

Confession and Confusion

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn back together to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16. You can read again two verses. Verse 16 and then verse 22.

Matthew 16, verse 16. Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then look at verse 22.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from you, Lord. This shall never happen to you.

It's a wonderful thing to be together at a time of communion where together we come and make a confession and a declaration of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He has done a great work in his people, having accomplished a great work for his people. And we come together to declare our own personal reception of that work and our participation in it.

[1 : 0 4] And he calls us to remember him. We often think about remembering his death, and of course that is significant and central to it, but it's him.

Remember me. Do this in remembrance of me. And so we come together hoping, longing, praying, and looking that we may have that deep sense of anticipation and prayerful longing to actually meet with the Lord and have that sweet and spiritual remembrance of him.

In our confession of the Lord, we're saying certain things about him. And in this context here that we've read about in Matthew 16, the Lord is pressing his disciples to make just that confession.

And we would like to try and concentrate. The two verses we reread, 16 and 22, are two confessions that Peter makes, but they're so very different from one another, it's quite hard to believe.

Coming as they do, not necessarily in the same place or conversation, but they're brought before us in the same context. And no doubt they're done so by the Holy Spirit through Matthew for a very significant reason.

[2 : 2 3] The reason, no doubt, being, among other reasons, that you can have and I can have with you a confession of faith that is so inspired by God at one minute.

And then we can say things, or do things, that owe their origin to Satan himself. That's easy enough to say. But when you think about it, the problem that Peter has, there are many problems in this situation, but the problem that Peter has is that he doesn't realize that in the second confession he makes, or taking Jesus aside and rebuking him, he doesn't realize that he is actually being the mouthpiece of Satan.

You can put him in the situation where in the one moment he's got a certain frame of mind, certain feelings that are animated, certain sense of conviction and assurance deep down in his heart.

You are the Christ, he says, the Son of the living God. The next thing he says, no doubt he's got the same certainty, the same sense of emotion and feeling, and with the same assurance he says to Jesus.

When he said to him, he's going to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, rise on the third day, Peter takes him aside, and he has a right talking to him. He says this, rebuking him, will never happen to you.

[3 : 41] Have you ever been in that situation? We may be come to a time of communion knowing that very experience, with regret, that we've maybe said things we thought were so true and so right, only to discover that we were so wrong.

Not only that, but we might even have said or done things that have become a terrible hindrance, and in this instance, it was becoming a temptation for Jesus. Where through Peter, through Peter, Satan is saying to Jesus that you can have your crown without your cross.

We'll come back to that in just a minute. Looking at two things really with these two statements of Peter in mind, firstly, there is his confession of faith, that's there in verse 16 and following, and the things the Lord says to him in addition to saying, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah.

And the second thing is to notice his confusion of faith. It's a staggering thing really that someone who is a believer in Jesus can say the kind of thing that Peter says, this will never happen to you, meaning the cross.

You can and I can with you be a believer and yet have massive gaps in our understanding. That could be Peter's instance, a warning for us, but there's the other side where if you feel your understanding is so limited, it can be a great encouragement.

[5 : 06] You don't need to know everything in order to have real faith. Well, let's try looking firstly at Peter's confession of faith. It is a time in our Lord's ministry where he's beginning to more and more intensely reveal his own personal identity to his disciples.

It's a very private context. See, verse 20 says, he strictly charges the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. He's firstly revealing who he is and then from verse 21 and following, he's revealing what he has come to do.

Both of them he's keeping fairly secret and the reason for that is where the crowds to get wind of it too soon, they'd get in his way and they'd become a hindrance on his way to the cross.

Now we'll see as we go along in the second point, the reasons why the people would get in the way of Jesus going to the cross. They thought the Messiah had come to set up an earthly kingdom in which there would be far from anything remotely connected to suffering and dying on a cross.

So he's wanting it kept quiet for the time being. It's soon going to be known to everyone everywhere as the apostles go out and preach, but for the time being, it's being kept to them, to be kept to themselves.

