

Jesus foretells Peter's Denial

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Date: 28 March 2010

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[0 : 00] Consider that section, verses 24 through, and again, just by way of overview, we're maybe moving a little slower here, but of course this is so much central to everything that has happened and is part and partial of our life as Christians.

A dispute in verse 24 tells us here, a dispute also arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And Jesus said at the end of verse 27, but I am among you as the one who serves.

And then he gives this warning in verse 31, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat. Now Peter, James, John, Andrew, all the disciples were the exception of Judas.

Were good men. We've always got to remember that. They were really good men. They were committed to Jesus. They loved Jesus.

They stuck with Jesus. They followed him through thick and thin. And Jesus acknowledged that fact. But they were also very human. Full of their own faults and full of their own feelings.

[1 : 23] Just like us. The Bible always tells it to us just as it is. And on many occasions their humanness and their failures rise up to the surface.

And these things are brought to our attention. And to be quite persuaded of this, God doesn't choose at random what was to be written.

But has given us these things for our edification, for our help. And very often what is written there are to act like mirrors in our own lives.

So that we will see. And you know sometimes it's as we go on in the Christian life. That we begin to see things that we didn't realize were there.

Sometimes we look at it and say, ah well, I can brush over that. And sometimes people can actually say, well I'm thankful I'm not like that. But maybe down the line further on the Lord shows to you, yep, you are just like that.

[2 : 25] And so we find that we looked at it last week just very, very briefly. But Jesus remembers, we were looking last week at Jesus, his passion, his great, just that earnest desire that he had to share in the Passover with his disciples.

And then from there how he instituted the Lord's Supper. It was a very moving, very passionate part of Jesus' life. But then following straight on from that time of great intimacy and love.

A time where you would expect that the disciples would have been humbled and their hearts warm with the presence of Jesus with them.

A heated argument breaks out amongst the disciples as to which one of them, that's what we read. Which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest? And we find it quite remarkable.

I think we mentioned that last week. Just how, in a sense, how appalling this is. And it's very easy to stand back and say, well, you know, that's just disgraceful. But I think I also mentioned last week, it's possible for us to be sitting at the Lord's table with something of that attitude and spirit.

[3 : 44] Where we're sitting in judgment of others. Where we're looking at others in our own way. Where we're sitting with a critical eye upon others. Putting others down and elevating ourselves.

And that is so dangerous. It is so wrong. It is exactly what the disciples were doing. And I think it's a warning to us because we can be doing it not just at the Lord's table.

We can be doing it all the time. Ministers can be doing it running in their heart. Running throughout their ministerial brethren. Putting down in their own heart on others and lifting themselves up.

Members of session can be doing it. Putting down on others in their own mind and elevating themselves. All the Lord's people can be doing that. Where we look and cast a critical eye on others.

And where we pass judgment in our own heart on others and lift ourselves up. That's the spirit of the Pharisee. It is certainly not the spirit of the kingdom.

[4 : 44] Because Jesus shows us very clearly it's another way. I think the disciples were still convinced that Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom of political influence.

And they believed that they would have a major part to play in that. And they would be at the forefront of decision making. And they could see themselves in real positions of authority. At the moment they were just following Jesus walking around with him. But they thought that they would soon be away from that. And they would have positions of real authority.

At that moment power dominated their thinking. Not service. And I want us to think about that. It was power that was dominating their thinking. Not service. And right down to this very day. That is one of the major problems that we face in society.

[5 : 46] In our places of work. Within the church. Within our communities. At home. This. A lust for power.

Rather than for service. And the Lord Jesus is showing us that the way of the kingdom. Is service. Not power. Much many of the problems today in society.

Is caused about many of the disputes. Many of much of the animosity. Much of the strife. Is brought about. By a lust for power. People.

Wanting position. People. Fighting. Against those. In authority over them. There is this. There is something. In the heart. Of man.

That wants to topple. Those who are above them. And who want that position. For themselves. Even if they don't want to go there. They still want to bring those. Who are above them down.

[6 : 43] You can go through. All over the country today. And you will find. This principle. At work. And it's destructive. And it is flying.

In direct. Opposition. To the Christian faith. To the rule. And the way. Of the kingdom. What a different society. We would have. If the desire for service.

