

SERIES ON THE APOSTLE PETER  
**SERMON #3 OF 5: THE DARK HOUR**  
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(Based on Hobb's lessons on Peter)

**TEXT: LUKE 22:31-34**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. 2 weeks ago: began series.
2. In our first lesson:
  - 1) We were introduced to Peter, and learned of his encounter with deity.
  - 2) Peter, in light of the presence of the sinless Christ, confessed his sinfulness, and left all to follow Jesus.
3. Last week we learned about the character of Peter, as we noted his tendency to act impulsively. This we observed in:
  - 1) His attempt to walk on water (**Matt. 14**).
  - 2) His attempt to keep Christ from following thru with God's plan (**Matt. 16**).
  - 3) His desire to build 3 tabernacles: one for Moses, Elijah, and Christ.
  - 4) In his taking up the sword to defend the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane (**John 18**).
4. READ TEXT: **LUKE 22:31-34**
5. Background of this text:
  - 1) It is the time of the Jewish Passover. One of the most sacred feasts of the Jews, in which the Jewish males assembled in Jerusalem.
  - 2) Satan has now entered into Judas Iscariot (**John 13:27**).
  - 3) Christ has instituted the Lord's Supper (**Matt. 26:26ff**).
  - 4) And in their last moments together: He reveals that the disciples will scatter (**Matt. 26:31**).
6. As we approach this lesson, which I have entitled, "The Dark Hour," consider that even the most faithful of Christians can, and do fail, in service to Christ.
7. Story is told: "After many unsuccessful attempts by Thomas Edison to invent the light bulb, another ended in frustration. An aide said, 'Well, you have failed again.' To which the great inventor replied, 'No, I have succeeded. For now I know another way how not to make a light bulb.'" (Hobbs)
8. Often it is the case, that failure must precede success.
9. Although Jesus knew that Peter was about to fail Him, He also knew that Peter would repent of his failure, and go on to serve Him in a great way.
10. With these thoughts in mind, let's look now at the dark hour.

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. PREDICTION OF PETER'S FAILURE.**

- A. Interestingly enough, we learn that all 11 would fail him.
  1. Both Matthew and Mark inform us that all 11 would be offended; lit. "be caused to stumble" (**Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27**).
  2. Jesus affirms their departure with O.T. prophecy (**Zech. 13:7**).
- B. Our specific focus is upon Peter, and noting that he would fail Jesus.
  1. Of particular interest: Satan asked to have Peter.
    - 1) This is similar to the story of Job where he obtained permission to afflict Job.
    - 2) In the story of Job he took away the family and herds that belonged to Job, save his wife (**Job 1**).
    - 3) In **Job 2**, he then afflicted Job with boils.

2. In essence the Lord reveals in this account, "Satan obtained you by asking," that is, got permission to try or test him.
  3. This is spelled out in the purpose: "That he might sift you as wheat."
    - 1) Grain was sifted in the fan or sieve. The good remained in the fan, and the chaff or dust was thrown off.
    - 2) Satan desired to try Peter to see if his faith would remain, or be found as chaff.
    - 3) This he was doing just as he did with Job (**Job 1:11; 2:5**).
    - 4) It was a great test for Peter.
  4. Jesus told Peter that He had prayed for him. Then in the statement of confidence and assurance says, "*and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren*" (**Luke 22:32**).
    - 1) Instead of returned, the KJV uses the term *converted* -- a word which actually means "turned again."
    - 2) At the appropriate time, Peter would turn again and strengthen his brethren, speaking of his leadership among the apostles, as demonstrated in the early part of Acts.
- C. Peter reacts to the words of Christ.
1. **Luke 22:33**
  2. In Mark's parallel account, it indicates that Peter "*spoke the more vehemently*" (**Mark 14:31**).
    - 1) Original: intensely vehement.
    - 2) The original word conveys an over-reaction; once again his impulsive or explosive nature is exposed.
  3. Each of the gospel accounts bring out what was said:
    - 1) **Matt. 26:35** *Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.*
    - 2) **Mark 14:31** *But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.*
    - 3) **Luke 22:33** *But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."*
    - 4) **John 13:37** *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."*
  4. Despite the denial, Jesus affirms that Peter would deny him 3 times before the cock crowed (**John 13:38**).
    - 1) Mark mentions the cock crowing twice: in Jerusalem, the rooster crowed around midnight and shortly before dawn.
    - 2) Before the cock would crow at dawn, Peter would deny Jesus 3 times.