[6 : 18] So he asks them this question, verse 13, who do people say that the Son of Man is? The identity of Jesus. There's no question as to who Jesus thought he was himself.

You maybe think, well, that's quite obvious. Why even say that? Well, notice Jesus refers to himself in verse 13 as the Son of Man. It's a very messianically loaded name.

It goes back into the Old Testament. It's one that the prophets would have and Daniel would have particularly in reference to the Messiah. And our Lord had that consciousness and awareness of his own identity.

And you think about that just in his own ministry, living in a world surrounded as he was at that time by his own people, the Jews, as John 1 says, he came to his own people and his own people did not recognize him.

Our Lord knew who he was. He knew his own identity. He says, who do people say that the Son of Man is? If it's the old translation you have, it's who do people say that I, the Son of Man, am.

[7 : 20] Something like that. He's aware of himself. The people en masse didn't know. He's saying to the disciples, who do people say that I am? Some say John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

He certainly stood out. But here's the question he has. Verse 15, but who do you say that I am? You, plural, meaning everyone there is disciples that he's talking to.

He's not talking to Peter singly. He's talking to them all there together. Who do you say that I am? And Peter in his, well, his, his well-known forthrightness and his being something of a spokesman comes out with this.

Verse 16, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. What a statement that is. You and I are familiar with it. We're familiar with Matthew 16 to a degree anyway.

We've, if not read it numerous times, we've probably heard it read or we've read it once. And coming across the statement, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, it's, it's kind of obvious to us.

[8 : 28] But for Peter to have said that, indeed, for any of them to have said that about Jesus at this point as he was making himself known to them was a phenomenal thing. And our Lord says as much.

You know, for you and for me today coming to communion, it is our Lord says, do this in remembrance of me. And the question really does, in a sense, come to us, who do you say that I am?

Not in the sense of what does everyone else say or are you jumping on because everyone else says I am who I am or they've experienced what they've experienced or have what they have. See, it's a personal thing, isn't it?

Who do you say that I am? Who do you say that I am? And do you know for yourself who he is? Now, there's more, of course, involved in this question than simply asking do you know about him?

Do I know about him? It's that knowing him. It's not simply knowing him in our understanding as we've heard about him but in a relational sense.

[9 : 27] Can you say and can I say that we know him? Well, what do we know about him? What did Peter know about him? He said, you are the Christ. The one there in front of them, the one who had come among them was to them not just the revelation of God but he was the son of God himself.

You are the Christ. You are the Messiah. You are the anointed. You are the one fulfilling all of the Old Testament prophecies. You are the one the Father has sent into the world. You are the son of the living God.

What a phenomenal statement. Everyone has this general view that you're sent by God. You're a prophet of God. You have that about you. That is out of the ordinary.

But Peter is saying, no, we know who you are. You are the Messiah. You are the Messiah. What insight, what faith, what revelation, what certainty, what a grasp he had.

Can you follow this? Can I follow this? Coming to communion, many doubts, many questions about us, maybe about one another, maybe about things in our lives, things that can cloud our view, cloud our judgment.

[10 : 28] If you have faith, if I have faith, however, there will be one certainty that nothing and no one can really take from us is that we can say, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

I don't know even if you might be feeling. I don't even know if I've got the kind of faith that I should have. I don't even know if I've repented properly. I don't even know if this or that or the next thing.

You may have many questions. Many parts of the Bible even may be closed to you. But if you're a Christian and I'm a Christian with you today, we'll be able to say exactly what Peter said.

It will have an echo, it will have a ring, a resonance in your own heart. You are the Christ, the son of the living God. No one needs to tell you that.

Isn't that amazing? That faith brings him to you in that sense. In the sense that you're holding on to him with a certainty of who he is. Questions about a lot of things, but no question about this.

[11 : 30] Now someone might come along and say to you, well you've just heard other people say that though. Nothing special about that. But you know in your heart, maybe you can trace it out, maybe I can follow you with that.

