

The Look of Jesus

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] A very sincere and warm welcome to you all this evening. Thank you for joining this live stream service from Stornow Free Church. I pray that wherever you're watching from, that God will bless you during this service, a short time of worship, and that he'll bless his word to us all as we come together in this way to worship him.

And we trust that the Holy Spirit will apply God's word to our hearts this evening. We're going to read first of all from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel according to Luke in chapter 22, and the first reading is verses 31 to 46.

Peter said to him, Lord, I am ready to go with you, both to prison and to death. Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.

And he said to them, When I sent you out with no money bag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything? They said, Nothing. He said to them, But now let the one who has a money bag take it, and likewise a knapsack.

And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me. And he was numbered with the transgressors. For what is written about me has its fulfillment.

[1 : 39] And they said, Lord, look, here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough. And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives.

And his disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, Pray that you may not enter into temptation. And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.

And his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them, Why are you sleeping?

Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation. We pray God will follow these words with his blessing. Let's join together now in prayer.

[2 : 44] Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, we thank you once again for this opportunity to worship you. And to do so, joined together by this technology.

But we give thanks, O Lord, that your people are joined together in a greater bond than this. We give thanks that your children are bonded together through your Holy Spirit.

And that your grace, O Lord, has brought them so that they are formed into a spiritual family for yourself. We thank you, Lord, that no power in heaven or earth is able to destroy that bond.

However much damage this virus may do in terms of wrecking human lives, breaking bonds and coming to disrupt families.

Lord, we know how much there is of turmoil and of fear and of grief throughout the world. But we give thanks tonight that the bond that secures your people remains so forever.

[3 : 50] We thank you for your love in Jesus Christ. Lord, we pray that you would lift up our minds this evening so that we may contemplate something more of your love.

Take us above the things that discourage us. The things that we find even in our present world where we find so much that could cause us gloom and fear and uncertainty.

Lord, help us, we pray, to focus on the certainty of your word, of your truth. And give us tonight to be encouraged in our hearts. That as we place our trust and confidence in the Lord, so you will take us through to the end of that course that you have designed for us.

Whatever it may contain, O Lord, in this world, we bless you that you give to your people the grace of perseverance. And we give thanks tonight, Lord, that we can look to you for your spirit to continue to bless us in that regard.

We ask your blessing to be with us in our homes, in our family lives. We give thanks, O Lord, that we are able to be together at such times.

[4 : 58] And we pray for those families who are at this time separated and for members of family cut off from home, whether it be in this country itself or overseas. We commit them to you, O Lord, and ask that you keep them safe and pray that you would bless them.

We give thanks, too, for our children. We thank you for their participation in services of your people. We thank you, Lord, for the ways in which you have come to instruct them through the gospel. And we thank you tonight for all who teach them, both in their own homes, in Sunday schools, and now online, through the resources made available. We thank you for those who give of their time and of their talent to bring these materials to our children.

Lord, we pray for your blessing to be upon them, too, as they seek to guide young souls to Christ. We ask you, blessing, now to be with those tonight who are, indeed, caught up in sorrow and mourning and distress.

We pray for those who have lost loved ones. And we ask, Lord, that you would keep us mindful of the fact that there are many deaths from other sources than this virus.

[6 : 11] And that when so much prominence is given to deaths from COVID, Lord, we pray that you would also help us to remember those who have experienced death in their families from other sources than this virus.

And we pray that all who experience death in these days will be led to that place where death has been overcome once and for all, to the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the way in which he has overcome death in his resurrection.

Lord, help us, we pray, to trust in that power that has destroyed death forever, that through trusting in you, we may, too, be placed in a way of victory over death, that we will enjoy at last when this world is over.

Remember, we pray, too, Lord, those who are suffering from this virus, those who are ill at this time, those who care for them. We give thanks again for them in nursing homes, in hospitals, and every other way in which people are cared for.

We commend to you, Lord, all who are involved in such care, at the risk of their own lives and health. Lord, we pray for them and ask that you would continue to bless them.