Rather than power. The lust for power. The lust for lording it over others. Now of course. We know. That there has to be. Within society.

There has to be. Government. And there has to be. Ways. And systems. Set in place. Now we're not saying. That there shouldn't be some. That are. Say for instance.

In a company. You have to have. Directors. And managers. And various things like that. We know that. But each one. Should recognize. The place.

[7 : 40] And accept. The places. And there shouldn't be. Those in our authority. Shouldn't be. Unreasonable. In their behavior. Towards those who are under. Neither should those who are under.

Be unreasonable. In this desire. To topple those who are above. It would be a very different society. Because Jesus is showing. That service.

Is a mark of the kingdom. Worldly rulers. Jesus shows. They wield power. And lord it over the people. Well that is not the kind of leadership. That Jesus is calling for.

Ruling. According to Jesus. Means service. Not status. And that's something the church. So often has lost sight of. Those who most.

Resemble Jesus. In this life. Have no thought. For power. For status. For position. For rank. For any of these things.

[8 : 39] All they're concerned about. Is serving. The lord Jesus Christ. These are the ones. Who most resemble. The lord Jesus. It's not. It's not. It's not about position.

Position doesn't matter. In the kingdom. In fact. Jesus himself. Is the perfect example. If we want an example. And somebody says. Well how. How do you know.

What you're saying is right. Well look at Jesus. In the old testament. He is termed. A servant. The prophets. Spoke of him. As coming. As a servant.

Jesus. Spoke of his own life. And this is what he said. The son of man. Did not come. To be served. But. To serve. Jesus.

At the last supper. Displayed that service. By getting up. And taking the basin of water. And washing the disciples feet. In fact. His whole life here.

[9 : 34] From the. His. His conception. Where he took human nature. All the way. From glory. To Gethsemane. To Calvary. To the grave.

It was all. A downward spiral. Remember what it says of him. Being equal to God. He took our nature. He who thought it not robbery.

To be equal with God. He became man. He made himself. Of no reputation. In other words. Jesus didn't want. Any position.

In this world. He didn't want. Any status. He just came. To do. To work. To serve. All the time.

And that's. This is why the Christian faith. Is so radical. So utterly. And altogether radical. And what a different society. When you think about it.

[10:31] How different life would be. If this principle. Threaded its way. Right throughout. The whole of society. So Jesus says.

That. The way of the kingdom. Is service. Not power. J.C. Ryle. Writing on this. And it's always worth quoting. And I'm going to quote. Something of what he says.

Usefulness. In the world. And church. He says. Is a humble. Readiness. To do anything. A cheerful. Willingness. To fill. Any post. However lowly. To promote. Happiness. And holiness.

On earth. These are the. True tests. Of Christian greatness. So that we ought. See what he's saying. We should be willing. To take any post.

[11:30] To fill. Anything. Doesn't matter. We're not looking for. Position for anything. The most lowly. Menial thing. As long. And we're deciding. To promote. Happiness. And holiness.

In this world. This is. He says. Is resembling Christ. The hero. In Christ's army. Is not the person. Who has rank. Title.

And dignity. It's a person. Who looks. Not on his own things. But on the things. Of others. It's a person. Who is kind. To all. Tender.

To all. Thoughtful. For all. With a hand. To help all. And a heart. To feel. For all. That's what. J.C. Ryle says. And you know. When you look at that.

Read that. You say. To your shirt. My word. What a different world. It would be. If that's how people. Were. That's how Christ. Was. And that's how Christ.

[12:24] Wants his people. To be. And so Jesus. Is saying. To the disciples. He's telling them. Look. You've got it wrong. It's not about power. It's about service.

However. Jesus. Although. He is. Talking in this way. He. Doesn't want them. To be comparing. And contrasting. One another.

But. Jesus. Also. Shows them. That he is still. Mindful. Of what they have been. To him. While Jesus. Is showing them.

That their thinking. Is wrong. Jesus. Is also aware. Of what they have done. For him. They have been. They have remained. Faithful to him. Yes. Jesus.

Has seen. Their. Their failures. And their. Funny ways. And their. Humanity. And they've. He's seen. All these things. But he still.