Now there was a time where you knew him in that, you know, second hand sense. People spoke about him. You heard others explain what had happened to their lives as far as becoming and being Christians is concerned.

But didn't a time come where for you this became real? You know, maybe not as clearly as Paul, but along the lines of what he says, what he says to the Galatians, I have been crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me and this bit especially. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

If you and I can follow that, something profound within our hearts has taken place. No matter whatever else we may find there or not find there, if we can say along these lines, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, in that sense of love and in that sense of attachment, in that sense of longing, something wonderful has taken place.

[12 : 44] What does Jesus explain it to be? Well, notice he firstly pronounces him something. 17. Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, Simon son of John, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Any of you interested may want to fish out, you may have this already, a sermon by Jonathan Edwards on these words, this context. And he's, though others may differ as far as what exactly is taking place is concerned, the commentators maybe are not so much at odds, but maybe don't quite of the same approach as Edwards does, stressing the fact of what he says along the lines of an immediate, meaning a one-on-one, nothing in between, illumination in the mind of Peter at this point that the Father gives.

The light just shines with such a directness and with such a level of power and significance. The Lord is saying to him, not in the sense of what you will be, Peter, but what you are in light of what you've said, blessed.

Makarios, you are blessed. You have that wholeness, that fullness, that everything that belongs to being the son or the daughter of God, that wholeness, that blessedness, insofar as you have received from the Father this knowledge that you've just given testimony to.

Blessed are you, Simon, son of John, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, neither your own heart, neither the words of anyone else, but my Father in heaven has revealed this to you.

[14 : 18] You know the difference, don't you, if you're a Christian today, and again, there's different levels, be it the experience of Lydia in Philippi or the jailer in Philippi. The same thing happens, this wonderful work of regeneration that's coming down the road to faith, repentance, conversion.

It happens at different levels of our awarenesses. For one, it may be so obvious and so dramatic, so life-changing outwardly. For others, it may be so gradual and subtle and imperceptible.

We don't maybe even have that where we can say, oh, it happened then or this is what I remember or it's more below the level of our consciousness. But it's a work that is shared.

It's a work that is identical nevertheless. We look into our hearts. We see that we have this deep down within blessed are you, he says, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven.

We have that like precious faith, that shared reality the Father has given in bringing us to that place of absolute persuasion. Deep down, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[15 : 30] Are we able to follow what Peter's saying at this point? We are truly blessed if that's the case. Truly blessed. Christ. We take no credit for it because we haven't come up with it ourselves.

But the blessing that Peter is declared to be in possession of is further added to. Now these words that come afterwards from verse 18 and following have been words over which the church has raged, you know this anyway, over the centuries.

I think it's arguable that were they not hijacked and abused by the Roman Catholic Church, then there would never, I don't think, be any difficulty with understanding them quite simply.

What do you mean and you may be saying, well, when Peter is told in verse 18, and I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

What or who is our Lord referring to when he says, on this rock I will build my church? Well, of course, some will say this is Peter being invested with that authority to become the first ever Pope and for that reason he is defined as being the rock on which the church will subsequently be built.

[16 : 40] Well, no, it's obviously not that. But how do people get round the meaning if this isn't referring to Peter as being the rock on which the church will be built?

Well, some will say our Lord is referring to the confession Peter has just made, that it's upon the basis of the confession that you have made. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God that the church will be built.

There's other ways people would explain it. I don't think we need to be afraid of taking the words just as they seem to appear before us. And maybe the subsequent narrative of the book of Acts will bear that out for itself.

Insofar as the first eight or so chapters of Acts would seem to suggest that Peter did become the key and foundational leader of the apostolic church.

not that Peter was the foundation of the church. I mean, the rest of the Bible explains. In fact, the Old Testament as well, in the Psalm 118 speaks about that stone is made, head cornerstone, the builders to despise, meaning, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 45] Ephesians 2 speaks about the church being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Peter did become foundational in his, not in his person, not in his person, but in his proclamation.

