

# The restoration of Peter

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Preacher: Prof J.Douglas Macmillan

[ 0 : 00 ] First of all, words that you'll find in the portion we read in Matthew, Matthew chapter 16, and words in verse 22.

His reaction to the information from Jesus that he must suffer, Peter's reaction. And then Peter took him, Jesus, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be, or never be, unto thee. And then words in the Gospel according to John, chapter 21, verses 18 and 19, the words of the Lord Jesus to Peter.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou gavest thyself, and walkest, whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee, whither thou wouldest not.

The words of verse 19, follow me. And last Sabbath evening, I spoke to you on the downgrade of Peter.

[ 1 : 32 ] The process of backsliding that took place in his experience as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The process that descended to the place where he denied Jesus, with the orbs and the caches of the Galilean waterfront.

And where he could save Jesus, I never knew him. I knew him not at all. And I tried to point out that that was a process.

Not just a sudden development. But it was a process. And a process that began way back in Caesarea Philippi. I want us this evening to look at the restoration of Peter.

How Jesus took Peter and restored him. To a place of communion and fellowship with himself.

[ 2 : 44 ] And how he restored him to his place in the apostolic band. And to his place in the New Testament church.

And just as Peter's downfall and his backsliding was a process. So I believe that the dealing of Jesus with Peter in his restoration was also a process.

When we come to one of the final scenes of the New Testament history. This scene that we've read of. On the shores of Galilee.

The Sea of Tiberias. As John calls it here. When we come to that final scene on the beach. I think we come to the end of the process.

And yet we're back at the beginning of it again too. Because there Jesus mentions again. A cross. You remember I said to you last week.

[ 3 : 55 ] That the process of Peter's backsliding began. When he was given a glimpse of the cross. And he didn't like the cross. Who does like the cross?

And he said no Lord. Not a cross. Not a cross for you. And not a cross for me. The cross Lord let it be far from you. And when Jesus said accept a man.

Take up the cross daily. And deny himself and follow me. He cannot be my disciple. Peter had to be built against that too. And the final restoration centered around the cross.

Just as the whole process of backsliding began. At the cross. Jesus said to him Peter. When you were young. Figured it yourself.

And you were free to go where you wanted to. And you were free to do as you pleased. But Peter the day is coming. A day is coming when you're old. And other men will gird you.

[ 5 : 02 ] Other men will bind you. And they will take you Peter. Where you would never want to go. And where you have declared that you never will go.

They'll take you when you'll be old. And they'll stretch forth your hands. And says John.

Commenting on the words of Peter. And John was probably an old man when he wrote this gospel.

And Peter's death was probably behind John. Had become an historical fact. John says he spoke to Jesus of the death by which Peter would glorify God.

Jesus is saying to Peter. Peter. You didn't want the cross. But Peter. The cross will be there not only for you.

For me. But for you. And then he said something that enabled Peter and I believe. To accept it. He said Peter. Follow me.

[6:03] Peter. Peter. I have been to the cross. I have tasted the suffering. I have borne your sin.

And Peter. The cross is behind me. I wonder if your cross will be behind you as well. Peter. Follow me. You see.

On the beach there. Jesus had taken Peter right back to where the process of the downfall had begun.

Peter had failed when Christ's cross was presented to him. And he was fully restored we believe under the shadow. Shown to him by Christ.

Under the shadow. Of his own cross. Yet there were steps in between that process that I want us to try and look at this evening.

[7:13] Attempt to trace the steps in Peter's restoration. And while the focus will be very much on Peter. I want you to remember something.

I want you to see not just Peter. But I want you to see the Christ who was dealing with Peter. I want you to see.

I want you to see. And always to keep in mind all through this sermon. The mighty grace. And the tender mercy. And the wonderful and enduring love of Jesus.

To rebellious souls like Peter. And perhaps I should say. Rebellious souls like yourself. And myself. Let's keep our eye.

On the method of divine mercy. The method of the mercy of Christ. As he makes a high way. Back to himself. For Peter.

[8:22] The backslidden apostle. A person. Now. Last week we could follow the downward steps in one chapter.

In Mark chapter 14. This evening it's not quite so easy to do that. And.

I want us to go back to Luke chapter 22. Luke chapter 22. And there you find.

That. An interview took place. Or words took place. Between. Peter.