[7 : 28] We thank you for their dedication. We thank you for the spirit that they show to us in their care for others. And we pray that we, too, may emulate this ourselves as we look out upon our world and seek to care for one another.

We think, too, O Lord, of those in other lands who are suffering at this time. We pray for those on the mission fields of the world, where we find, O Lord, news from them that even at times when, in places where this virus has not yet caused much devastation, yet we pray for their protection.

We ask, Lord, that you would keep them safe, that you would bless them. And all that we know ourselves, especially in regard to our loved ones in the fields of service overseas.

Remember them, we pray. We pray that you would remember those like God is good Africa, who have experienced so much discouragement from those enemies of the gospel in recent times.

We pray your blessing for Kenny and for all who work there. And we pray that you would, Lord, grant to them your upholding strength and your encouragement at this time. We pray that you would remember those, O Lord, in agencies who look after deprived children overseas and at home here.

[8 : 47] And ask that you be near to them. Remember our social workers. Remember those, Lord, who have to go to homes. And for those also who care for young people and children who are vulnerable at all times, and especially at times like these.

Lord, again, we commit them to you. Remember our local authorities, our governments, nationally and locally. Be near them at this time, O Lord, in all their decision-making.

Be pleased to grant them your guidance. And give them, we pray, the wisdom that only you can give. And we ask that you would provide a way for us, O Lord, through this virus to be overcome, so that we may once again enjoy the freedom that we once had.

But help us, we pray, to treasure that freedom and not to overuse it. Give us wisdom at this time, O Lord, with the grace of patience, so that we may wait patiently until the dangerous past.

And help, we pray, those who may consider that these measures are unnecessary and put themselves and others at risk at this time. Lord, we ask that you would bless us as a people, so that we may follow directions from those who know these things best.

[10 : 04] And in all of these things, we pray that your blessing will remain with us, that we may make advantage of this time, however difficult it may be for us, to seek the Lord while he is to be found, and to call upon you while you are near.

Hear us now, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, it's always a pleasure to have children watching. I know there may be some this evening as well.

We've started having children's address during the evening services now, while we're in lockdown, because there are families we know gathered tuning in or watching the service. And I want tonight to start a little series for the children on birds of the Bible.

Many birds mentioned in the Bible, but I want to begin tonight by mentioning the sparrow. And for that, I'm going to read one verse where sparrows are mentioned, and it's in Matthew chapter 10, where Jesus was there speaking to those who were maybe afraid at the time of following Jesus or being known as his disciples.

And who would, of course, have to face many, many difficulties in coming to attach themselves to Jesus and to be his followers. And this is what he said to them in Matthew chapter 10, where he begins at verse 26, have no fear of them.

[11 : 28] And then he comes to the words you find there in verse 29. The sparrow, as you know, sparrow is a small bird.

It's not a very attractive bird in terms of colour. It's found all over the world. It's a very common bird and it's very much overlooked.

And Jesus here was saying that birds, the sparrows, in his own day were not very valuable. If they were to be sold at all, they were worth virtually nothing. Nothing are not two sparrows sold for a penny.

In other words, people would regard sparrows as pretty drab. They're just a dirty brown colour. They scabble around in the dust a lot of the time. But here is Jesus saying, not one of these sparrows falls to the ground apart from your father.

Without your father, he's saying to the disciples, your father at heaven, he watches out for every sparrow that falls to the ground. In other words, he's saying, whenever a sparrow falls to the ground, whether it's injured or dead, God takes note.

[12 : 52] God notices. God actually takes account of it. His knowledge is that intimate, that detailed. And he's concerned for his whole creation, even to the extent of taking note of a sparrow falling to the ground.

And then Jesus says, fear not, therefore. Don't you be afraid, he says, of following me, for you are of more value than many sparrows.

In other words, what he's really saying, and the children can really latch onto this, I'm sure, as well as ourselves, as adults, if God looks after sparrows in such a wonderful way, if he takes note of the fall of a sparrow, surely he's really going to take great care of his children, of the Lord's own flock, of the Lord's people.