In the sense that after his subsequent to this account, his failure, remember when he three times denied that he knew Jesus and then he went away bitterly weeping and broken and crushed, the Lord took him back, restored him and invested him with the care of the sheep and the lambs.

Yes, and even way back at the beginning of John's gospel, our Lord looking at Peter on his first encounter, what a sight there must have been to behold. The opening of John's gospel when Peter was brought and the Lord looked at him, he said, so you're Simon, son of John.

He said, you will be called Peter. What is that meaning? Well, it's the imagery of the rock. It's the imagery of the stability and the dependability that didn't adhere to Peter as an individual at that point.

He was as unstable as water, Peter, like we are. We think in ourselves that we're kind of dependable or reliable in our own way and doesn't the Lord have his way of taking us through things to show us this is just exactly the way we are.

[19 : 04] We're as dependable as Peter is. We'll pledge our allegiance. We're sure of our faithfulness and our commitment and our zeal and all of these things, but give us certain set of circumstances and we'll fail just as miserably.

But the Lord at the beginning said to Peter looking at him prophetically like he did with others of his disciples. He gave them, well, I suppose we'd call it a nickname.

He added a name onto them. He called Simon son of John. He called him Cephas. He called him Petros. He called him Peter because he would become a rock. Oh well, and we see Matthew saying you are Peter and on this rock.

It's a play on his name underneath the English text. You have it, although it's masculine, feminine, things like that. These things don't matter. There's a clear play on the word, Peter's name and the rock upon which the church will be built.

I think the reference is to Peter himself, not as a person, but yes, in terms of his proclamation because he would be so influential. And have a look, if you would, in the book of Acts.

[20 : 07] You're there in chapter 2, the day of Pentecost. What is it that happens when the crowds of the Jews in their thousands are mocking and ridiculing and looking on at the coming of the spirit, the phenomena associated and they're saying, oh yes, these men are full of new wine.

This is why they're making all the din and the racket. This is what the commotion's all about. They're inebriated. They're drunk. They're out of their minds. And no Peter stands up. Amazing to see that Peter who had pledged his faithfulness and stood so firmly until that moment where three times he denied that he even knew Jesus the third time.

Calling down the curses of God in his own head. There he goes away broken and crushed. Taken back by Jesus and invested with apostolic authority again.

And there he is on the day of Pentecost. And he stands filled with the Holy Spirit. Preaches that such a wonderful sermon, chapter 2 and thousands are converted through it. And thereafter, as the narrative of Acts unfolds, Peter is key until the conversion of Paul and until the commission of Paul and then Peter somewhat is in the shadows then.

And Paul is taken into the foreground. So I don't think we need to worry about Peter being understood as being the rock in terms of his being something of an apostolic spokesman.

[21 : 26] He was in Acts 2 and thereafter of being influential and key in the founding of the New Testament church. You see, people can take certain verses or certain teachings and twist and distort and make them to mean what they want them to mean and we're then scared of touching them.

I mean, how often, for example, do we think of or study the life of our Lord's mother? We're almost, you know, don't want to go there and make too much of Mary, the mother of our Lord just in case.

So on and so forth. Well, it's a tremendous thing the Lord says to Peter. Blessed are you, Simon, son of John, Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hasn't revealed this to you but my Father who's in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church. Notice that. This is the thing. We don't need to be scared about it because the Lord isn't saying you are Peter and on this rock you will build my church.

No, he's not saying that. The authority, the sovereignty, the power, things will come back to God willing tomorrow night. Find their source in Jesus. You are Peter, yes, and on this rock I will build my church.

[22 : 33] It's not you that's going to build the church, Peter. It's me that's going to build my church. You'll be instrumental, you'll be a means, you'll be a channel like everyone else in every other age and generation proclaiming the same gospel, relying on the same power.

I will build my church and the gates of hell, the gates of Hades. Sometimes people will take the Hades there as a reference to death. That doesn't quite make much sense.

