

Peter denies Jesus

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[0:00] A very good evening to you. I'd like to welcome you to this pre-recorded evening service for Calvary Evangelical Church Brighton. My name is Aaron Reeves and I'm a member of the church. I'm also part of the preaching team. So with God's help I'll be leading us through our service tonight.

If this is your first time with us I'd like to extend a particularly warm welcome to you and just to give you the heads up that we'll be doing some of the things that Christians would normally do if we were meeting in the church and worshipping together there.

So we're going to be singing some hymns, we'll be reading our Bibles and we'll spend a good portion of our time studying scripture. So tonight we'll be looking at the book of Matthew chapter 26 and we'll be looking into Peter's denial of Jesus.

So Peter denied Jesus three times and we'll be trying to answer the question, did it really all end in tears for Peter? But before we do that, let's commit our time together to the Lord.

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise your mighty name, King of heavens and of the earth. We give thanks to you for all that you provide for us.

[1:19] We thank you for our measure of health for the day. We thank you that even in such times as these we still have some ability to be worshipping you together. We are sorry for our inability to be faithful, Lord.

So often we turn away from you. We pray for the forgiveness of those sins. For all the times we have failed to trust you and have given into temptation. We ask that you be with us, Lord, in our worship tonight and that you would equip us with everything we need.

In Jesus name. Amen. OK, let's sing our first hymn together. This is Above the Clash of Creeds. Above the Clash of Creeds Many voices that call on so many names.

Into these final days our God has spoken by sending His only Son.

There is no other way by which we must be saved.

[3:07] His name is Jesus, the only Savior. No other sinless life, no other sacrifice.

In all creation, no other way. Before we call Him, He came to earth from heaven.

Our maker became a man. When no one else could play.

He bought our dream. He bought our freedom. He bought our freedom. He bought our freedom.

Exchanging His life for us. For us.

There is no other way By which we must be saved His name is Jesus The only Savior No other sinless life No other sacrifice In all creation No other way In all the cross of Christ Let earth fall silent In all of this mystery And let this song arise

[5:15] And fill the nations In Him will come unto me There is no other way By which we must be saved His name is Jesus The only Savior No other sinless life No other sacrifice In all creation Amen Let's read the Bible together

So our first reading tonight Is going to be from the book of Matthew Of course And the verses are 31 to 35 I forgot to mention that this is chapter 26 verses 31 to 35 Then Jesus told them This very night You will all fall away On account of me For it is written I will strike the shepherd And the sheep of the flock Will be scattered But after I have risen I will go ahead of you Into Galilee Peter replied Peter replied Even if all fall away On account of you I never will Truly I tell you Jesus answered This very night Before the rooster crows You will disown me Three times But Peter declared Even if I

have to die with you I will never disown you And all the other disciples Said the same Jesus lover of my soul

Let me to your presence fly While the gathering waters roll While the tempest still is high Hide me oh my saviour Hide Till the storm of life is past Safe into the haven guide And receive my soul at last Let's sing Praise 682 This song is called Jesus lover of my soul Jesus lover of my soul Let me to your presence fly While the gathering waters roll While the tempest still is high Hide me oh my saviour

Hide Till the storm of life is past Set the joy of the haven guide And receive my soul at last Another refuge have I none All my hope in you I see Leave or leave me not alone Still support and strengthen me All my trust on you is safe All my help from you I bring Cover my defenseless hand With the shadow of your will

You, the Christ, are all I want More than all in you I find Raise the fallen Cheer the faint Heal the sick and lead the blind Just and holy is your name I am all unworthiness False and full of sin I am You are full of truth and grace Boundless grace with you is found Grace to cover all my sin Let the healing streams abound

[10:26] Make and keep me clean within Living fountain now impart All your life and purity Spreading forever in my heart Rise to the healing Rise to the eternal eternity Amen So let's have our main reading for tonight So this is going to be the text that we'll be studying in just a moment This is from the book of Matthew chapter 26 again and we're going to be reading from verses 69 to 75 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard and a servant girl came to him You also were with Jesus of Galilee she said But he denied it before them all I don't know what you're talking about he said

Then he went out to the gateway where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth He denied it again with an oath I don't know the man After a little while those standing there went up to Peter and said Surely you are one of them Your accent gives you away Then he began to call down curses and he swore to them I don't know the man Immediately a rooster crowed Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken Before the rooster crows You will disown me three times And he went outside and wept bitterly This is the word of the Lord Let's pray before we come to our study now Lord as we come to study your word we pray that you would bless us with comprehension

