

Betrayed And Denied

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to John chapter 18. We have made our way to the 18th chapter of John, and we are going to cover verses 1 through 27 this morning.

So John 18, verses 1 through 27. As I always encourage you, please have a Bible open. We're going to look with our own eyes at God's Word this morning as we walk through this passage together.

So when you found it, John 18, verses 1 through 27, if you would please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place. For Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

And then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth.

[1 : 21] Jesus said to them, I am he. Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

So he asked them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you seek me, let these men go.

This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken. Of those whom you gave me, I have not lost one. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, Put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.

First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

[2 : 29] Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door.

So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door and brought Peter in. The servant girl at the door said to Peter, You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?

He said, I am not. Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all Jews come together.

I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I said. When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Is that how you answer the high priest?

[3 : 40] Jesus answered him, If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong. But if what I said is right, then why do you strike me? Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself, so they said to him, You also are not one of his disciples, are you? He denied it and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, Did I not see you in the garden with him? Peter again denied it, and at once the rooster crowed.

Grass withers and flower fades, but the word of our Lord endures forever. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the truth of your word, and we pray as Jesus has just prayed in John 17, would you sanctify us in the truth.

Your word is truth. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. About every six months, we enter into what is called eclipse season.

[4 : 57] I found myself reading about this this week. We're actually just a few weeks away from an eclipse season, March 24th and 25th. I know you have your calendars marked for this. There will be a partial lunar eclipse, called a penumbral eclipse, where just part of the moon's brightness will be partially blocked by the earth's shadow.

The earth, as it orbits and rotates, it gets in the way of the sun's direct light from directly hitting, reaching, and reflecting off of the surface of the moon.

And if it's a total eclipse, what happens is that the earth, it completely blocks direct sunlight from hitting the moon. It moves right in the way. And for a moment, but only for a moment, that moon that normally shines and lights up the night sky is partially darkened, but only partially, because even in this unique moment of unusual darkness, the light still makes its way through.

It's still visible. The contrast is still seen. Sometimes the moon is a reddish color instead of bright white, but it's still there. It's still visible. It's still shining forth in the darkness.

The darkness cannot overpower the light. As we enter into this final section of John's gospel this morning, I want to remind you of what John told us all the way back in John chapter 1.

[6 : 26] He told us how this story would go. Do you remember what he said? The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

You can take that phrase and slap it right across chapters 18 through 21, because what we see here is a moment of intense, unusual darkness.

And yet, as much as the earth and the world and the sinful nature of the world attempts to block out the light of the Son of God, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In fact, what we see in this passage so clearly is the sharp contrast between light and darkness. We see, as we've been singing about all morning long, the depth of our dark sin and the height of His holiness.

What I want you to see as we walk through this passage together this morning is two contrasts between the darkness and the light this morning. This will be our outline if you're a note taker, help you follow along.

[7 : 32] We're going to see two contrasts between the darkness and the light this morning. The first is here in verses 1 through 11. Look there with me. It's the contrast between Judas and Jesus.

This is a contrast between betrayal and obedience. Verse 1 tells us that when Jesus had finished speaking, probably referring to the whole upper room discourse and His priestly prayer in chapters 13 through 17, when He finished these words, He went out with His disciples across the brook Kidron to a garden.

I want you to try as best as you can to picture this scene with me. It was nighttime. It was dark. Here on the night before the Passover, it would have been a full moon.

And you can picture kind of an eerie scene. It has all the characteristics of the beginning of a horror movie. It was a dark, quiet, moonlit night. And John tells us that Jesus takes His disciples across the brook Kidron.

The brook of Kidron was actually a wadi, which means that typically year-round it's dry, except for after an intense rain when it pulls up with water, much like a lot of our property here in the Lowcountry, right?

[8 : 45] Typically dry, except for after a heavy rain like last night. And this brook, it ran through the Kidron Valley. It separated the Temple Mount on one side from the Mount of Olives on the other.

And as you imagine this, you can imagine the Mount of Olives would be covered with olive trees sprawling across the hill. And Jesus had apparently found in there a comfortable, familiar meeting place where He could engage and interact and teach and meet with His disciples.

And maybe you have a place like this. Some of you know, every now and then, sometimes, usually on a Monday, whenever I feel particularly overwhelmed or burdened or stressed or worn out, I will walk right out here past the yard into the trees of the Francis Marion Forest and walk as far back as I can get until I feel like I am completely alone.

And there, I've done it often enough now where I'm familiar with some of the areas. I have a couple of places that to me have become meeting places, holy places of prayer where I can go and speak and interact with the Lord.