[13:18] Recognizes. Their commitment. To him. Despite all. Their mistakes. And failures. Their faithfulness. And we've got to remember. That it's a long term.

It's. It's. It's. It's not. There's blips. And there's faults. And there's failings. And there's faults. And we see that. Coming with Peter. But the Lord. Is recognizing. That they have stuck.

With him. Through the testing times. And reward. Is very much part. Of the Christian life. We're not living. For the reward. But reward. Is there. And the Lord.

Is making clear. That. That the disciples. Have a great part. To play. In the future kingdom. And that they might be. Thinking about power. But when that time comes. It won't even be.

In their thinking. They achieve. The glory. And the reward. Through the service. Through. Working for him. Committed to him. But their future. Is assured. And they are going to.

[14:12] Enter into. And receive. And exercise. A lordship. Of course. In that time. It will be a pure. And a clear lordship. However. Not everything.

At the moment. Is going to be rosy. For the disciples. Because Jesus. Goes on to show. That the forces of darkness. Are gathering. The clouds of hell. Are moving in. Because this is the.

Hour and power of darkness. Jesus said that. It was like the gates of hell. Were opened. And the forces of hell. Were unleashed. And the darkness of hell.

Was invading this earth. Although Satan. Is always roaming about. And the legions of angels. That he has with him. This was a time. Where as it were.

God's restraint. Was being pulled back. You see. God puts a protecting hand. Around. And it's like God. Is saying. I am lifting. My protecting hand off.

[15:08] I am giving. Freedom. Just as he did. To. To this. To Satan. Against Job. Remember how God. Had put a hedge. Around Job. And all that he had.

God pulled that hedge. Back. To allow Satan in. And he said to Satan. I'm allowing you. At Job. You can do anything. Except kill him.

And Satan did everything. But kill him. And in fact. Job wished to die. It had been so awful. What he had. What he had to go through. But here is this.

As we say. The gathering clouds. Of darkness. Are coming in. And they're homing in. On the disciples. But they're homing in. And particularly. On the leader. Of the disciples. On Peter. And so. Jesus is warning here. And you know. My friend. This teaches us. The importance. Of praying. For one another. You go through. The epistles. And it's interesting. How often.

[16:05] We find. The apostle Paul. Saying to the church. To all the different churches. Pray for us. You write. You find him writing. In the church. In Corinth. And he's saying.

I'll pray for us. The church in Colossae. And he talks to them. About how their prayers. Are helping him. But he's so. Aware. Of the importance.

Of prayer. My friends. Pray. For one another. It's vital. Because you see. There's an enemy. Many of our souls. Without seeking.

To destroy. And so we find. Jesus addressing. Peter. Simon here. But at first. It's not just. Peter. That he's addressing. Because he addresses.

All the disciples. Because when he says. Simon. Simon. Behold. Satan demands. To have you. He is speaking. In the plural. That you. Is in the plural.

[16:58] So he's really saying. Though I'm speaking. To you. Simon. And this is primarily. For you. I'm speaking. To all of you. As well. That Satan. Is deciding.

To have you. But then. When. He says. But I have prayed. For you. That your faith. May not fail. He turns. Into the singular.

And he's addressing. Particularly. Peter here. Because Peter. All the disciples. Are going to be hit. By Satan. But particularly. Peter. And Peter.

Is in the one. Who is in most need. The one. Who is most vulnerable. And the one. As we know. Who was. Picked out. And so. Jesus.

As he's addressing. The disciples. And particularly. Peter. He says. Satan is desire. He's demanded. To have you. We have that written. Elsewhere. Desire to have you. Is demanded.

[17:53] To have you. That he may sift you. Like wheat. Grain. As we know. Was shaken. In a kind of sieve. The good grain. Was. Was. As this sifting. Process took place.

The grain. Remained. But all the chaff. And the dust. It fell through. It was. It was blown away. It was a violent shaking. And you know.

Just if you. Even. Even if you're sieving. Something today. In a wee strainer. You kind of shake it. Or you get a fork. And push it through. But if you didn't have. You would shake away. Well that's what.

Satan was going to do. To Peter. Just like he's going to get hold of him. And shake him. And shake him. And shake him. My friend. Remember this.