So tonight, whatever fears we may have, however difficult it may be for yourselves as children to be known as Christians, to be known that you love the Lord, that you go to church, that you share in these things of the gospel, and however difficult it may be to share these things with others as well, remember that God notices you, and God's notice of you is always special.

You are really special to us as a congregation. You're special to the church. We're grateful and thankful to God for you all, but you are more special to God even than that.

[14 : 27] And God takes note of your young lives in such a wonderful way that he cares for you deeply and through the gospel wants to continue to show that care for you.

So here is Jesus saying, don't be afraid, therefore. Don't let your heart be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrow. So the next time you see a sparrow, let that be a reminder to you of the care of God.

When you see a sparrow in your garden, every garden, I'm sure, has a sparrow or nearby. Think of what this is saying, that the God who cares so much for the sparrows cares even more for those who love him.

I hope that God will bless these few thoughts to us. Let's now say the Lord's Prayer together. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[15 : 43] For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Now we're going to read some more verses from where we finished in Luke chapter 22.

This time we're reading chapter 22, verses 47 to 62. Luke 22 at verse 47. Then we'll come to look at something of this passage.

While Jesus 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. But Jesus said to him, Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, no more of this.

And he touched his ear and healed him. 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?

[16 : 52] 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. Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.

And Peter was following at a distance. When they had killed a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant guard, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, This man also was with them.

But he denied it, saying, Woman, I do not know him. And a little later, someone else saw him and said, You also are one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not.

And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted, saying, Certainly, this man was also with him, for he too is a Galilean. But Peter said, Man, I do not know what you are talking about. And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 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.

[18 : 07] And he went out and wept bitterly. Again, we pray God will follow with this blessing, our reading of that portion of his word.

And I want to come now to look at some of these words, especially the words you find near the end there from our passage, verses 61 and 62. 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. And he went out and wept bitterly.

Well, the last couple of weeks, we looked two weeks ago at the touch of Jesus, dealing with a leper. Last week, we looked at the voice of Jesus, the power of his voice, the life-giving voice, of Jesus, and how that still continues through the gospel.

And now we want to look at the look of Jesus this evening. You find this also quite frequently in the gospels, sometimes actually specified how Jesus looked at a person or looked at a certain crowd of people.

[19 : 17] For example, Mark chapter 3, verse 5, that's the incident, the man with the withered hand that Jesus healed on the Sabbath. And the Pharisees especially, were just full of anger towards him for what he was doing on the Sabbath.

So Jesus, looking around, as it says in that verse, looked upon them with anger for the hardness of their hearts.

Jesus is not always giving loving looks as he looks around at people when he was going about the places he went to. That's one incident where he looked with anger because he saw the hardness of their hearts, how they were stubbornly refusing to accept him and his teaching.

You could go to Mark chapter 6, verse 34, and the other passages like that and describing the feeding of the 5,000 in the gospels. Where you find in Mark 6, 34, that Jesus looked out upon this great crowd of people who were then by that stage needing something to eat.

And he was moved with compassion when he looked out on them. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. There's the look of compassion. Previously, the look of anger.

[20 : 35] And we'll look at this look this evening that we're going to speak about. is a look that's described really from the effect it had on Peter.

The nature of the look, you can say, is opened up for us when you look at the effect it had on Peter. And as you look at the effect it had on Peter, you can really tell much from that the kind of look it was.

It was a look that wasn't altogether lacking, of course, in love, but it was a look also that had what do you call disappointment with Peter.

Possibly a measure of anger as well. But let's look at the effect and see what comes across from that as to the look that Jesus gave Peter.

There are two things especially that you can see in that effect. This look caused Peter to remember things. And there were three things I'm going to mention that had caused him to remember.