Verse 2 says that Jesus, here, He went across the brook Kidron to His meeting place where He often met with His disciples. And the three other gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, they fill us in on what's just happened just moments before this as Jesus went out and prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane praying that if it be at all possible that this cup might pass from Him.

[10:21] You remember, He's agonizing over this coming moment. He's sweating drops of blood as He met with God in prayer. And do you remember how He rose and how He finished that prayer?

Yet not my will, but Yours be done. And as He rises from His prayer, as He resolves to perfectly obey the will of God, to fulfill this plan of God to a T, John fills us in on what Judas, is up to.

And I want you to notice here the contrast that John is trying to lay out for us. Jesus is resolved to obey to the point of death. He is willing to pay the price of His own life for obedience to the Father's plan.

But here, Judas betrays Him for just 30 pieces of silver, according to Matthew. And this is a contrast of rebellion against God as Judas rebels and perfect submission to God as Jesus rises to obey.

Judas, of course, he knew the place where Jesus would be. He had met there with Him many times before. You can only imagine the sweetness of those meetings, of that personal time with Jesus as Jesus often led Him there to the garden to meet.

[11:39] But now, verse 3 says, Judas leads a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus returns to that familiar meeting place. I'm not sure how you picture this scene in your mind or if you've ever seen a dramatization of this moment, but anytime I tend to imagine it, usually there's just a handful of men there to arrest Jesus.

In fact, I was curious and so I went back and I re-watched the scene from *The Passion of the Christ*. Have you ever seen that movie, *The Passion of the Christ*? I re-watched the scene where Jesus was arrested and parts were moving, it was going kind of fast, but I could only count maybe as many as five men in the scene coming to arrest Jesus.

Certainly no more than ten men were there. And that's where some dramatizations like that can be a little unhelpful for us. And my apologies to Mel Gibson, right, but as I studied this text, this week, I was reminded that these two groups of people, the band of soldiers and the officers, would likely have added up to approximately 1,000 men.

The band of soldiers is a Roman detachment, which in and of itself, by the strictest definition of the term, is 1,000 men.

[13:04] Typically, they didn't roll with that many men. It's normally approximately six to 700 individuals. But then you add the Jewish officials from both the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

These were the temple police. You add these two groups together and the best estimates are that there are about 1,000 men gathered there together, all with their torches and their weapons coming to arrest one man.

Jews and Romans together. This is an image, isn't it, of the entire world banding together against this one man. It's just as the psalmist said in Psalm chapter 2, isn't it?

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed.

And here in verse 4, John says, Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek?

[14:07] They replied, Jesus of Nazareth. So Jesus simply said to them, I am He. I am He.

Just two words in the Greek, ego, a, me. I am He. And if you've listened closely as we've walked through the Gospel of John, you should know that these two words carry a weight beyond simply just saying, here I am.

Right? Jesus is saying, once again, I am. He's claiming identity of being the I am. Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament.

Who are you seeking? Jesus, I am. Now the power of these two words, Ego, a, me. Judas and the Roman detachment and all the temple police, all of the hundreds of men that came with weapons reared drew back and fell to the ground.

And so He asked them once more, Who are you seeking? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And so He replied, I told you I am He. And so if you seek Me, let these men go.

[15:19] And John tells us He spoke these words as fulfillment of the word that He had spoken of these men whom you gave Me, Father. I have not lost one. He's come to die.

He's come to fulfill the plan of God. He's come to save and to preserve and to protect His own. This was the plan of God. And Jesus was obedient, willing to lay down His life to save His own.

Well, as always, Peter was a step behind. He had to do something about this. And John tells us that he took out his sword and he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

Not exactly a good shot or a good idea, right? But he still wasn't quite understanding that all of this was according to plan.

So Jesus tells him, Peter, put your sword back in its sheath. Now listen to this. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

[16:29] Do you see the difference here? Do you see the contrast that John is laying out for us between our sin and His holiness?

Do you see the contrast here between Judas and Jesus? Judas goes to betray God. Jesus goes to obey God. Judas unwittingly fulfills the plan of God in his sin.

And Jesus knowingly fulfills the plan of God in his obedience. Judas sides with the powers of man. Jesus sides with the powers of God.

And Judas and the hundreds of men came with weapons ready. And Jesus says to Peter, put your sword away. We're told elsewhere, he tells him, don't you know I can call down as many legions of angels as I need if I were to want to defend myself here in this moment.

But I've come here for this purpose. To obey the plan of God. Church, as we walk through this journey to the cross, as we follow John, as he takes us to Golgotha, as we prepare our hearts for Good Friday and for Easter here in just a couple of short weeks, I want you to understand once again that the death of Jesus is not a tragic accident.