How is death going to hinder the church being built? We think of it rather in terms of hell, in terms of, as we'll see in just a minute, Satan, all the hosts of hell, arraigned en masse and in their totality against the progress of the church.

Our Lord is saying, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. What a situation. He's not finished though because he goes on to explain how instrumental he and the others will be in the kingdom and the church being built.

I'll give you, he says in verse 19, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth be bound in heaven, loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven. There's no doubt admission and exclusion from the kingdom in terms of proclamation.

[23 : 43] Keys carry that sense of admission and exclusion. Well, keys, doors, come in and out. It's quite a vivid self-evident illustration. As far as binding on earth and binding in heaven, well, there may be an overlap by way of admission and exclusion into the kingdom to the administration within that kingdom.

That's the way they would generally take it, the idea that there is an authority invested in the officers within the church. Peter being referred to here but not to the exclusion of the rest, that they will have that authority within the church and it will be so powerful when it is built as it is upon Jesus himself.

You are the Christ, the son of the living God. How do you think Peter felt? Knowing what we know about Peter at this point, knowing what we know about him, the rest of the narrative of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, you know, Peter's the one who had the foot in his mouth.

Peter's the one who was going to come out with it. He was going to do it. You'll think about it afterwards. When the damage is done and you think, I shouldn't have said that, shouldn't have done that, well, that's just the way Peter is. But if you and I stand in his shoes, we're among the disciples, we're in the congregation, the Lord comes in here and asks a question and we can put our hands up as it were and answer it perfectly.

And the Lord singles us out and he pronounces us blessed that we didn't come up with the answer, the Father gave it to us on that moment. And you've got all the rest of the church around you.

[25 : 21] You're singled out for an honor by the Lord, whatever it is. How do you feel about that? Are you asking in your life, are you praying for something, for the Lord to give you something and it's maybe being denied you?

Am I in that situation? Why do you think it is? We often wonder, why does the Lord not sometimes answer us? Well, sometimes it's for our spiritual benefit.

If the Lord were to give us everything we ask, well, he knows why he gives and doesn't give what we ask, but no doubt there's some things that if he were to ask, if he were to give, some of the things we ask for, it would harm us.

Think of Paul himself, where he had that experience of the third heavens, 2 Corinthians 12, 11, 12, isn't it?

And where he had that experience, he didn't know he'd left his body or he went there, body and soul together into heaven. And he came back and because of the potential of pride, the Lord left an affliction in his life.

[26 : 32] The Lord needed to leave something in Paul's life to keep him from being proud. See, Peter, Peter's going to come through that experience as well.

Not the same as Paul, and not the thorn in the flesh in one sin, but Peter's going to do something, the denial. Peter's going to do something that is going to cost him so much that the old Peter we see just now is going to be by and large taken away, not totally, but by and large taken away.

See, sometimes, you know, the Lord does us good and gives us favor, gives us blessing. We need the grace, we need the strength, the wherewithal to cope with it, don't we? The worst thing in some context the Lord would do is just give us what we want.

He gave them what they sought, the psalm says, and sent leanness into their souls. There's also Hezekiah. Remember the Lord, through the prophet, we're told that the Lord left him to show him what was in his heart.

Well, Peter's going to have to learn. See the second thing, more briefly. Firstly, is confession of faith. Secondly, confusion of faith.

[27 : 47] Peter would have been feeling so good. You know how it feels when your Lord has blessed you? That's a very general kind of thing to say and maybe someone asked, well, what is blessing? That's a question and a half.

But where there's that sense through whatever experience or you feel and that deep in your heart you know and come through, be it a providence, be it something in God's house, in God's word, in the fellowship, in prayer, whatever it might be.

That sense the Lord gives you of his blessing, of his favor, that just changes you, whatever your circumstances. The peace, the joy, the liberty, the contentment, and all the other things that come with it.

You know, and Peter must have been just walking on air really. Feeling really happy. And thinking maybe he was in the know.

