fishing. And they'd been fishing all night long and they hadn't had any success. And he, again, he's a seasoned fisherman so he's probably thinking, okay, this guy knows nothing, but hey, we'll humor him.

And in fact, he even said that. He said, Lord, we were out all night. We didn't catch a thing, but because you want me to. We'll do this. Not a problem. And you'll remember what happened. They threw the nets over the boat, and they were bursting with fish to the point where they were freaking out, had to call another boat over to help him out and get all these fish in because the nets were bursting at the seams and then you'll remember what happened.

Peter looked at all that happened, after hearing Jesus preach to the crowd, and it says he came, and he fell on his knees. He said, Lord, depart from me, depart from me. I am just a sinful man. And I love what Jesus said to him. He said, don't be afraid. From now on you're going to be catching men, not fish. Well, during the course of Peter's time with Jesus, there are a couple of recordings in the Gospels where Peter said some flat-out amazing things. One of them is recorded for us in the Book of John and Jesus was talking.

If you've ever read through John chapter 6, it's a very hard chapter to read through because Jesus is saying hard things, and the people knew that He was saying hard things. And it says that the people started leaving. Some of His followers, they had been following Jesus, but now they were like, yeah, I don't know. You turned me off with that, and people started taking off. Let me show you this from John chapter 6 and verse 67 and 68. Look at this.

John 6:67-68 (ESV)

So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,"

So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" (And it was Peter who spoke up) Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,"

And I love that. I mean, this is one of Peter's shining moments. What a beautiful response to the Lord. Where else are we going to go? Just because it's hard, just because it's gotten challenging. No, where else are we going to go? And then you'll remember that Peter's other, of course, shining moment was when he made that great confession. Let me show you this in Matthew chapter verse 16 and beginning of verse 17, it says,

Matthew: 16:13-17 (ESV)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, (Well you know) "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" (Again, Simon Peter, again one of his shining moments) ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are (the Messiah. You are) the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus (even responded by) answered (Peter) him, (saying) "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

Wow! What a thing to hear from the Lord, right? Yeah. Flesh and blood didn't make you aware of this Peter, my Father in heaven made you aware. I mean, Peter was the man. But if you ever noticed as you're reading through the Gospels that Peter's backsliding began almost immediately after that. I mean, it's in the same chapter where he confesses Jesus as the Messiah, that Jesus begins talking about His impending death in Jerusalem. And we're told that Peter didn't like that. He didn't like what he heard.

And so, he pulled Jesus aside in a moment that we can only describe as one of spiritual pride, which is, it can happen when we've done or said some things that were really inspired by the Lord. And in this moment of spiritual pride, Peter pulls Jesus aside and he starts to rebuke Him. Can you imagine rebuking the Lord? Well, Peter received a rebuke of his own. And Jesus said to him, get behind me, Satan, you're a hindrance to me for you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but you've got your mind on the things of men.

And you know what's interesting? We don't hear much from Peter after that. I mean like a dumb statement on the Mount of Transfiguration about building shelters and stuff like that. But the next most significant statement from Peter takes place when Jesus announces to all of the disciples that they would all desert him that night, and you'll remember that's when Peter's self-confidence once again rose to the surface, and he boldly proclaimed in the hearing of all the men that night others might fall away, but it was not going to be him. And he promised Jesus that he was ready.

He was ready to go to prison. He was ready to go to his death. And with those words, Jesus showed, excuse me, Peter showed that he was still a very prideful man, and he saw himself in a rather exalted way, which was frankly, entirely out of step with reality. And you'll remember that it was at that time that Jesus, told Peter that Satan had asked to sift he and all of the disciples as wheat. And that sifting, of course, took place as we already read here in Luke's account when all of the disciples abandoned Jesus.

But for Peter, for Peter, that sifting was probably most pronounced in the courtyard where Peter was sitting and warming himself while this horrible trial was going on inside. And during that time, as we read three times, Peter denied any connection with Jesus, even punctuating his denials with curses and oaths. But when that rooster crowed, even as his final denial was still coming, rolling off his tongue, it says the rooster crowed and then Peter saw Jesus. He turned and saw Jesus.

And that's when Peter had to run. And he ran off into the darkness and as we read, he wept bitterly. But you know what? It might sound like a big, horrible night for Peter, and it was to be sure, but this time of Peter running off and weeping is probably one of the most important events of Peter's entire life because it was then that repentance took place. It was then that restoration began in his life. Because in that moment of repentance, Peter had to face some very difficult truths in his life. He was not the man of strength that he thought himself to be.

He was not the greatest of the followers of Jesus. He was not the most insightful of the 12, and he was not ready to suffer for Jesus, or to give his life. And what Peter realized that night is that he was a weak man. He was a pitiful man, and he desperately needed Jesus in his life.

And if you and I are fortunate, we are given that same revelation one day in our own lives. And it's just as hard to swallow for us as it was for Peter. And it may even cause bitterness of weeping, but it is so incredibly important.

As we look at Peter's failure, let me end with a final question because again, we're supposed to be learning from this. In fact, while I'm doing this, I'm going to have Brandon and Amy come up and get ready to give us a final worship song here this morning.

But as we're looking at the actions of Peter and we're asking ourselves, all right, so what were the signs that Peter was at the precipice of failure? What are the signs that we can look for in our own life that might help us to watch out for a similar kind of a situation?

Well, I think it's all contained in a couple of verses. Look with me again at verses 54 and 55 in your Bible. These are so important. It says, *"Then they seized Him and led him away, bringing Him to the high priest's house."*

And then we're told something there in that verse about Peter. *“And Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire, (in verse 55) in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.”*

What do we see Peter doing here? Well, I'll tell you what we see him doing. And this is the mistake you and I can make as well. We see Peter following Jesus at a distance, and we see Peter warming himself at the fires of the enemy. And this creates for you and I a powerful warning to help us understand when failure may be very near.

Here's the question that this passage begs for you and I. Am I following Jesus at a distance? Have I allowed His Lordship in my life to be a distant thing? Have I backed away into the shadows?

And wherever Jesus is going, maybe I'm following, but I'm following a ways back. I'm not right next to Him. I'm not there. I'm not hearing. I'm not feeling His touch. I am in the cold shadows of the distance. And am I warming myself by the fires of this world?

In other words, am I connecting to the world? Am I spending more time hanging out with the world listening to what they say? Being influenced by how they think, how they act, how they work, how they play, how they respond?

Am I following Jesus at a distance and am I warming myself by the fires of this world?