We have an enemy of our souls. And that's what he wants to do. If you're here today as a believer. Be persuaded of this. Satan. Has marked you out. He wants to harm you. And to hurt you.

[18:47] He wants to put a blight. In your life. He wants to derail you. Take you off the road. He wants to make your walk. Such that you'll be limping.

You're not going to walk properly. He wants to take you. So that you'll back slide. He wants to. He'll do anything and everything. To derail you as a Christian.

Be persuaded of it. He's at you all the time. But there will be particular times. Where he's desperate. To mar your profession. To spoil you.

And that's exactly what we have here. However. Although the situation as we see here is critical. And Satan is waiting to pounce.

You know there's something. This is the most encouraging part of all this. That Jesus is saying. I have prayed for you. Yes. Peter.

[19:47] This is grim. Satan has got you. And he's going to shake you. And you are going to go through a time. That's going to break your heart. It's going to be tough for you Peter.

But he said. I prayed for you. How thankful we are. For the intercessory prayer of Jesus. How thankful we are. For that intercessory prayer.

And you know at the end. Peter is going to come out a better man. It's going to be tough for him for a while. It's going to be so tough for him.

That he thinks he's lost everything. You know we didn't read it. But at the beginning of John chapter 21. Before Peter was restored. Peter says. I'm going fishing.

And other disciples go with him. The actual Greek. There speaks about. I'm going back. To the fishing. In other words. Peter thought. He had no more chances.

[20 : 48] Peter thought. He had blown it. Big style. Peter thought through his denial. That there was no way back. Because. As we'll come to see later.

Peter's denial. Was not just a matter of saying. I'm sorry. I don't. I'm not. I'm not a follower of Jesus. Peter with oaths and curses.

He's swearing. And he's saying. I don't know Jesus. He means nothing to me. It was vehement. His denial of Christ. Wasn't just a passing little thing.

It was passionate. It. Because you see. Satan had a hold of Peter. But Jesus. Is praying. What was Jesus praying for?

Was Jesus praying. Lord. Make the temptation. Not too severe. No. He wasn't praying that. Was he praying. To the father.

[21 : 44] Father. Please. Don't make Peter. Deny me. Was he praying that? No. Was he praying. Don't make Peter.

Bring shame. Upon the cause. Was he praying that? No. What was he praying? That Peter's faith. Wouldn't fail. That doesn't mean. That Peter.

Wouldn't stumble. That's not. What is spoken about here. That's not. The kind of. Kind of meaning. That this. Fail. Or to falter. Or stumble. It means. To cease.

Altogether. And that's. That is. What won't happen. It wouldn't. Cease. Altogether. Yes. Peter. Stumbled. Badly.

Yes. He faltered. In a terrible way. But it didn't cease. Because Jesus. Had a hold of him. Despite the denials.

[22 : 40] We find that. Peter went out. Broken hearted. The tears. Of repentance. Floored. He knew.

He had let his Lord. Down badly. And Jesus. Is saying to him here. You know. He said. I love what it says. But I have prayed for you. That your faith. May not fail.

And when you have turned again. Strengthen your brethren. Jesus is here. Talking about. Peter's restoration. When Peter is restored. He is.

Going to be used again. And we know. That Peter was used. In a way. That he had never been used. Prior to his fall. Peter was. Was the leader. Of the church. Peter was the man.

Through his preaching. That thousands. Were converted. Peter became. The great encourager. Of the brethren. Nobody. Would ever have believed. If they had been listening. To Peter.

[23 : 34] That night. In the hall. As he was denying. Jesus. With oaths. And curses. That not too far. On in the future. Peter. Would be preaching. About Jesus.

The man. Who was ashamed. Of Jesus. Didn't want to be. Associated with him. Anyway. Standing at the forefront. And doesn't count his life. Anything. He's not perturbed.

Whether he's taken. Put in prison. Or whether he's killed. He's going to proclaim. Jesus Christ. Fearless. Bold. What a difference. How.

Why. Because. While Satan. Had a hold of him. Jesus. Had a greater hold of him. And although Satan. Shook Peter.

Violently. Jesus' grip. Was even greater. Even greater. And Jesus. Was molding Peter. And through.