Oh well. The Father has told me that he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and didn't tell the other eleven. So they better all start listening to me. Because I am in the know. I am in that place that they aren't in.

[28 : 54] But look, the second thing when Jesus begins in verse 21 to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and on the third day rise again. This is the thing they don't accept.

And the reason for it is that they had an ideal in their minds that they had gathered from a partial understanding of the prophets of the Old Testament that the Messiah would be the conquering king.

There wasn't the grasping hold of the suffering servant. There wasn't the sense of, as our Lord in Luke 24 says to the disciples he's walking with, that the Christ had to suffer then enter his glory.

They didn't grasp that there had to be the cross before the crown. It was all the crown. It was all the king. In virtue of the fact that he was the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, he should have direct access to that throne.

Didn't the prophets say it? This is the problem. They were thinking, yes, of course he did. Our Lord is saying, keep my identity secret because if it's revealed too soon, the people, as on another occasion, they will come and try to make him a king by force.

[29 : 59] Crown before cross. See, that was Satan's temptation. Constantly. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And he said, all these I'll give to you if you just bow down and worship me.

You can have the crown without the cross. Well, Peter takes him aside in verse 22. Can you see the Lord talking?

You put yourself in such an almost homely situation. Here's the Lord. Here's the disciples. And the Lord is talking. You know someone who comes alongside and says, I'm going to do you a favor and I'm not going to publicly humiliate you.

I'll take you aside and I'll have a word with you by yourself. That's very commendable in an ordinary context. There are times where that's not appropriate though. In what sense?

How can it never be appropriate not to try and one-to-one speak to someone about a problem or a fault or something that you want to help them out of, bearing your own weakness at the same time in mind and so on?

[31 : 02] Well, you remember Peter himself made a, it's recorded in Galatians. Peter made a mistake. We would maybe see the gravity of it like Paul did. where on one occasion at Antioch Peter was having no problem in eating and dining with non-Jews.

As a Christian it's neither Jew nor Gentile, born nor free, male or female. We're all one in Christ. None of these things matter as far as being a Christian is concerned. So Peter would eat and dine. He had no qualm, no problem, no problem in his conscience.

But when he heard that a delegation from Jerusalem was coming, he thought, I can't be seen by these Judaizers, these people who are really strict in the laws of Moses.

Can't allow them to see me eating with non-Jews because I'll be in trouble. So what does he do? He withdraws from the non-Jews. Paul hears about it and Paul rebukes them publicly.

And we'd look at what Paul goes on to say. Have a look at this. It's there in Galatians. Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul says that I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, well, there's not these words, but he, but he rebuked him on front of them all.

[32 : 12] He told them, he told Peter publicly because what Paul understood to be the issue there wasn't just people pleasing. That's bad enough. Being kind of two-faced. Depending, you know, like the chameleon, you'd be like this with one person, be something else.

No, Paul, yes, he would have you be down the line, consistent, who, who, who, who, no matter whoever you were with. But the problem for Paul is that Peter's behavior was actually jeopardizing justification by faith in Christ alone.

Because Peter's behavior was leading people to think, yes, I need to have faith, but I also need to have works. By with, you know, keeping these ceremonial laws and so on and so forth.

Paul is saying, no. Pharisee of the Pharisee, he used to be touching the righteousness that is in the law, blameless. He's saying to Peter, this is gone. You're confusing and you're compromising your own faith and that of others.

So, Peter, however, he's going to take the Lord aside by himself. He's going to do the Lord a favor. See the blessing, blessed are you, Simon, son of John.

[33 : 14] It's gone to his head. It's really gone to his head. And it shows how ignorant, just like all of us, the way we learn, isn't it, that Peter thought he knew so much that he was actually going to tell the Son of God that he had got it wrong.

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, but you're wrong. And I'm right. So he took him aside and began to rebuke him.