And the Lord Jesus. Verse 31 there. The Lord Jesus. Verse 31 in Luke 22. The Lord said to Peter. Simon.

[9:22] Simon. Behold. Satan has desired to have you. That he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you.

That thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted. Or when thou art turned again. Strengthen. Thy brethren. Now I want to put these words in very simple.

Everyday language. A very literal translation of them is this. Simon. Simon. Satan. Has obtained you.

By asking. Or Satan has obtained you for testing. By asking. And then when Jesus had said that to him.

He said something else. Simon. Satan has asked for you. But.

[10:27] But Simon. I too have asked. I have prayed. I have prayed. That you. Faith should not fail.

Do you see where this man is caught? He is caught between. The two forces. That dominate the world. He is caught between. The force of evil.

And the force of good. He is caught between the power of good. And the power of evil. He is a soul. In the balance. Between the working of almighty God.

And the working of powerful evil. And Jesus knows what's happening. And. There is a sense.

In which every man and woman. Of which. This is. A sense in which this is true. Of every man and woman. Of yourself. And myself. Perhaps very seldom. Are we ever aware of it.

[11:26] Yet it is true. That you too. I with you. We are caught. Between the forces of good.

And the forces of evil. This is what Jesus is saying here. He says to Peter. Peter. Around you. Steps in these coming days.

Around them. Is the asking. Of Satan. But Peter.

I've gone. Into these days. I've gone. I've gone. Into them as well. And he tells Peter. That he has. Garrisoned him. And that he has.

Garrisoned him. With his own prayer. And my Christian friend. No matter what temptation. You may come into. You too.

[12:26] Are garrisoned. With the prayers. Of the same Jesus. We have. And every Christian believer. Can say this. We have an advocate.

With the father. Jesus Christ. The righteous one. And his prayers. His prayers. From heaven's throne. Garrison us.

In every step. That we take. Satan has asked. But I have asked too. And look what Jesus told Peter.

He had asked for him. That you fail. Fail not. He hadn't asked. That the testing. Would be taken away. And that the testing. Would be eliminated.

And that Peter. Would never undergo. This dark. Sad. Experience. He didn't ask that at all. But he asked. That in the testing.

[13:24] And in the darkness. And even in the denial. Peter's faith. Should not fail.

And you say to me. God. Well surely that prayer. Wasn't answered. Surely. In all the steps. She talked about. Last Sunday evening.

And in the denial. That people made. Surely that prayer. Of Jesus. Wasn't answered. Ah but it was. I believe that. That. Peter lost his confidence.

I believe that he lost his vision. Of what Jesus. Was going to do. But I do not. For a moment.

Believe that his faith. Had only failed. Let me almost take that.

From the story. That's so familiar with us. For us. Of the. Two men on the road. To Aeneas. These two men. Had they lost their faith.

[14:25] They said. We had hoped. That it was he. Which should redeem Israel. They had lost their hope. And they had lost their vision.

It was a wrong one anyway. The vision. Of a. Messiah. Who would. Save Israel. From Rome. But they had never.

Lost their faith. They were still. Talking about Jesus. I believe. That was true. For Peter too. Even in a moment.

But Peter denied Jesus. And said. I never knew him. I believe. That he was still. Looked. To Christ. By faith. And where there is.

Real faith in Jesus. That never can be. Utterly taken away. Sometimes we may lose our hope. And sometimes our love may go down very low. But there will always be.

[15:28] A strand of faith. That will tie us. To the Savior. And then if we go on.

In Luke chapter 22. Now that was the first thing. And it happened. Before Peter was ever conscious. That he was caught up in a process of backsliding. That was the first thing that Jesus did.

About the whole process. He took step number one. When he told Peter. And when he left this in Peter's mind. I have prayed for thee. Then if we go on to.

In Luke 22. To verse 61 there. We have. Another very familiar incident. The denial.

Of Peter. What we talked about last week. And then in verse 61. We read. And the Lord. The Lord Jesus. Turned. And looked upon Peter.

[16:28] And Peter. Peter remembered. The word of the Lord. How he had said unto him. Before the cock crow. Thou shalt deny me Christ. And Peter. Went out.

And wept. Bitterly. The Lord. Turned. And looked upon Peter. Here's the second thing. In the process.