[21 : 42] First of all, it caused him to remember the advance notice that Jesus had given them with regard to what was going to happen. You go back to verse 31 where we began our reading this evening where he said specifically to Peter, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded or desired to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and when you have turned again strengthen your brothers. There are so many sermons within this passage itself.

I'm not going to go into more than that this evening but you notice there first of all Satan's aim was to cause disruption among the disciples, among the church of the time.

Because that first word you is plural. Satan demanded to have you all, you followers, you disciples of mine. He's saying, but I have prayed for you.

That's you singular. Jesus prayed for Peter. You see, Satan's aim was to sift these disciples, to cause disruption amongst them, to cause separations, jealousies, all kinds of things that would sift them about, that would actually cause disruption and cause havoc amongst them.

[22 : 56] That is always Satan's aim. It's his aim tonight. It's his aim at all times that he will get in amongst God's people and cause this sifting to take place. But that's countered by Christ's intercession which will involve also an answer in Peter's recovery.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and when you have turned again, in other words, he's saying when you recover from your lapse, we're going to look at that lapse in a wee minute, when you've turned from that again, strengthen your brothers.

In other words, Satan's aim is to cause such disruption among God's people but it's countered by this wonderful intercession of Jesus. He has prayed for this specific disciple, Peter, and when Peter is recovered, what's he going to do?

He's going to strengthen his brothers. Far from sifting the church, it actually strengthens the church because Peter came to be the leading or one of the leading apostles in the early church as described in the first few chapters of the book of Acts and you can see the wonderful comfort that you and I can take from that when we ourselves know our proneness to lapsing, our failures, the many ways in which sometimes we give heed to Satan's voice and we're thankful tonight that our life doesn't hang by our own ability to resist him.

That is depending upon the intercession of Jesus and that Jesus at all times is the master of all the events of our human lives including everything that's going on in the world today.

[24 : 45] So it caused Peter, this look of Jesus caused Peter to remember the advance notice that Jesus had given him but that he had failed to take account of properly.

It caused him secondly to remember the call to prayer that Jesus had given them. Look at verse 40 and you'll find a reference there to Jesus saying when he came to the place where he was going to pray himself he said, pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And you go forward to verses 45 and 46. When he rose from prayer he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them why are you sleeping?

Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation. You see Jesus knew what was going to happen very soon that he was going to be taken into custody that he would actually end up with his death on the cross and that this would cause consternation among the disciples.

So he's saying to them watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. And here they were sleeping. Instead of praying they were sleeping. It says here sleeping for sorrow.

[25 : 56] They were probably like you and I would probably have been as well at the time sleeping because they were worn out. Worn out with grief with fear with whatever else was attacking them emotionally.

In any case they were sleeping. And what Jesus was pointing them to as he's pointing to us as well is the reality of temptation and the need for prayer against it.

is not just something that happens occasionally or from time to time. The reality of temptation is always with us and it's not just from out there or directly from Satan.

Temptation can come from the lusts of our own hearts drawing us aside bringing us away from Christ and away from nearness to him and away from obedience to him and faithfulness to him and Jesus is saying to you and to me tonight as well remember that temptation is real life is not a game this is not something that you play on a monitor it's not something that you engage in in terms of reality displayed in a way that's just something that you put away for the night once you've finished with it.