We pray that you will remove the human imperfections of the presentation and leave only what you want us to hear We pray that you would be with us in this study In Jesus name Amen Tonight we're in the book of Matthew and we'll be looking at Peter's famous denial of Jesus This particular historical incident is reported in all four gospels and primarily we'll be looking at our text from Matthew tonight but we'll be comparing some of the details from the other accounts also to help us build a clearer picture of what's occurring So as we've seen from our readings in this part of Peter's story you might have noticed there's a very significant shift in Peter's personality They could almost be two different people

At the beginning of our reading we saw a Peter who was bold confident and even prepared to fight out of loyalty And then at the end of our text we saw a Peter who ran into solitude weeping bitterly We'll be exploring this transformation tonight and what occurred to make this happen So if English isn't your first language you may not have heard the expression It'll all end in tears It's often used when somebody can see that something will not end well or when somebody will be left feeling unhappy For example when I was a boy I'd try and do ridiculous things on my skateboard and my mother would say to me It'll end in tears and it usually did We'll try and answer this question For Peter did it really end in tears Let's just set the scene and draw out where we are in the bigger story by taking a quick run through the events that have led up to this moment It's the early hours of the morning Jesus is in the court in the house of the high priest whilst the high priest and other religious leaders try desperately to find reasons to take Jesus' life from him as we heard from Ben last week Peter is just outside in the courtyard of the high priest and this is a very unusual situation and place for Peter to be in but to find out why that is we need to rewind this story just a little bit So earlier on in the chapter Jesus is with his disciples on the night before he was to be executed they were celebrating the Passover together with a meal during the meal

[15:36] Jesus begins to speak of betrayal particularly how Judas was going to betray him and this set the tone for the events that were to follow after the meal Jesus and his disciples went out into the night coming to Gethsemane where Jesus was praying alone it was at this place where Judas had carried out his betrayal and brought a large crowd of Jewish officials and Roman soldiers with weapons to arrest Jesus after Jesus was arrested the disciples deserted Jesus and they fled that's 2656 including Peter Peter fled too but Peter having fled then found his way back to the large group of people that were taking Jesus and he followed them at distance according to

John 18 he wasn't the only one another disciple who some people suspect to be John went with him Matthew in verse 58 gives us the outline of Peter entering into the courtyard and sitting down with the guards and John expands on this by informing us that actually at first Peter was refused entry into the courtyard the other disciple was known to the high priest and so he had gained entry but when he had seen that Peter was still back at the entrance he went back and he requested that Peter would be let in by the servant girl who was working on the gate that's John 18 15 to 16 so Peter goes into the courtyard of the high priest and he's still at a distance from Jesus it was dark and it was cold and Peter had opted to stand with the servants and the guards who were warming themselves around the fire these people wouldn't have been anybody with any major authority they were likely just workers to the high priest in fact it would have only been people known to the high priest present in the courtyard at that time including

Roman soldiers so it's likely that Peter wasn't just trying to keep warm he was probably intending to fit in and not be noticed in fact he probably would have stood out like a sore thumb had he gone into the courtyard and just stood on his own as we see in our text Peter's tactics didn't work out quite that well verse 69 and a servant girl came to him you also were with Jesus of Galilee she said I believe this is the same servant girl who was on the gate who had come back to accuse Peter people maybe she realised that he didn't really have any connection with anybody on the inside or maybe she was near the gate she'd seen him following

Jesus at a distance these are just speculations and that brings us to Peter's first denial but before we come to that let's just ask the question what is denial well denial is a river in northeast Africa and is the longest river in the world but that's not what we're referring to the verb deny which is something that people do usually has two meanings I'd like us to try and keep these two meanings in our head as we go through the text so it can mean to claim that something is untrue and it can also mean to refuse somebody this word is very important this is the centerpiece of the text really and why is it so important well to answer this question we need to rewind the story to just after Jesus meal with his disciples we find this conversation between Jesus and Peter this is verse 31 and Jesus told them this very night you will all fall away on account of me for it is written I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered but after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee Peter replied even if all fall away on account of you I never will truly I tell you Jesus answered this very night before the rooster crows you will disown me three times Peter declared even if I have to die with you I will never disown you Jesus here quotes from Zechariah 13 7 which says awake sword against my shepherd against the man who is close to me declares the

[21:19] Lord Almighty strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered and this predicts Jesus as the shepherd who is to be struck by God's sword which is his justice and he is to be struck for the sins of mankind The act of doing this will be the act that!

gathers the sheep So when Jesus quotes this this is Jesus very accurately predicting the events which are just about to happen verse 45 the hour that begins the onset of God's wrath begins Jesus says the hour has come verse 50 Jesus is seized by men verse 56 the disciples or the shepherd sheep are scattered all of this is happening before Peter and yet he had failed to recognize the truth in Jesus words he didn't trust in Jesus sovereignty at this point which is also clear from Peter's response to Jesus in verse 35 which says even if I have to die with you I will never deny or disown you after everything