## **II. THE FULFILLMENT OF PETER'S FAILURE.**

- A. Background of this unfortunate event:
  1. Following the institution of the Lord's Supper they went into Gethsemane.
  2. There, after several agonizing prayers, Jesus was arrested.
  3. As predicted, the disciples fled (**Matt. 26:56**).
  4. Jesus is led off to the high priest's residence.
    - 1) Peter follows him from a distance and enters the courtyard (**John 18:13-16**).
    - 2) The damsel or maid at the door is suspicious.
- B. Peter's first denial is found in **Luke 22:55-57**.

1. We observe here that the maid or servant girl and Peter were gathered around a fire.
2. Passover is a rather cool time of the year in Jerusalem; and sometimes we forget that the city was some 2500 ft. above sea level.
3. The higher elevation brings on cooler temperatures (Illus. - Colorado).
4. This girl earnestly or intently looked on him; a term which actually means to closely study.
5. Sometimes when we see someone we'll say, "I'm sure I know that person from somewhere."
6. Her conclusion: *"This man was also with Him."*
7. Peter responds: *"Women, I do not know Him."* --the word *know* signifies, "I'm not even casually acquainted with Him."

**C. Luke 22:58**

1. John reveals in **John 18:18** that there were several warming themselves at this fire; servants and officers.
2. Both Matthew and Mark speak of another maid or servant girl speaking to Peter; Luke however mentions a man speaking.
3. Since John mentions that several were around this fire, it seems likely that as one spoke, another one chimed in in agreement.
3. This man, recorded in Luke, speaks emphatically: *"You also are of them."* (suggests he was positive)
4. The servant girl in Matthew and Mark likewise.
5. The longer Peter warmed himself at the fire the more positive the onlookers became as to his identity.
6. Peter again denies knowing Christ.

**D. Luke 22:59** -- This time it is much more difficult for Peter, for John records that this man was a relative of Malchus (**John 18:26**).

**E. Matt. 26:73**

1. Peter then began to curse and to swear.
2. Some have thought this to mean foul language.
3. But **Mark 14:71** indicates otherwise.
  - 1) Likely, the word curse indicates in essence, "If what I'm saying is not true, then let me be accursed."
  - 2) *Swear* - "I swear I don't know Him."
  - 3) Luke mentions him saying: *"I do not know what you are saying."*

(**Luke 22:60**). -- modern vernacular: "I don't know what you are talking about."

**F. Luke 22:60-61**

1. Here is utter devastation: Peter is able to see the Lord from the comfort of the fire; and all the time denying him before those who warmed themselves at the fire.
2. One could only imagine how Peter must have felt when he saw the Lord looking at him.
3. Peter falters again, but this time the Lord is not reaching out to keep him from sinking, as He did in **Matt. 14**.
4. Peter, once again is faced with the reminder that he is a sinful man.
5. He remembers how earlier that he promised that he would not deny the Lord; and now he has lied and forsaken his Master.

6. **Luke 22:62**

7. Overwhelmed by his sin, Peter retreated, and had time to ponder over his sin.
8. To this point, our story is one of failure.

**III. PETER'S RISE ABOVE FAILURE.**

A. **John 21:15-19**

B. Some time has passed since Peter's denial of Christ.

1. This event occurred after the 2nd Lord's Day meeting at which Thomas had confessed Christ (**John 20:28**).
2. John identifies this as the 3rd time Jesus has presented Himself to the disciples after His resurrection (**21:14**).
3. This event has something very familiar to it for Peter.
4. The Sea of Tiberius was also known as the "Lake of Genesaret," or "the sea of Galilee."
5. Two weeks ago we learned that Peter faced his sinfulness at this same place (**Luke 5**).
6. This chapter opens with the familiar ring: we find the disciples were fishing but caught nothing.

C. Note **John 21:6**.

1. Peter was so elated: he announced it was the Lord and dove in the sea to hurry to get to shore.
2. Once again his impulsive nature shines thru.