That was to bring Peter. Back to Jesus. The first was. The prayer of Jesus. And the second. Is just. A look. From Jesus. I often wondered.

What kind of look. That was. I suppose. If you and I. Were to look at a friend. That had betrayed us. And said.

Him. I never knew him. You and I. Would. Would look at him. In quite an angry fashion. I should think. I would say. What else. They talking about. Now.

[17:22] What a friend. Says. Now. He never knew me. At all. Yet. I don't think. There was anger. In the look of Jesus. I think.

There may have been. Sorrow in it. And if there was. Sorrow in it. Then I think. That it was sorrow. Not for himself. But for Peter.

Who can analyze. What was in that look. No preacher can. But whatever was in that look.

It made Peter. Turn away. From the fire. Of the enemies of Christ. It made him turn away.

From the place of denial. With a sore heart. And with tear filled eyes. He went out. And he went. I think.

[ 18 : 23 ] There is something. In the look of Jesus. That said to Peter. Peter. Look at the sorrow. Not at the sorrow. You're causing me. Peter. Although it must have caused.

Jesus. Sorrow too. But look. Not at the sorrow. You're causing me. But look Peter. At what sorrow. You're causing yourself. Peter. And Peter. Peter. And Peter.

He quit. The world's fire. And he hurried out. Into the darkness. Of that night. And for Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter. Peter.

Peter. And it was night. It was the same night. And for Judas. There were no tears. And for Judas. there was no pathway home to our father's house it went out into night and into darkness and it was the path into a blacker darkness the darkness of our lost eternity Peter went out and he was sure that Peter was filled with the bitterness of conviction of sin he knew now and felt now what he had done in denying Jesus and he went out and it was dark outside but you know the darkest hour for the Christian believer the darkest hour is often the hour before the light comes the darkest hour they tell us is always the hour before dawn and there was a light began to dawn for Peter out in the darkness of that night and the darkness of his own experience and perhaps for you and for me for many of us here that was also true that there came an hour of darkness in your lives and it was the darkness before the dawn of a better day and I hope you're here tonight and if you've never walked in the light of the love of God and Christ oh my friend I hope that that if it's dark it'll be the darkness that comes before the dawn now in the next step we have to go to the gospel according to Mark on chapter 16 the gospel of Mark chapter 16 it's the resurrection it's an angel talking to the woman who had gone to the grave verse 7 they've been told not to be afraid but they're to go back and they're to witness and this is the message go your way tell his disciples that he goes before you into Galilee there shall ye see him as he said unto you and if you've had your Bible open you've noticed the words that I've missed out haven't you that's not what the angel said at all and we thank God for that but this is what the angel said go your way tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee how much does that mean to you go and tell his disciples and Peter well I don't know how much it means to you my friend that Jesus should specially mention Peter but I believe that it meant a great deal to Peter when they came back with the message just try and imagine the kind of firm of mind that Peter was in all through the period from the crucifixion to the resurrection of Jesus there he is he's gone death has taken him and the last words that he ever heard me saying were a good man the last thought that he had of my witness and testimony to him was an outright denial [ 23 : 17 ] I wonder if you've ever had the experience sometimes I've gone to homes where there's been a death and the person has said to me oh Mr. McMillan oh if only I had a chance to see him or to see her before they were taken away if only I had a chance to obliterate the last words I ever said to him and it's been a cause of heartbreak and grief because a loved one was taken away and the last words they said were hard words and all through these days this must have been ringing through the soul of the big fisherman and the last thing I the last thing he heard me say was I I don't know at all what misery a soul poor Peter must have been in and what misery a soul every man and woman must ever follow Jesus and then backslidden what misery a soul will go through

I know it many of you know it denial of Christ always brings misery a soul and then comes a message Peter is risen and Peter he told us to tell the disciples and he told us to tell you and with this message from Jesus Peter sees his name linked still with the other disciples finding that that must have been a great encouragement for him Jesus has linked his name with those who never denied as he had denied and you know this is this is a wonder of God's mercy the wonder of the gospel we have it's a gospel that takes great sin and forgives it through the cross of Christ two words is our name on the little conjunction and and that little conjunction is important because it links