The rebuke here, it's the same word, the same imagery, really, the word conveys us when the Lord stood on Galilee on the boat and rebuked the wind and the sea. He commanded the change. And Peter is bringing the force of his own mind and his will and his personality to bear on Jesus.

And it's not quite, maybe as we see it, as I see it here. Well, in fact, if you have the footnote, the ESV, it brings this out where it says, verse 22, Peter took him aside, began to rebuke him, saying, far be it from you.

Now, that is how it can be translated. But literally, it is, be merciful. Not in the sense of, well, maybe in the sense of a request. Peter is saying in effect, may the Lord have mercy on you.

[34 : 25] May God have mercy on you. May this never happen to you. The wish, the desire that this would never come the way of Jesus. Well, I'm going to suffer. I'm going to die. And on the third day, rise again.

Peter is saying, may this never happen to you. May it never, never happen to you. But no, the very fact that he is rebuking Jesus, he isn't expressing a wish.

He's issuing a command. He's commanding the Son of God with the emphatic negative. I mean, the words are packed together with such emphasis and such force.

It's just Peter's personality comes through them. This will never happen to you. This will never happen to you. The Son of God. This will never happen.

You might think it's going to happen, but Peter is saying, I am telling you, the Son of God, that you've got it wrong. I've got it right. You stand back from that situation and you think, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute.

[35 : 23] Peter, what are you doing? But you know, aren't we like it in so many ways in our own lives? We come from being blessed.

We come from being assured, maybe having a certainty in our hearts. And we go on the strength of that and we think we're somewhat infallible and we can make pronouncements.

Have you ever done this? that feeling sure that you have the mind of God about something, you say it only to subsequently regret it. You come out with something and make a pronouncement believing you have the mind of God.

Have you ever done that? It's a very frightening thing to do. Very frightening thing to do. Not only is it presumptuous, unless you and I have chapter and verse, thus saith the Lord, to come out with something that we cannot verify and base firmly in the plain meaning of scripture, we dare not say that we have the mind of God.

The mind of God in the sense of this is what the Lord is saying in a given situation. Because we haven't. Let's be honest. Unless it is written, you and I cannot say this is what the Lord says about a situation.

[36 : 41] No matter what we feel. Because Peter's doing that. He's taking the Lord aside. I'm going to have a word with Jesus about this. This will never happen to you.

Oh well. Jesus turned verse 23 and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan. Stand in Peter's shoes now.

Maybe wish we could stand in his shoes earlier on. Blessed are you, Simon, son of John. What about standing in them now? Get behind me, Satan. Our Lord sees through Peter and sees behind Peter.

There is his archenemy, the devil himself. You can have your crown without your cross. Imagine that.

You are a hindrance to me. You are a stumbling block. Now we could, the imagery is somewhat expanded. That the foundation stone is becoming a stone lying in the way of the Lord to trip him up on his path of obedience.

[37 : 45] How quickly we can change. How undependable. How frail, how weak. How dependent we are on God. You are a hindrance to me for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man.

Coming to communion. We come with absolute certainty as God's people about the identity of Jesus.

You are the Christ. The son of the living God. No question. We doubt a lot of things. We may question a lot of things that we wish we had certainty about but you have this if you're a believer deep at heart.

You have that. Look at him. Focus on him and me along with you. Revealed to us as he is in his word. In our lives let's maybe reflect on time or let's beware of should the time come that we act or speak in a context under the impulse of feeling where we think we're right where we may be very wrong.

See the two things come side by surely that's the reason they're side by side for us. That you can have one and you can have the other in the same person in a very very time frame that's very very close together.

[39 : 07] The confusion of his faith the confession of his faith. You are the Christ the son of the living God. What a wonderful thing it is to be in that place.

We pray, we hope, we long that in these these times that you have us congregation at communion the Lord may have mercy and you may find and be with you the cry of our heart as we meet him in his word when we're by yourselves as we meet him together in his house at his table you are the Christ the son of the living God but that the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

The Lord grant us that assurance and certainty in our confession of faith. Let's pray together. Thank you.