It's not like that sort of thing at all it's real life it's life in the raw it's life as you know it as you live it and here is Jesus saying pray that you may not enter into temptation watch and pray against the temptations that life is full of and Peter forgot that Peter forgot that call to prayer and it ended up in disaster so the look of Jesus it brought to Peter's heart and mind again what Jesus had said to them the advance notice he'd given the call to prayer that he'd given thirdly it brought to mind Peter's repeated denials verses 54 they are down to the verses we're looking at we read through them a wee minute ago the repeated denials verses 54 to 60 and this I'm sure would be the most painful thing of all for Peter to recollect for Peter to remember that Jesus had actually warned them against this and asked him and called upon him to pray against temptation and here he is facing these temptations and he's not ready for them he's not strengthened against them he's not been praying in preparation for them and you can see some things not just in terms of the denial denials themselves three times but we can look at one or two of the details round about that as well as what is built into these three denials what led to these three denials apart from not taking notice of [28 : 49] Jesus' words and Jesus' call to prayer you see in verse 54 when they seized Jesus and led him away they brought him into the high priest's house and Peter was following at a distance and these words are packed with spiritual meaning for us as well he was following but it was at a distance he was looking at what was going on from a distance away from what was really happening and he didn't want to be associated with this Jesus but he didn't want to be entirely away from him either and that's so much a possibility for myself and for yourself as we go through life as Christians following at a distance you probably know what it's like even as a Christian sometimes just to go through the motions you haven't stopped reading the Bible but your reading of it isn't really filling your heart with warmth sometimes you engage in prayer and you know your heart is not in it and you get up from prayer and you know it hasn't been as it should have been and you just move on from there instead of going back to prayer following at a distance maybe tonight before the lockdown you truly were a follower of

Jesus but had not made that known you were following at a distance you'd have loved to have gone to the prayer meeting but you just didn't have the courage or the boldness or whatever to do it or maybe you felt you weren't ready yet you were following at a distance and if you're following at a distance tonight whatever it is has come between you and the Lord whatever has caused that distance to take place you have to deal with that you can't afford to be at a distance from Christ you can't afford to let that distance into your life where it keeps you following but only just following but hardly noticed following at a distance and along with that and these repeated denials is Peter in the wrong company you see they build a fire there these people who are bringing Jesus into custody these helpers of the high priest and others who want to get rid of Jesus they kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together

Peter sat down among them what's he doing there that's not where you expect him to be that's not where he should be and it's not that somebody has arranged it so that he can hardly be anywhere else it's not that he doesn't have an option of being somewhere else it's not that he's been placed in a position where he can't get out of this he's put himself there he's actually chosen to be there and he's with those who are enemies of Jesus who are making sport of what's happening to Jesus he's amongst bad influences he sat round this fire with them enjoying the warmth of the fire but no warmth of fellowship with Christ it's not just in terms of the company we keep that we have to apply this verse to ourselves that is very much part of it but ask yourself tonight

I must ask myself tonight how often are we warming ourselves at the world's fires you don't have to do that simply by keeping the wrong company you can do it in isolation on your phone on your tablet on the internet wherever else you are by yourself watching things listening to things and they're the fires of the world they're the fires of the world and there's so many of them be careful friends that you're not warming yourself tonight by the fires of the world that you're not sharing in the world's enmity to Christ that you're not yourself like Peter choosing to sit there rather than be close to his fellow disciples and to Jesus himself whatever it is that's going to take you to be warmed in a worldly way it's going to take you away from Christ be careful whose company you keep what it is you're reading what it is you're watching because there are so many opportunities for being warmed by the fires of the world well here is Peter and he's not where he should be and the look of

Jesus has brought to his mind everything that's gone on just in these hours before this and as he's looking as Jesus is looking upon him it causes him to remember the advance notice he was given the call to prayer he was given the repeated denials he was involved with and that finally involves a missed opportunity because look at verse 59 you see after an interval of about an hour still another insisted saying certainly this man also was with him for he too is a Galilean you see God was being kind to Peter between the second temptation and the third there was a whole period of an hour Peter could have thought about what he was doing Peter could have chosen to start praying there and then Peter could have left that company he could have made his way somewhere else but he stayed there he remained firmly fixed in the company of these people and the

[35 : 03] Lord's look brought it all home to him just like an incoming flood into Peter's soul the advance notice of Jesus the call to prayer from Jesus the repeated denials against Jesus they're now flooding into his heart they're flooding into his mind and no more can he stay there he's got to leave and that's what he does so the look of Jesus caused him to remember it causes us to remember too when Jesus looks upon you when you know the look of Jesus from the gospel when you're aware of the fact that Christ is looking in on your heart and Christ is looking in on your life he brings back to you to your memory the advantages he's given us the call to prayer that he's giving us all the time and the warnings against temptation and in it brought the

