

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

From Regret to Restoration Luke 22:31-62

“For of all the sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, ‘It might have been.’” So wrote John Greenleaf Whittier.

All of us can identify with this statement. We know how painful regret can be. To have missed an opportunity or to have made a painful mistake can lead us to the brink of despair. We keep thinking how really different it all could have been, if if..... if..... You complete the sentence.

There are two kinds of regret. There is the regret caused by human error. Just this last week in our news was the account of a training exercise conducted by a local law enforcement agency which resulted in the accidental shooting of a eight year police veteran which resulted in his death. Consider the feelings of the man responsible. Would you suppose that he would be filled with regret? Of course!! His regret is the result of human error. But there is another form of regret that can be far more devastating.

A regret that grows out of deliberate disobedience. It may only involve a certain action or it may involve an entire lifestyle. And all the while in the midst of the choosing, a small voice is telling us our choice is sinful but we continue to act out our disobedience. Inevitably we will come to regret those choices. We need no other witness to the truth of what I have just shared than Peter.

Approximately six months had passed since Jesus had begun to speak clearly to His disciples about the necessity for Him to go to Jerusalem, to suffer at the hands of the Sanhedrin, be killed and yet be raised on the third day. How successful had Jesus been in persuading them that this was in fact the right and certain course. How successful had Jesus been in convincing His disciples that without the cross there would be no crown. Not very!!!

Let us quickly examine **Luke 22:31-62** and see what we can learn about Peter’s condition, literally only hours before Christ’s crucifixion. We first of all learn that Peter boasted too much. Let us read **Luke 22:31-34**. When Christ made the statement to Peter “**Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; (32) But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.**” it implied that Peter would shortly fall. There is no way that he could be restored unless he had fallen. Peter is aghast at the thought and makes a very rash boast in **V. 33** where he says “**With you I am ready to go both to prison and to death.**” Rather than impressing Jesus, Jesus goes on to give even greater detail of his predicted failure in **V. 34**. “**I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.**”

Not only do we learn that Peter boasted to much, but he prayed too little. Let us read **VV. 35-46**. Did Jesus make these statements in order to change their behavior or their expectations? I believe He made these comments in order to change their expectations. Things will be changing dramatically very shortly. There will be a great outpouring of hostility toward Jesus and His disciples. Jesus wants His disciples to understand this. Clearly Jesus did not anticipate each of His disciples at this point going out and arming themselves.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

We see this clearly from the text when the disciples make it clear that they have two swords among them and Jesus responds that is enough..... If Peter was ever going to stand a chance of fulfilling his boast he needed to remain alert in prayer and he failed.

What else do we learn about Peter? He acted too soon. Let us read **VV. 47-53**, Notice that Luke in **V. 50** does not identify the one who cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. However John in his Gospel identifies the person who wielded the sword to be Peter (**John 18:2-11**). Peter was continuing to resist God's plan for Christ. Peter was not about to sit idly by and watch Jesus suffer. As we can imagine, Jesus was not pleased with Peter's action and quickly replaced the ear of the high priest's servant. This action on the part of Christ was devastating to Peter. If Jesus had followed Peter's lead and had resisted what was taking place, I truly believe that Peter thought everything would have worked out fine. Jesus would have exercised his supernatural powers to assist his disciples and the kingdom would be established. But this did not happen. This leads us to the very next thing we learn about Peter. We also learn that Peter followed too far. Let us read **V. 54**. He was willing to fight, but Peter made a choice not to follow. At least he chose to not follow too closely. Why? He probably for the first time realized that being identified with Jesus was dangerous. His choice to follow at a distance was a major mistake. Either he should have walked by Jesus side which would have been the honorable thing to do or he should have scattered to the hills with the other disciples. This leads us to the very next thing we learn about Peter.

He thought too late. Let us read **VV. 55-61**, Peter remembered the prediction of Christ only after the rooster had crowed and Jesus had turned to look at him. The man who had only a little while before said that he would die with Christ had now chosen on three different occasions to deny him. As Jesus made eye contact with Peter, Peter was overcome with grief. **V. 62 “and he went out and wept bitterly.”** It was not an accident or an error in judgment that led to Peter's denials it was a repeated choice on his part to lie in order to protect himself. Peter had now become everything that he despised. He has ripped out his own heart.

Peter is clearly devastated. Is there any hope for his recovery. Is there any hope for any of us who have chosen to sin and then found ourselves overwhelmed with regret. This morning I would like to share with you **FOUR ENCOURAGING TRUTHS**. Two truths that we will find in the passage that we have just covered and two other truths found in subsequent events recorded for us in the Gospel

Christ Intercedes For Us

Knowing what was about to happen, Christ prayed for Peter. He addressed His disciple as Simon, for this night the rock would revert back to sand. **“Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat (32) But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”**

When wheat grows, a coating called chaff protects the grain. In the old fashioned winnowing of Jesus' day, the chaff was separated from the wheat by walking an animal on the husks and throwing the mixture into the air so that the wind could blow the chaff away. Jesus was saying to Peter, “Satan wants to sift you and prove that you are nothing but chaff but I have prayed for you.”

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Thirty years later Peter would write in **1 Peter 5:8-9** **“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”**

Every Christian goes through this very same sifting process. For some it may be an illness, the loss of a job, a failed relationship or simply the pull of our flesh to wander away from Christ. Satan is a very active participant in all of this. Like a snake, he is coiled, waiting to strike at an appropriate time. He magnifies the power of temptation, trying to get us to follow the easy path, he wants our lives to discredit Christ.