Peter to those who were still the disciples of Christ the dark days the days when Christ was dead and in the grave the dark days for all the disciples I think they were especially dark for Peter and I think that the message that came was the resurrection of Christ the message that that brought to the heart of Peter must have brought light and hope perhaps it brought a great sense of sorrow too because when you and I begin to know the love of Christ the love that bounds over even our sin and our disobedience our hearts become filled with the sorrow of our true repentance then we take a look at a further step still in the restoration of Peter we have to turn now to Luke chapter 24

Luke 24 verses 33 and 34 they rose up that same hour that's the two men they had walked on the road to Emmaus you remember and Jesus had met them and then they had all he had come in and had supper with them and in the breaking of bread they knew him and he vanished and they came back they rose up the same hour and they returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and then they were with them saying the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon the Lord had walked with these two and they returned and it was the eleven who said the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon and it seems to me that probably the Lord had appeared to Simon before he appeared to the two and the world to Emmaus we don't know exactly when he appeared to Simon because it's only noted for us

I'm very glad that it is noted it's noted there in Luke 22 24 and then it's noted by the Apostle Paul when the Apostle Paul is giving the list of the historical appearances of Christ after the resurrection he brings this in tune he appeared also to Cephas and this I think is the Lord's next step in bringing Peter home a lonely private exclusive interview there's no one there but Peter and Jesus I sometimes wonder to myself I wonder what Jesus said to Peter and I wonder what Peter said to Jesus in that encounter and we can't know we cannot know it can only be speculation and yet I think that God was wise when he had that from us

[ 29 : 19 ] I believe that things take place things take place between our soul the soul of our eternal sinner and the eternal gracious loving saviour things take place that no one else should try him to they're only for Jesus and they're only for Peter and whatever Jesus is restoring us all or healing us all or bringing us all to peace I believe that somehow somewhere someplace he will take that soul and bring it to a place where it's alone with itself you know that's what we need to be in these days it's so hard to be alone with God and it's only when we're alone with God that we get the whole of life into a right perspective perhaps Jesus spoke to

Peter there about the real meaning of the cross about the shedding of his blood and about the forgiveness of sin through the cross we don't know then finally we come to the last step back to John chapter 21 and although I say the last step there's really three movements in this step all together let me just sum up and remind you of the steps already taken in the restoration of Peter it was first of all Jesus prayed for Peter and then Jesus looked at Peter and then Jesus sent Peter a message and then Jesus had a private interview with Peter and then was the story of Peter and the other disciples on the shores of the lake of Galilee I want us to trace three more steps really at the lakeside here in

Galilee the first thing Jesus does there is to challenge Peter's love now it's an old story this it's well known it's familiar to us it's so familiar that perhaps we read through it quickly and we say yes I know it all already but let's pause and look at it for a moment because it's a story that's full of contrasts and comparisons contrasts and similarities let's notice just some of these contrasts some of these similarities Peter had denied the Lord in the city I always think there's something about a city that can very easily lead men and women away from God well Peter was in the city when he denied Jesus and he was a country mom so country fellows watch yourself in the city and when he's going to begin the final process of restoration

Jesus takes Peter away from the city away from the bustle and the noise I go back to the sea that Peter knew and that Peter loved and you know there's something something I always think about the hills and the sea I used to sometimes sit on the top of a hill when I was a shepherd or sit down by the sea on a quiet day and just allow the sense of the presence and the greatness of God to be all around me that's one of the sad things that we can't do this in the city and we often lose the perspective and God seems very far away if you're living in a concrete much box of 22 stories and surrounded by people who never talk about God and never think about God well

Jesus takes Peter down to the seashore I want you to notice something that takes Peter back to the very scene where he had first contacted him back to the place where he had first of all encountered Jesus as saviour Peter had denied Jesus when it was over the midnight hour he denied Jesus in the darkness of night and now Jesus comes to meet with Peter in the dawning of another day not in the darkness but in light perhaps there's a message there itself Peter there's going to be a new day and dawning in your spiritual experience my friend wouldn't it be good for you and for me if tonight [ 34 : 59 ] God was saying a new day is going to dawn in your spiritual experience too what's the dawn it's the hour when men begin to see clearly isn't it on from his boat Peter sees the Lord Jesus the Lord Jesus Christ because I show and then we notice something else don't we remember that Peter had denied Jesus by a fire by the fire that was warming the enemies of Christ by the fires of

the world Jesus takes them in the dawn of this new day to another fire Jesus builds a fire and over that fire he brings Peter to a place of soul confession soul my friend the fires that Jesus builds are always better than what I called last week the painted fires of the world that are always better just look at the simplicity of Jesus at work how does the blade does it