Corinthians to be grieved they were truly sorry they were truly in grief because it caused them a lot of anguish and this is what he's saying here in verse 8 of chapter 7 of 2nd Corinthians for even if I made you grieve with my letter I do not regret it though I did regret it for I see that the letter grieved you though only for a while as it is I rejoice not because you were grieved but because you were grieved into repenting for you felt a godly grief so that you suffered no loss through us for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret whereas worldly grief produces death and that's a contrast that's always worth going back to godly grief the grief that comes from the look of Jesus that we respond to positively and believingly and repentingly it brings us to God and to salvation and that element of sorrow is here in Peter as well remember David as well in Psalm 51 when he came to repent of his sin with Bathsheba and arranging the death of Uriah her husband he came and he wept before God he came with anguish of soul and Psalm 51 is the wonderful product of that repentance or an expression of that repentance really and what he says near the beginning there is this again you you only Lord I have sinned and done this wickedness this evil you see what he's saying somebody might say to David well you know you were influenced by other people it's not just all your fault look at the influence of so and so in your life and look at how you were led in this direction or that direction and David is having none of it he's saying no I've done it

Lord and however much his sin affected other people and it did of course affected his friends his household especially it affected Bathsheba and her family what David is most concerned with there and sorrowing most over is the fact that he's done it against God against you you only I have sinned and I think that's what's in Peter's mind here as he goes out and weeps bitterly he went out and wept bitterly what was the weeping about why did the look of Jesus bring about this weeping well because Peter is saying I think at that moment what have I done I have wounded my best friend I have wounded my that's what his tears are really saying and when God brings home to us the nature of our sin when the look of

Jesus comes to us through the gospel and exposes our sin isn't this what it always demonstrates isn't this what it always lays upon our heart isn't this what leads to our shedding tears over that we have sinned not just against God in a general fashion we can say with Peter I have sinned and I

have sinned against your goodness and I have sinned against your love and I have sinned against your provision and I have sinned against your patience and I have sinned against everything good that you've done for me that's what the look of Jesus does brings you face to face with what we've really done against himself so tonight as Jesus is looking into your heart and into my heart what is he seeing what is that look saying to you what is your response to that look is it not sorrow over sin not so that you'll despair not so that you'll leave it at sorrow we'll see in a minute that's not what [40 : 56] Peter did not so that you will come and confess that sin to himself and ask for his forgiveness and for his comfort for the balm that he alone can work into your soul there's sorrow for sin it brought him to repentance which involved sorrow but it also brought him to repentance because that involves a returning to God and that always accompanies the sorrow that's in repentance that's always an about turn from sin to God where you once faced sin with your back to God repentance is a turning around repentance is putting your back to sin and coming to face God and to seek his blessing you notice here Peter went out and wept bitterly don't miss out these words Peter went out the whole hour before this or the hours before this since he had sat down beside that fire with these people he was stuck there he wasn't willing to leave there but as soon as

Jesus looked upon him in that look of Jesus there was an instant response from Peter he went out he couldn't stay there any longer he couldn't actually keep that company anymore he had to be out of there he had to be with himself he had to weep bitterly he had to bring this back to God and express his regret and sorrow the power in that look of Jesus a power that moved this man in his lapse in his failure as no other power could as no other look could you see what's the positive we want to really remember from this study tonight yes it caused him to remember regretfully everything that he had chosen just to ignore the advance notice the call to prayer yes it brought to his memory the repeated denials the following at a distance the wrong company the missed opportunity and it caused sorrow in regard to that but it brought his return to God he left where he was and where does he next appear well there's no more word of