All of this may be very overwhelming to us, especially as we are constantly reminded of our faithlessness. But be of good cheer for as Christ, our high priest, had interceded for Peter, He will also be interceding for us. Therefore let us read once again the words Jesus spoke to Peter and know that these same words could very well be addressed to us as well. **“Satan has asked permission, and it has been granted, that you might be tested. When the temptation is over, I pray that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brethren. Learn from your failures and keep going.”** As we face our moral failures let us know Christ has interceded for us.

Christ Understands Us

Remember, Jesus said to Peter, **“I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”** Why did Jesus tell Peter this? He was making it easy for Peter to return to fellowship after his impending fall. GRACE WAS ANNOUNCED BEFORE PETER FELL.

Jesus knows our weakness and the full extent of our propensity to sin. Jesus knows things about us that we have not even admitted to ourselves. When Jeremiah said that, **“The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked who can know it?”** in **Jer. 17:9** the prophet was then led to follow that verse with **V. 10** which states **“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind.”** We may be caught off guard by our actions, and maybe others might be caught off guard by our actions but you will never hear the Lord say, **“I NEVER EXPECTED THAT YOU WOULD DO SUCH A THING!!”** Peter’s failure did not catch Christ off guard and neither does ours. But even so, He will not leave us nor forsake us.

Christ Has Compassion For Us

Christ prays for us. He understands us and He also shows us compassion. You can imagine what Peter must have been feeling after the crucifixion of Jesus. His opportunity to demonstrate his love for Christ had slipped through his fingers. He had buckled under the pressure and had betrayed the Lord not simply once but three times. But something very special takes place.

After Christ was dead, He was put into a new tomb in a nearby garden. Some women came to the tomb on the first day of the week to anoint the body. They were wondering who would roll the heavy stone from the entrance when, to their surprise, they noticed that it had already been pushed aside.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

When they entered, they saw a young man sitting at the right wearing a white robe. Incredibly, he told them that Jesus was no longer here, for He was risen! Then according to **Mark 16:7** it says that the angel then said, “**But go, tell His disciples and Peter.**”

The Lord had not in any sense withdrawn from Peter because of His failure. In fact according to **Luke 24:34** Jesus revealed Himself to Peter before He revealed Himself to any of the other apostles. Peter may have felt like an outcast but he needn't feel that way any longer.

By His actions, Christ was saying, “Peter, you fell, but you are not down. You were ashamed to say you knew Me, but I am glad to say that I know you. You have sinned, but you have wept tears of repentance and you are forgiven. I love you, Peter.”

Even now Jesus is reaching out to us, no matter what our failures are. Those arms are long and gentle enough to embrace even the most wayward, backslidden person who has denied the Savior. **CHRIST IS READY TO RESTORE US.**

Christ Restores Us

Hayden Robinson tells the story of a man named Roy Riggles, who caught a football and ran sixty-five yards in the wrong direction while playing in a Rose Bowl game for UCLA. One of his teammates outdistanced him and tackled him just before he scored for Georgia Tech, the opposing team.

Since that play came in the first half, the crowd wondered what coach Nibbs Price would do with Roy Riggles in the second half. In humiliation Riggles put a blanket around his shoulders, sat down in a corner, put his face in his hands and tried to disappear. When it was time to return to the field, the coach said simply, “The same team that played the first half will play the second half.”

Riggles did not budge. The coach repeated his instructions but Roy said, “I can't do it; I have humiliated you. I've ruined the University of California; I've ruined myself; I couldn't face the crowd in the stadium.”

Then Coach Nibbs Price put his hands on Riggles' shoulders and said, “Roy, get up and go back, the game is only half over.”

This is basically what happened to Peter. In **John 21** in a continuing ministry of compassion to Peter after Christ's resurrection asked Peter in **V. 15** “**Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?**” He said to Him, “**Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.**” He said to him, “**Tend my lambs**” Christ used the Greek word AGAPE, which refers to the highest form of love. Peter responded with PHILEO, a reference to brotherly love.

Jesus then repeated the question, again asking if Peter had that true AGAPE love for Him. Peter, not yet sure of his own heart, responded, “**Yes, Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you.**” Jesus replied “**Shepherd my sheep**” (**V. 16**).

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

A third time Jesus asked the same question, but this time He used the word for Love which Peter had used, “**Simon son of John, do you love (Phileo) Me?**” And Peter responds, “**Lord, You know all things; you know that I love (phileo) you.**” Peter clearly has been humbled. He found himself unable to respond to Christ in the way that would have been expected. But it is equally clear that Jesus accepted Peter as He was and exhorted him to get involved in meaningful ministry. Peter had been restored to a place of fruitful service in the name of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Like Roy Riggles, we sometimes take the ball and run in the wrong direction. We stumble and fall and are so filled with shame that we don't want to try again. And then the grace of God comes and says, “Get up, go back, the game is only half over.”

Christ is even now praying for us. He knows our weaknesses and the circumstances that caused us to fall. He is also filled with compassion, and is willing to restore us to fellowship and usefulness. We must simply let Him provide the healing that only He can give.

Peter had to learn that, even when we betray Christ, He does not betray us. Though we may be rough and twisted, the divine Sculptor will hew us according to His special plan. And when we are damaged, He repairs the hurt.