[24 : 29] What he went through. Through these dark. Bitter. Painful. Experiences. Peter. Rose from the ashes. Of his own.

Personal tragedies. And he came up. A strong. Vibrant. Christian. Who was of immense. Use. To the cause. You know.

Peter had been. Busy arguing. About his own importance. And Jesus. Was going to show Peter. You know this Peter. You're as frail. As anything. And you know.

We've got to remember that. Whatever we've achieved. In life. Wherever we are. Whatever.

Wherever we are. And life. We're there. By God's grace. And God's grace alone. Remember that.

We have. Nothing. Ourselves. What do we have. That we have not received. That's why the Bible. Tells us. Pride comes. Before a fall. And that's through.

[25 : 26] Of spiritual pride. As well. Where we think. We're something. That we're not. It won't be long. Until we'll be falling. That's what happened. With Peter. He fell. Well my friend.

Let us remember this. You and I. And everybody here. We're at the center. Of a cosmic struggle. There were two disciples. Judas and Peter.

Satan got a grip of Judas. And he got a grip of Peter. The grip that Satan got of Judas. Was a fatal grip.

Why? Because Judas had never. Put his life. Into the grip of Jesus. There's no doubt.

But that there were many times. In Judas's life. That he was happy to be Jesus. To be with Jesus. And he followed Jesus. And he went with Jesus. And he did many things. With Jesus. And I believe.

[26 : 22] That at that level. That Judas was fond of Jesus. And in his own way. Although it wasn't. The love of a believer. He loved Jesus.

And I think we see. The despair of Judas. In the end. Speaks of. His realization. Of what he's done. But the problem was.

Christ. Did not. Have a hold. Of Judas. Christ. Had a hold of Peter. So did Satan. But if Christ. As a hold. Satan. Won't. Be able to pull you. Out of Satan's hand. Satan. Won't be able to pull you. Out of Christ's hand.

That's the important thing. Whose hand. Are you. In today. That's the all important question. The Bible talks.

[27 : 17] John. And John's gospel. We find. That. Jesus. Talking about that very thing. Remember. In John chapter 10. About how. They are. His people.

Are in. In his hand. And they are in the father's hand. My father. Jesus says. I give them eternal life. And they will never perish. And no one. Will snatch them out of my hand.

Oh yes. You might be shaken. Like Peter. Like a dog with a bone. You know. The way the dog. Just shakes. And. Like that. But you know.

Satan may do that to you. But if Jesus is a hold. No one can snatch you out of it. My hand. And I like actually. That word snatch. Because that's the way.

You're most likely. To get something. Out of somebody's hand. Somebody's holding something. If you're showing. You're going to pull. That person. The. The person who's holding. Will apply pressure.

[28 : 13] All the more. To hold tight. But if you snatch. It's like you're taking something. When somebody's off their guard. Quick like that. That's when somebody's most likely. To lose something.

Well that's what. Jesus is showing. Even that way. Can. Nobody can come and snatch. The believer. Out of my hand. And then Jesus. Reinforces this.

And says. My father. Who has given them to me. Is greater than all. And no one is able. To snatch them. Out of my. Father's hand. I and the father.

Are one. What security. For the believer. Today. Today. My dear friend. You are in the father's hand. You're in Christ's hand. If you're outside.

Christ today. There's only one person. At the moment. Who's got a hold of you. And you need to get out. Of his grasp. You might not be aware of it. But he's hovering there.

[29 : 09] In the background. And he's trying to. Trying to keep you away. Out of. Out of the hand. Of God. Out of the hand. Of the savior. Yet. Today.

You ask Jesus. Lord. Please. Help me to come. To give myself to you. So that I will come into your hand. Into the safety. And security. Of your firm.

Tight grasp. Always. And ever. Use. Let us pray. Oh Lord. Oh God. We. We give thanks for this word. And.

For reminding us. Of the great assurance. That God's people have. The safety. The security. That is in Jesus Christ. We give thanks. That nobody can snatch. No power.

Can snatch. The believer. Out of the hand. Of. Of our blessed savior. Lord. Do us good. Take all of us home safely. Protect us. Keep us.

[30 : 04] Bless us. And forgive us our sin. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.