D. With the great catch of fish, the disciples then are invited to eat; setting up our scene for yet another encounter between Peter and the Lord.

E. One thing that is apparent as scholars note, Peter has repented and obtained forgiveness, which accounts for his change in attitude since that unfortunate night.

F. Here Jesus poses a series of questions for Peter:

1. **21:15**

2. Our English translations do a great injustice to this passage.

- 1) The English translators have a tendency to generalize words, instead of providing us with specifics.
- 2) For example: the Greeks had several different words for love; conveying different aspects of love.
- 3) Unfortunately, the English translators just categorized everything under the word love.

3. Jesus was asking Peter: Do you love me more than these? --Using the word *agape* --a word signifying the highest form of love. (a self-sacrificing love.)

4. Peter's response was with a different word: in essence saying, "Lord, You know that I love you as a brother."

5. Peter used the word signifying the love that would exist between 2 brothers.

G. **21:16**

1. The second time the words are primarily the same.

2. Jesus still asks Peter if he has the *agape* love for Him; Peter still uses the brotherly love word *phileo*.

H. **21:17**

1. Here the Lord turned things on Peter and uses the same term that Peter has been using.

2. As one put it, "Peter, do you really have the warm, close, personal and abiding affection for me that you claim?" (Guy N. Woods, *Gospel Advocate Commentary on John*).
3. It is obvious that Peter was hurt by this; and affirms that he really does have the *phileo* love for Jesus.
- I. 3 times Peter denied the Lord, and 3 times he had to reaffirm his love, the process, though extremely painful, was a healing one. (Ibid.)
- J. We've noted throughout this series thus far, that Peter had an impulsive nature.
  1. Although a painful lesson, Peter needed to be humble.
  2. He needed to put aside his impulsive quick tempered spirit.
- K. And he needed to know that despite his failure, the Lord still loved him, and was willing to forgive him and use him in His service.

#### **IV. APPLICATION.**

- A. All of us, at one time or another, likely will fail the Lord.
  1. It may come in our actions, or words, or even a lack of action (referring to sins of commission or omission).
  2. The prayer that I would offer is that we would be troubled as Peter was by our sins.
  3. Paul warned in his writings of those who sear their conscience, showing that we can reach a stage in our life where we are no longer bothered by sin, can't repent.
  4. The Hebrew writer warns of those who are impossible to "*renew ... again unto repentance...*" (**Heb. 6:4-6**).
  5. As long as hearts remain tender, hope remains.
  6. **Heb. 3:13**
- B. Peter was able to rise above his failure, as we are going to note in next week's lesson.
  1. It is a reminder to each of us that even though we stumble, there is still hope for a better tomorrow.
  2. Each time actually that we stumble, it becomes an opportunity to learn.
  3. Do we not tell our children that you can learn from your mistakes?
- C. It is true, that sometimes it is a painful learning experience.
  1. Peter went thru a very painful trial, one that pricked his heart so deeply that he wept bitterly.
  2. Someone once said to me that becoming a Christian was an intellectual experience, that it should not be done out of emotion.
  3. Friends, there has to be some emotion involved. How else can you be so moved to truly repent of your sins, and truly be converted to Jesus?
- D. One of the songs we sing is that, "*He could have called 10,000 angels.*"
  1. How can you not be moved by the words? How that they bound Him, spit upon Him, and struck Him and to know that thru it all He could have called His angels to set Him free.
  2. And that sad realization, that He went through it all for me.
- E. We often make the observation that true worship is to worship God in spirit and in truth. We use painstaking measures to be sure that we get the truth part right, but may be lacking in the spirit aspect.
- F. Peter was moved to greater service because both his intellect and emotion had been touched by the Lord.

1. The Lord knew he was ready to serve Him: He told Peter to feed or tend His sheep.
  2. And He also knew that Peter would even die in service to Him, telling him in what manner he would die (**John 21:18**).
  3. And then told Peter those commanding words "Follow Me."
- G. When we have truly been convicted of our sins, and faced the painful moments of realization of how sinful we really are -- if we truly repent, then we are ready to serve the Lord even if it costs us our lives.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. **2 Pet. 3:9**
2. Is this your dark hour; do you need the forgiveness of God?