Peter had seen in his time with Jesus all the miracles all the healings he himself had walked on water he foolishly states that Jesus is somehow wrong and so this this word deny is so important because the very thing that Jesus is warning Peter about and it was all about to happen it was all

about to take place and so Peter is standing in the courtyard of the high priest and while just a little distance from him Jesus was on trial and you can guarantee that everyone in the courtyard knows what was going on Jesus being tried before the religious leaders I think was the thing on everybody's lips in that courtyard this was no small thing gossip abounded verse 69 and a servant girl came to him that is

Peter you also were with Jesus of Galilee she said this brings us to Peter's first denial he says I don't know what you're talking about and there's a pause Peter I think on the inside would have been shaking so far he's proven himself to be quite an emotional person but look at his response he holds it together and calmly leaves the fire and heads for the gateway but it probably didn't happen immediately I don't think he wants to draw so much attention to himself probably hung around for a bit and then slid off Luke's account states that the next denial was to happen a little later so I think there's probably a false calmness in Peter at this point

Peter's second denial so Peter had wandered off to the gateway and unsurprisingly there's people there too and another of the female servants saw him and pointed Peter out to the crowd saying this is verse 71 this man was with Jesus of Nazareth and so Peter is probably panicking a little bit more now he's amongst small crowds of officials and Roman soldiers and more and more of them are paying attention to him in fact the other gospels tell us that others were also challenging Peter at this time Matthew and Mark report the accusation coming from another servant girl John uses the plural and says they asked him Luke speaks of a man questioning him

[25:52] Peter denies the accusations and questions with an oath I don't know the man which is to say much less casual and much stronger form of a statement to make an oath so the pressure increases drastically for Peter as gossip gains momentum in the courtyard more and more people are taking an interest in Peter he's probably overhearing people talking about him and people are likely staring at him and again there is a lapse of time before the third round of accusations and Peter's third denial Luke tells us that it was an hour later Peter's third denial and so after an hour we get the final challenge of Peter's identity and it's almost a flurry of accusations

Matthew and Mark say it was from those standing there Luke pins an accusation to a single man questioning Peter's accent John tells us that a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off was questioning him this time in this round of questions and accusations it was too much for Peter it tipped him over the edge and he lost his temper verse 74 then he began to call down curses and he swore to them I don't know the man so Peter would be shouting waving his hands about and cursing that is declaring a destruction against anything connected to the accusations which he is claiming is false only we know that they are not false they are true how far has this disciple fallen into lies into denying

Jesus into anger and a total loss of self control the text says he followed Jesus at a distance but I bet he never felt further away from him than he did at this moment immediately a rooster crowed then he remembered the words Jesus had spoken before the rooster crows you will disown me three times so Peter's denial of Jesus was complete he looks up and as Luke 22 says Jesus turned and looked right at Peter and this wasn't a random glance

Jesus knows everything that's happening inside Peter's mind and in his heart at that very moment in time and I think Jesus is saying to Peter in this look remember I am the son of God I know what's to come I know your heart Peter had not just remembered Jesus words he had remembered who Jesus was and the magnitude of his actions hit him all of a sudden all that was left to do was for him to go outside and weep bitterly at what he'd done so what lessons are there to learn from this I'd like to draw out two lessons that I think can help us and encourage us in the week ahead the first one would be a warning against pride so it doesn't take a genius to see that the characteristics of Peter that brought him so much trouble so much pain so much sadness are the very characteristics that the world encourages as a positive thing today in fact

I would argue that it's never been more relevant to us in the west as it is now this story of pride firstly Peter was disproportionately self confident what do we mean by that when I wake up in the morning or in the early afternoon sometimes I can usually be confident that I still have the drive and the faculties I need to get out of bed and make a coffee and go to work and do the job that I'm employed to do I'm confident that I can engage people in conversation I'm fairly confident in doing

these things because these are the skills that I have been given and I've had them for some time this is the truth of who I am most of the time now disproportionate self confidence distorts the truth of who we are so that same day for me might look a bit different if I'm overly self confident if I think [31:58] I'm going to go to work and do my job with no problems whatsoever because I'm so great at it and wonderful then I'm likely to get careless and I'm likely to make a lot of mistakes if I think I'm going to engage people all day with a smile and leave them feeling wonderful because my personality is so magnetic I'm likely to upset somebody by being so arrogant so here's the thing the world today tells you to trust in yourself because you are wonderful and you're capable of doing anything that you want to do the Bible God's word tells you today to trust in God because he is wonderful and capable of doing anything he wants to the world is lying to you people aren't so wonderful as we see from this text and if we look back on our own lives with honesty we can probably say that about ourselves