[17:57] This is not an innocent man caught by surprise by the powers of darkness. Jesus was not taken by surprise.

This betrayal did not take Jesus by surprise. He told Judas back in chapter 13, what you are about to do, do it quickly. Jesus wasn't hiding. He went to a familiar place on purpose, knowing that this would be the first place Judas would look.

He wasn't trying to hide. These hundreds of men didn't sneak up on Jesus. How could they? He didn't try to run away. He came out to them. He didn't wait for them to ask who he was.

He asked them, what do you want? Who are you looking for? And he told them, I am he. He did not hide. He did not run. He did not need his followers to rise up and defend him.

He came for this purpose, to drink the cup that the Father has given him. He was obedient. Judas betrayed God, yet Jesus fully submitted to God.

[19:01] That's contrast number one. John shows us another contrast here in this passage. It's the contrast between Peter and Jesus. It's a contrast between the unfaithfulness of Peter and the faithfulness of Jesus.

The scene shifts now in verse 12 to Jesus' informal trial with Annas. And the storytelling here, I want you to notice this because it's brilliant. I want you to see it.

John, he bounces back and forth, doesn't he? Between the scene with Jesus and the scene with Peter and then back to Jesus and then back to Peter. And oftentimes, when a biblical narrative does that, the author's doing that on purpose to help us to see a connection between these two events.

They want us to make some sort of conclusion as we read these stories together. And here, what I think John wants us to do is to see a contrast between Jesus' faithfulness and Peter's unfaithfulness.

Okay? So we'll get to Peter in just a moment, but let's look at what is happening with Jesus first. Verse 12. Look there with me. Verse 12 says that the band of Roman soldiers and their captain,

along with the Jewish officers, arrest Jesus, and they bound him.

[20 : 17] And first, they said it, they led him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. Now, there's a little bit of confusing language going on here, isn't there?

It's a little bit hard to keep up with the characters in this scene. There's a bit of political drama behind the scenes here because Caiaphas was the official high priest by Roman appointment, but Annas was the high priest before Caiaphas, and by Jewish law, when you're appointed the high priest, that appointment is for life.

And so it may be that what's happening here is that the first leg of this informal trial was to bring him to Annas, who many thought was truly the real high priest, before bringing him to Caiaphas, who was the official high priest.

Verse 19 says that the high priest, meaning Annas, then questioned Jesus about two things, his disciples and his teaching. And Jesus, again, staying faithful to his promise to protect his disciples to the end, he just ignores the first question completely, doesn't he?

And he said, I've spoken openly to the world. I've always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews come together. I've said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me?

[21 : 40] Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I said. Now, on the one hand, what Jesus is doing here is simply stating an obvious fact, right?

His teaching predominantly has been in public. He's already had his public run-ins with the Pharisees. He's taught the multitudes. He's taught in synagogues and in the temple.

Any one of these hearers can bear testimony to what Jesus has taught. That's an obvious fact, isn't it? But on the other hand, what he's doing is he's also, he's digging in here to show that this line of questioning really isn't legitimate.

This whole trial really isn't legitimate. Now, the proper legal procedure, according to Jewish law at the time, would be to question the witnesses before questioning the defendant.

And typically, you would question the witnesses on behalf of the defendant first before you would question the witnesses that are accusing the defendant. And all of this goes right out the window here.

[22 : 44] They just start questioning Jesus. So Jesus says, I have witnesses. They've all heard me. Why are you bypassing the legal requirements and coming straight after me?

Ask them. They heard what I said. He's pointing out that the real lawbreakers in the room, if we're going to be serious about this, the real lawbreakers in the room is not me. It's you.

But here, before an illegitimate high priest with an illegitimate line of questioning, all decorum goes right out the window. This isn't going to be a fair trial.

And make that clear that they're not here to play nice. When he said these things, one of the officers there strikes Jesus with his hand, saying, is that how you answer the high priest?

But again, Jesus answered him, if what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong. But if what I said is right, why do you strike me?

[23 : 43] If I've done wrong, if I've spoken wrongly, testify. Hold a fair trial. Bear witness. Bring witnesses in here. Jesus is calling them to a fair trial.

But of course, this won't be a fair trial. They've made up their mind. This man deserves to die. None of this was fair.

None of this was right. He was the only innocent man to ever walk the earth. And yet here, he's treated as a criminal. Jesus willingly stands in the place of the guilty.

Willingly subjects himself to public shame and ridicule. Why? For his disciples' sake. For faithfulness to the promises that he's made.