Peter until he appears in the company of John the beloved disciple on the morning or the day of the resurrection of Christ and I think that's very precious John had been instrumental in gaining access for Peter into this place not that John in any way encouraged Peter to sit where he sat but John knew some of the officials and we know from elsewhere in the gospels that that's how Peter got access but Peter made his way and sat by this fire with Christ's enemies and now when all of that is over and Christ has risen from the dead where is he he's back with John did John go to look for him did Peter come to look for John I don't know we're not told but isn't it a wonderful detail that they are together on the day of the resurrection friend if you know a brother or a sister who has lapsed or is lapsed be like

John don't leave them there encourage them to come back to the Lord to come back to where they should be to leave the company they're in if they're in bad company to come back to following Christ the abounding mercy of Christ you see it's not mentioned but is all over the place there the abounding mercy of Christ that receives the lapsed Christian just as much as the person who's coming for the first time an abounding mercy like you find in Psalm 130 Lord if you should mark iniquity who could stand but there is forgiveness with you with you there is steadfast love and that's why you come to confess your sins that's the ground of your forgiveness in Christ the mercy of God in Christ as the catechism puts it in its definition of repentance among the other details there there's this apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ where would

I be where would you be tonight if you didn't know that God is a God of mercy if it's just your own conviction of sin and nothing beyond that there is friend there is this mercy with God and oh what a relief that is among other things what a relief to the soul that's burdened with sin when you come to confess them to God and realise that God cares for you that there is abounding mercy with him as John Newton wrote in this wonderful hymn entitled The Cross and as I read through the poem or the hymn look out for those references to the look of Jesus here is what Newton wrote in evil in evil long night took delight unawed by shame or fear till a new object struck my sight and stopped my wild career

[46 : 49] I saw one hanging on a tree in agonies and blood he fixed his languid eyes on me as near his cross I stood sure never till my latest breath shall I forget that look it seemed to charge me with his death though not a word he spoke a second look he gave which said I freely all forgive this blood is for thy ransom paid I die that thou mayest live thus while his death my sin displays in all its blackest hue such is the mystery of grace it seals my pardon too the look of Jesus let's pray Lord

our

God we ask that you would look into our souls savingly for us this evening we ask that we may respond to that look repentantly for however long we have been following you or even if we have just come for the first time to do so Lord we need your look every day and we need to look upon your look so that we may realise that your look towards your people is always filled with life we give thanks oh Lord for the look that brings us to repentance and we thank you for the many opportunities we have to repent even along the way through the Christian life and we give thanks for the many times that you receive us when we come with penitence and when we weep over our sin be pleased we pray to keep us and to enable us to continue to pray that we may not enter into temptation that we may not yield to the devil's wiles and to the lusts of our own hearts receive our thanks and hear our prayers for Jesus sake amen now we're going to conclude again with a singing to God's praise tonight we're going to sing from psalm 38 and sing psalm psalm 38 and verses 1 to 5 and then also verses 21 and 22 so four stanzas all together verses marked 1 to 5 it's on page 48 if you're using the blue psalm books in wrath do not rebuke me lord or in your anger chasten me your arrows deeply pierce my soul your hand lies on me heavily because your anger rests on me my body has no health within there is no soundness in my bones because you judge me for my sin my guilt has overwhelmed my soul its burden is a crushing weight my wounds are foul and festering because my foolishness is great and then verse 21 oh lord do not abandon me do not be far from me my god come quickly to deliver me because you are my saviour lord these four verses in psalm 38 in wrath do not rebuke me lord or in your anger chasten me your arrows deeply pierce my soul your hand lies on me heavily because your anger rests on me my body has no health within there is no soundness in my bones because you judge me for my sin my guilt has overwhelmed my soul its burden is a crushing weight my wounds are foul and festering because my foolishness is great oh lord do

not abandon me do not be far from me my my god come quickly to deliver me because you are my saviour lord now may the grace of the lord jesus christ the love of god the father and the communion of the holy spirit be with you now and ever more amen thank you once again to all of you for watching for taking part in our service of worship and as we prayed at the beginning we trust that god will bless it to us and may god keep you all safe and well in this week to come thank you go to in a work of worship in a honor and in this heaven and we done the stuff and imagine ba what and other meine love