Peter were denied three times and Jesus takes Peter and he makes confess his sin because that's what he was doing and confess his fear no less than three times Peter do you love me the other simplicity of it seashore sin an informal breakfast was prepared by Jesus himself a fire built by Jesus the place the time the setting everything is set by the Lord Jesus he came he set the scene he's there waiting for Peter to help Peter the movement of grace out from Christ to Peter and this is always the movement of grace from God to you to me

God sets the scene time and son of Jonas love us tell me and I want to say something here quite quickly that doesn't come through in our translation in the Greek there are two words for love there's one that's very high it's the highest word for Christian love agape and there's another one that's a wee bit lower down phileal and when Jesus speaks and says to Peter Peter love us thou me he uses the high word he uses the word that means a great love love of mind and heart and soul and when Peter answers he uses the lower word and he says thou knowest that I have a great affection for thee that's what he's saying and notice what's in the first question of Jesus why did he say it the first time

Peter love us thou me more than these and commentators make all sorts of guesses about why well I think it's very simple really do you remember what Peter had said it was one of the steps on his downward road he had said though all men forsake thee Jesus had said I'm going to a cross and Peter had looked at the other disciples and he had said these shall be offended in me Jesus had said Peter had looked at them and said Lord although they will be offended I will never be offended and I will follow you right down to death my love is better and higher and greater than their love they may need you I'll never know and now Jesus is saying well Peter do you love me greater than these and Peter no Peter can't say now I love you more than they do he says

Lord you know I have a great affection for you he had learned a lot of Peter and he had learned it in a bitter school of experience and then Jesus says to him again Lord Peter lovest thou me and again it's the high word and Peter answers him again and it's still the low word and he says you know I have a great affection for you he still can't get up there and then Jesus I think there's something wonderful here then Jesus asks again and when asks again he comes right down to the level where Peter is and he uses the word that Peter feels he can use and he says Peter do you have a great affection for me and that's why people was grieved grieved and Jesus had to come right down to this and he said

[ 40 : 53 ] Lord Lord thou knowest all things and last week remember when what he said to Jesus they might they might let you down but I never know Jesus you don't know me the way I really am you don't know me at all Jesus you're misjudging me he can't say that now he's saying Jesus you know you know all things you know the terrible possibilities of him in my heart and doing all things you know that my love is the love for the lowest plane I can't claim the love in the highest plane and with each question and each answer Jesus restores them to his place in the disciple band and to his place as a servant of Jesus feed my arms feed my flood feed my sheep that's the first great step on the way back sometimes perhaps people will ask did

Peter ever get to the place where he used the higher word this is just a by the way and of course we can say Peter did if you go to the epistles that Peter wrote in the New Testament you never get the lower word it's always the higher word I think that's great Peter was led by God from the lower word to the higher word that morning he kept the level of the love he knew he still had to Jesus he don't only rise to a higher level perhaps that would be the same for you and for me so Jesus had done these two things he had called Peter to his fire and over this fire he had had Peter confess over another fire

Peter had denied three times over the fire built by the Lord Jesus he confesses three times and then there was the last death Jesus told him about the cross that was coming for him and he gave this one word follow me and it was the first word Peter had ever heard from Jesus follow me and it gathers up that that word follow it gathers up the whole essence of what our Christian life is it is obedience to the way of Jesus if we follow Jesus we cannot go wrong Peter was defiled at his following of Jesus first to involve the cross it had involved the cross for

Christ and Peter's letters in the New Testament tell us how fully he followed Jesus and how much the cross meant to him it's mentioned very often in Peter's letters when he talks of the redemption and the purchase price of his soul I think we see how precious Jesus was to him last week we saw Peter following afar off this week we've seen Jesus take Peter and bring him back into the closeness of fellowship with himself follow me my friend if you feel you're far away from Jesus tonight remember that Jesus with such love and tenderness restore Peter he can restore me as well and he does it in his own gracious unloving way and come with this one thing follow me are my others are the fires of the love of kind all are the fires of the world in the world of the and the time the the middle life hands Thank you.