For faithful obedience to the plan of God to save his own. Meanwhile, let's change the scene. John tells us that while Jesus is inside being questioned, outside is Peter and he's being interrogated in his own way.

[24 : 49] John says, verse 15, Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. There's good reason to believe that that other disciple is John. And since that disciple, John, was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

But Peter stood outside the door and at the other disciples' request, Peter was brought in and the servant girl who's holding the door open for him takes one look at Peter and asks him, not you too.

You're not also one of this man's disciples, are you? You're with him too? You? And Peter, without any indication that he gave more than a moment's thought, I'm not.

How could he do this? How could he say that? You remember, this is Peter we're talking about, right? It's the same Peter who just moments ago was willing to take on a thousand men for Jesus. And here, he's unwilling to identify with him for fear of public shame from one servant girl holding a door. It's the same Peter who in chapter 13, verse 37, said, Lord, I will lay down my life for you.

[26 : 04] I'll die for you, Jesus. I'll lay down my life for you. I'll do anything. I'll pay whatever it costs to follow you. And Jesus, at that point, you remember what he said, don't you?

He called him on it. He said, will you lay down your life for me, Peter? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Jesus knew even Peter would betray him. Here is Jesus's is in the proverbial hot seat protecting his disciples.

Here, Peter goes out and he warms himself by the fire beside Jesus's enemies. And as he stood here in the light of the flames, somebody else asked him a second time, you're not also one of his disciples, are you?

Here's another chance to get it right. Here's another opportunity. Peter, okay, it's time for redemption. Claim him. Yes, say yes, yes. And again, he denied it.

[27 : 05] I am not. How could he say that? After all that he had seen and heard, after all that he'd experienced as a personal friend and disciple of Jesus, how could he say, I'm not one of his people?

And finally, one of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear, Peter, has just cut off. He gets a little bit more pointed with him, doesn't he? He says, didn't I see you in the garden with him?

Didn't I see you there with him? One more opportunity to get it right, Peter. Peter. And once again, Peter denied it and at once the rooster crowed.

Do you see the contrast that John wants us to see? Do you see the contrast between Peter's unfaithfulness and Jesus' faithfulness?

Now here is Peter eager to protect himself while Jesus himself is willing to die to protect sinners. Here is Peter denying the Lord as Jesus defends Peter and the other disciples to the end.

[28 : 20] Here is Peter avoiding association with the perfect Son of God as Jesus was willing to associate with sinners like Peter. Do you see it? Peter wanted out of any punishment coming his way but Jesus came for this hour.

He was willing to die in the place of sinners. Jesus accepts the public humiliation and the shame but Peter can't even bear a little suffering for his sake. Jesus remains faithful and Peter is unfaithful. Church, there is a sharp and distinct and undeniable contrast between holiness and sinfulness. Do you see it? between darkness and light. But before we shake our heads and wag our finger at Judas and Peter here is what I want you to see church.

We are Judas. We are Peter. We are guilty.

[29 : 33] Every one of us of sinning against a holy God. we have joined together with the rest of the world to try and snuff out and block the light. John told us how this would play out.

The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. We are not neutral here.

Every one of us is guilty of betrayal. We join together with the rest of the world in sinful rebellion against God just like Judas. We have betrayed the Lord.

Haven't we? We have made idols for ourselves of sex. Idols of power. Idols of money.

Idols of control. Every one of us has exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

[30 : 32] Amen. As Romans chapter 1 tells us, we have done this. We have chosen to take our 30 pieces of silver and be content with trinkets and the glory of God is held out to us in Christ.

We are just like Judas and we are just like Peter. How often have we denied him?

How often are we hot and cold? On and off. Hot and cold. I will cut someone's ear off for you Jesus. I will fight a thousand men for you Jesus. But the next moment we can't even speak up to a little servant girl holding the door.

How often have we pledged our complete and total allegiance to God and then moments later turned our back to him? How often have we said to him in prayer, Lord, I am yours.

I would die for you. I would do anything for you, Lord. Then we go out and we live our lives as if he didn't even exist. I don't know him. I don't know him. I don't know him. How often have we been unwilling to bear a little criticism for identifying with Jesus?

[31 : 44] how often have we been unwilling to be mocked or ridiculed for him? How often have we preferred to warm ourselves with the comforts of the world rather than just endure a little suffering for his sake?

I spent a few days this week at the Charles Simeon Trust preaching workshop. And Charles Simeon, if you're not familiar with him, was the pastor of Trinity Church in Cambridge, England for 49 years.