Peter was so self-confident that he failed spectacularly and ended up in great distress see that night at the beginning Peter saw himself as loyal brave and clever but Jesus however the son of God saw the reality that Peter was to be unfaithful quick to anger and foolish but Jesus loved him anyway and this brings me to my second conclusion that your weakness whatever it might be does not invalidate your relationship with Jesus in this ultimate example of love that we've read while Jesus was being tried and beaten facing the death penalty for his people including Peter Peter was denying that he had anything to do with him but Jesus loved him anyway as we've just said Jesus demonstrates throughout this text that he has perfect knowledge of who Peter is and everything that Peter was going to do in fact he knew Peter better than Peter knew himself earlier on in the text Peter had fallen asleep with some other disciples three times in the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus warned them by way of addressing Peter watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak Jesus issued yet another warning of things to come by instructing the disciples to keep their defence up which is for a Christian to keep watching and keep praying

I don't know if anybody that might be watching this watches boxing but you'll see that fighters at the beginning of a match have their hands up like this and they have their hands up to guard themselves to stop themselves from being hit in the head but after a while the body gets tired and you get further on in the rounds and the hands are falling down and they're left open to attack so Jesus isn't just making a generic statement here he's warning also against an attack Luke 22 31 says this Jesus is talking he says Simon Simon if you're wondering who Simon is that Simon is Peter it's another name for Peter Jesus continues Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat but I have prayed for you

Simon that your faith may not fail and when you have turned back strengthen your brothers it's interesting Jesus is saying behind the scenes in all of this story there is a third party requesting to exploit the weaknesses of the disciples including Peter and that third party is Satan seems to me it was Satan was the one doing the tempting he was the one orchestrating the accusations and Jesus is not just reminding Peter of the ongoing spiritual battle and the need for a good defense Jesus is also reassuring Peter Jesus is asserting his authority over Satan here and he's saying but I have prayed that your faith will not fail and he follows that up with another prediction that Peter will turn back so as we come to the end of the chapter you might think that it ended in tears for Peter that night it did but Peter's faith did not fail after Jesus was executed

[37:49] Jesus took up his life again because death couldn't hold him and he met once again with his disciples I believe it was on the third time and he asked Peter these questions Simon as we know is Peter son of John do you love me more than these yes Lord he said you know that I love you Jesus said feed my lambs again Jesus said Simon son of John do you love me he answered yes Lord you know that I love you Jesus said take care of my sheep the third time he said to him Simon son of John do you love me Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time do you love me he said Lord you know you know all things you know that

I love you Jesus said feed my sheep three times Peter denied Jesus and three times Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to tell Jesus that he loved him Peter's faith indeed had not failed Jesus forgave Peter and Jesus gave Peter work to do back in the courtyard when Peter ran outside and wept bitterly he was sorry right down inside his heart he was wishing that he'd never betrayed Jesus and it was painful for him right up until this point after Jesus was resurrected and he came back to see his disciples and yet Peter persevered with that grief right up until this moment when it was made right

Peter throughout all of that time carried on loving the Lord and his failure did not invalidate his relationship with Jesus so as we draw to a close I'll just finish by saying this don't let your failures throw you off the path you can be at your most confident when you place your confidence in the one who rules over everything which is the son of God Jesus Christ and if you stick with Jesus you know he promises in scripture a place for you where there are no more tears book of revelation says this he will wipe every tear from their eyes there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things have passed away amen and that concludes our sermon for today thanks for listening

I hope that you found it helpful in some way if you wish to discuss anything that you've heard today or anything spiritual at all feel free to get in contact with us even if you just want to say howdy we'd love to hear from you you can reach us at our website calvary-brighton.org.uk now before we finish I'll just say a final prayer and we'll sing a final hymn may God bless your week father we thank you for all we've heard today we thank you for your unfailing love we pray that you'll be with us in the week that you'll forgive our sins and that you'll help us each day restore our faith we ask in Jesus name amen there is a redeeming

Jesus God's own son precious lamb of god sin holy Mary for my father for giving us your son leading your spirit The work on earth is done Jesus, my Redeemer Name above all names Precious Lamb of God

[43:09] O Messiah, O sinner slain Thank You, O my Father For giving us Your Son And leaving Your Spirit The work on earth is done When I stand in glory I will see His face And then I'll serve my King forever In that holy place Thank You, O my Father

For giving us Your Son And leaving Your Spirit The work on earth is done Thank You, O my Father For giving us Your Son And leaving Your Spirit The work on earth is done To ending Your Spirit Thank you.