And he was once asked by a friend how he had lasted that long. 49 years in the ministry. How have you lasted that long through all the many attacks and persecutions and shame thrown his way against him for identifying faithfully with Christ?

Here's what he said. My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ's sake. When I'm getting through a hedge, if my head and shoulders are safely through, I can bear the pricking of my legs.

Let us rejoice in the remembrance that our holy head has surmounted all his suffering and triumphed over death. Let us follow him patiently.

[33 : 05] We shall soon be partakers of his victory. glory. Friend, as we read this account, we have to understand that we are guilty.

We often sing the song, Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon his shoulders. My sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice.

It was my sin that held him there until it was finished. My sin. We have to acknowledge that each one of us, we have betrayed Christ.

We have denied Christ. We have earned death with our sin. This darkness is ours. But church, the good news of the gospel is that Christ Jesus has succeeded where all of us have failed.

Amen? 1 Peter 3.18 says, Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

[34 : 15] Isaiah 53, he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one of us to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Christ Jesus has tasted the wrath of God that we deserved. He's taken death head on, and he alone has come through victorious. Why? So that sinners like us, who just can't get it together, the sinners like us, who are united to him by faith, might share in his victory over sin, death, and the grave.

Now the message that I want you to hear this morning from this passage is not stop being like Judas, be more like Jesus.

It's not stop being like Peter, be more like Jesus. That's not the gospel, church. In fact, if that's how you understand the gospel, I would say you don't really understand it very well at all. You might not be a Christian.

[35 : 32] The gospel is not stop doing this and start doing this. The gospel is the recognition that our sin is dark and heavy, as distinct from the light as the moon from the darkness, and yet Christ, the light of the world, has stepped into the darkness to redeem us out of the light of the darkness.

He stepped into the darkness to do what we cannot do ourselves. We can't stop being like Judas unless he comes and he changes our heart, calls us out of darkness to belong into his marvelous light.

The gospel is the invitation not to do better, but to receive what he alone has done. As we walk with John over these final chapters and follow Jesus to the cross, I want you to ask yourself, have I received what Jesus has done?

Do I really know that I've sinned against him and have I truly received his forgiveness? Have I truly turned away from this life of sin and trusted in Christ alone to say, yes, I'm guilty, but I trust that you came to take my guilt away from me, that you died for my sin, that you were punished on my behalf. Have you received his work, friend? And if you have, if you are a believer, and resting in that finished work of Jesus, what steps of repentance do we need to take this morning?

[37 : 10] In what ways have we denied him this week? In what ways have we betrayed him this week? And in what ways have we been unwilling to bear a little suffering for the sake of Christ?

God's renew your commitment once again to follow him and praise the Lord for his obedience, for his faithfulness.

Our sins, they are many, but his, what? His mercy is more. Praise God. I want to close with one final contrast this morning.

This is a bonus for you, okay? Contrast number three is the contrast between Judas and Peter. This is a contrast between condemnation and forgiveness.

Matthew tells us in Matthew chapter 27 that Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, changed his mind and came to the chief priests and the Pharisees and tried to give them their money back.

[38 : 13] He said, I've sinned by betraying innocent blood. He realized he messed up, but for him, it was too late. It says he threw down the money on the temple floor and he left and he hanged himself.

Judas felt sorrow for his wrongs and he went out and he died in his sin. But Peter, Lord willing, we'll see what happens with Peter in just a couple of weeks.

Peter, although he had denied the Lord, although he had sinned mightily against the Lord, this was not the end for Peter. He would be forgiven. He would be restored.

He would be washed clean. He would be made a pillar of the early church. The Lord sought him out and restored him, forgave him for what he had done.

The difference between Judas and Peter is not a difference of sin. Do you see that? both have sinned greatly against Jesus. The difference between Judas and Peter is forgiveness.

[39 : 21] The Lord sought Peter out and forgave him of his sin. This is the contrast that I want to put before us this morning as we close.

Church, all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. all of us are guilty. But Christ has come that sinners like us might receive him and find forgiveness by the finished work of Jesus.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, the darkness of our sin is so evident in these chapters.

We confess our sin to you this morning in many ways that we have denied you, betrayed you, sinned against you. Father, for those who you have sought out and forgiven, we praise you, Lord, for the finished work of Christ that you have obeyed in our place, that your perfect righteousness is credited to our bankrupt account by faith.

God, for the people who do not know you, Lord, we pray in this moment, would you show them their need for Christ?

[40 : 48] Would you open their eyes to see the glory of Jesus that he alone can save, not by any goodness in our account, but by his perfect righteousness and faithfulness to the plan of God?

God, we love you, Lord, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.